

8/16/17  
Statement to AofD

Hello,

I understand that the budget for FY18 for the Barnstable County Human Rights Commission (BCHRC) is set for review at the AoD meeting on August 16.

As the current Vice Chair of BCHRC, I would like to express my strong support for this Proposed Ordinance, which would have the effect of restoring funding to FY16 and 17 levels in respect of the Coordinator of the Human Rights Commission.

The Commission is in the process of rebuilding, with a number of new Commissioners, 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.

Students from the Human Rights Academy, which BCHRC organizes for students from middle and high schools (both public and independent) from across the County, were among those who made representations. One of those students was recognized with our Malcolm McDowell Award in the spring, and is now going to the UN International Youth Summit on Human Rights.

The need for an effective Human Rights Commission in the County remains strong.

The Ordinance which established the Commission 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.*

There are many recent impending or prospective changes in legislation and funding, at national and state levels, for example in healthcare and immigration, which will have direct effects on groups covered by the Ordinance. Recent analyses of demographic trends by the County Department of Human Services (see [www.BCHumanServices.net](http://www.BCHumanServices.net) for details) indicate that, by 2030, 43% of the County's population will be aged 60 and

above (the highest in the Commonwealth); and the proportion aged 75, 85 and 90 or over (whose needs become increasingly demanding and complex) will also increase. Issues of race and disability permeate many aspects of lives of people in the County, from local, national and international events.

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

However, we have struggled with only 13 hours/week support from the Coordinator to insure that, as volunteer Commissioners and Town Representatives, we are able to fulfill expectations of our mandate.

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

Sincerely,

Alan Milsted