

re: P.O. 17-11

mailed to  
Delegates  
9-19-17

To: **Members of the Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates**

Hello,

**Barnstable County Human Rights Commission: budget FY18 and FY19**

As the Vice Chair of BCHRC, I would like to express my strong support for Proposed Ordinance 17-11, which would have the effect of restoring funding to FY16 and 17 levels in respect of the Coordinator of the Human Rights Commission. The proposed Ordinance was twice discussed in August, before being tabled, pending further deliberation by the County Administrator and Board of County Commissioners.

As noted during presentation to the Assembly on August 16, the Human Rights Commission is in the process of rebuilding, with a number of new Commissioners and Town Representatives, as well as a recently-recruited Coordinator, Susan Quiñones. We have appreciated the support which was shown to the Commission at the beginning of the year, both from the Assembly and from County Commissioners, partly in response to representations from the wider community.

One point which was not made in the earlier representations is that the level of funding in FY16 and 17 itself represented a reduction in funding available to engage a Coordinator, after the "position" was amended, by Ordinance 15-06 from an independent contractor or consultant, funded for 25 hours/week to a part-time County employee contracted for 19 hours/week with no benefits.

The Ordinance which established the Commission (05-18) states:  
*It is the policy of Barnstable County to promote equal opportunity for all persons in Barnstable County regardless of race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, age, ancestry, sexual or affectional preference, marital, family or military status, source of income, neighborhood or disability where unlawful discrimination exists in housing, employment, education, public accommodations, Town and County services, insurance, banking, credit, and health care.*

The Human Rights Commission works with other agencies and groups, through education, collaboration and mediation, to address concerns about actual and potential discrimination.

As discussed at the Assembly meeting on August 16, during the budget – making process for FY16, a recommendation from the Health and Human Services Committee to set the budget for a Coordinator for the Human Rights Commission at \$8,000 higher than proposed by the Board of County

Commissioners was not (by an acknowledged oversight) was not submitted to the full Assembly.

The proposed Ordinance, which was proposed by Assembly Delegate O'Malley, seeks to implement that recommendation.

It should be noted that, because the previous Coordinator had resigned in the course of FY17 and there was a delay in recruiting a new Coordinator, the addition to the budget does not represent full-year costs of a Coordinator even at 19 hours/week, and I would ask that this be considered when the budget for FY19 is being prepared and considered.

As noted above, the Commission seeks to work with other agencies and groups, through education, collaboration and mediation, for our efforts to have the greatest effect.

However, we have struggled with only 13½ hours/week support from the Coordinator to insure that, as volunteer Commissioners and Town Representatives, we are able to fulfill expectations of our mandate.

These are some activities where additional hours would support our efforts:

- Receiving and responding to complaints, which often require repeated phone calls, collection of information and meetings, to complete the process;
- Logistics involved in organizing the Human Rights Academy, the Human Rights Day Breakfast; Commission meetings, and preparing material for publication;
- Support and training for new Commissioners and Town Representatives;
- Insuring that the Coordinator, Commissioners and Town Representatives keep abreast of relevant events, and policy and legislative developments at Town, County, State and Federal levels;
- Coordinating the participation of the Coordinator, Commissioners and Town Representatives in committees, panels and training opportunities at local state and national levels;
- Developing proposals for funding opportunities, in conjunction with County officials and external partners.

I hope, therefore, that you will support proposed Ordinance 17-11.

Sincerely,

Alan Milsted  
Vice-chair, Barnstable County Human Rights Commission