



**Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission
February 7th, 2011, 6:00-8:15 PM
City Hall, Boards and Commissions Room-L280**

Meeting Minutes

- Commissioners Present:** Devon Abdallah, Ashraf Alazadi, Cherry Cayabyab, Shree Dahal, Mohamed Sheikh Hassan, Bincy Jacob, Jesus Y. Rodriguez, Magdalena M Rose-Avila, Pradeepta Upadhyay, Yasemin San, Tsegaba Woldhaimanot,
- Commissioners Absent:** Andrea Caupain, Michael Neguse, Pradeepta Upadhyay
- Commissioners by Phone:** None
- SOCR Staff Present:** Julie Nelson, Ron Ramp
- Guests:** Members of the Human Rights Commission, and Seattle University Policy Students
- Guest Speakers:** Ricahrd Hartwell
- Call to Order:** Call to order at 6:00 PM
- Approval of Minutes:** January minutes approved (added Shree Ram Dahal as present in January)

Announcements

Paid Sick leave Presentation

Mike Chin the Enforcement Manager for SOCR gave a presentation on the new paid sick leave ordinance. A presentation slide show was distributed to commissioners prior to the meeting, and at the meeting. The city ordinance has passed and will be in effect September 1st 2012. SOCR will enforce the ordinance, and conduct outreach. SOCR would like to work the board in reaching immigrant and refugee communities. Outreach will include immigrant and refugee employees, employers, and general community awareness of the new ordinance. SOCR is in charge of writing the rules for this ordinance, and would like community input on the rules. SOCR will soon hire a ½ time, six month position to work on the outreach campaign.

The ordinance covers employees within the city limits of Seattle only. For example if an employer has workers in Seattle and Bellevue, the Seattle workers are covered but the Bellevue workers are not. The amount of leave received is determined by the size of the employer. Calculating the size of the employer will include workers at all location, even those outside Seattle. The ordinance covers temporary and contract workers. Seattle is among of few cities to offer this protection, and hope it will inspire other

jurisdiction to implement similar laws. For more information on this ordinance contact Elliott Bronstein at SOCR (206) 684-4507

The board discussed the new ordinance. It was mention that radio has been particularly effective in reaching the I&R community. Many I&R high school students are the primary source of information for their parents. It was suggested to include the ordinance information in the first day packet.

Presentation about Al Okere

Richard Hartwell spoke about Al Okere's immigration situation. Al's father was a prominent business man and journalist in Nigeria. Al's father exposed government corruption in Nigeria. He received death threats and was being followed. Al's father was murdered exiting his car, in front of his wife, and 1 year old son Al. When Al was 5 he and his mother came to the United States and fist arrived in Texas. Later they settled in Seattle to be closer to family. Sadly Al's mother was deported to Nigeria while Al was in high school. Al's mom was a journalist too, and known to uncover corruption similar to her husband. His mother is living under ground in Nigeria. Al is an "A" student at Central Washington University studying pre-med. Al is currently facing deportation by US official within "ICE". You can find an article about Al in a Seattle Times article.

Al had poor legal representation that has resulted in his current situation. The topic of bad lawyers was discussed. It is fairly common for the I&R communities to receive poor legal assistance. It was mention to find a qualified immigration attorney contact the Northwest Immigrants Rights Project.

Action item: Richard Hartwell asked the commission to write a letter of support for Al Okere. The letter should be addressed as "To Whom it May Concern" Yasemin will help write the letter, Devon said she could help edit.

Others may support by signing an online petition, and supporting financially if possible.

Work Plan

The board broke out into committees to finalize the work plan. The board came back and reported/discussed changes to the work plan. A discussion around whether the Tracking and Responding to Key Issues Committee's work plan was too ambitious. When Bincy said she would be the liaison with the other Commissions on the Bias Crime activity we agreed to put Bias Crime on the work plan.

Ron took notes, and will distribute and work plan via e-mail for any final edits soon after this meeting.

The Meeting Adjourned at 8:15 PM