



Governor Terry E. Branstad
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds
San Wong, Director

MINUTES
Iowa Commission on the Status of Women
January 30, 2017
Conference call

Commissioners present by phone

Phyllis Peters, chair
Tom Carnahan
Sean Bagniewski
Sherill Whisenand
David Gudenkauf
Elizabeth Coonan

Commissioners absent

Rachelle Hunt Russian

DHR/ICSW staff

Monica Stone, Deputy Director, Iowa Department of Human Rights
Kristen Corey, Program Planner, Office on the Status of Women

Members of the public - present for all or part of the meeting

None

Call to order

Call to order by Chair Phyllis Peters at 12:02 p.m.

Introduction of guests/public observers

No guests/public observers

Approval of agenda

Coonan moved for approval; Whisenand second.

Vote:

Aye: all

No: 0

Motion carried.

Commission on the Status of Women

Public Comment

None.

Review and vote on 2017 legislative priorities document and cover letters to the Governor and General Assembly

Chair Phyllis Peters introduced the 2017 legislative priorities document and cover letters to the Governor and General Assembly that Kristen Corey drafted for the Commission. The drafted 2017 policy priorities are the following;

- 1) Increase the state child care assistance initial income eligibility limit from 145% of the federal poverty level to at least 175%.
- 2) Support additional protections for pregnant workers under the Iowa Civil Rights Act.
- 3) Increase the budget for the Iowa Department of Human Rights' Division of Community Advocacy and Services (CAS). (See SF130).

Commissioners reviewed and discussed the draft policy recommendation document and letters.

Commissioner Gudenkauf brought up the fact that there is another side of child care assistance that the Commission has not discussed – the earned income tax credit (EITC). He added that this is a back-end that helps as people get raises so they don't directly fall off of the child care assistance cliff.

Commissioner Carnahan responded that in reference to the EITC, a raise would impact that as well because the EITC is based on earnings – the less you earn, the more of a tax credit you get. If a person gets a 15 cent raise, that not only impacts front-end – it would also affect EITC by lowering that as well.

Gudenkauf mentioned that Iowa has additional child tax care credits that aid the public – such as the EITC, a dependency exemption, and child/dependent care. He added that this is also part of the formula the Commission needs to review.

Peters added that when she and commissioner Carnahan met with researchers at the Iowa Policy Project, the researchers' data was shown to take into account the EITC and other credits (i.e. energy assistance grants for some) affecting a basic family budget. She asked commissioner Gudenkauf if he thought the Commission should look at tax credits separately.

Gudenkauf stated there is a need to have this addressed, but believes legislators will sit down and come up with the right things for the public. He

added that for the future, when he mentions bringing in subject matter experts, the Commission needs to see what the numbers are to understand what they're talking about.

Corey added that at the last Commission meeting, Lorie Easter from the Division of Community Action Agencies spoke to the Commission about what factors go into the Federal Poverty Level.

Stone mentioned that staff could look to the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSs) program to see what inputs go into the process (i.e., child care assistance, etc.) She asked if the Commission should look to the Community Action Agency staff to get the formula.

Gudenkauf stated that he would like to see the formula and see where the adjustments are taken into account on the tax-end/back end.

Gudenkauf added that he thinks the best thing the Commission can do is to make the recommendation to raise the qualification for state child care assistance and then get the recommendation into legislators' hands so they can do the proper analysis. He added that all the Commission can do is to make the recommendation for legislators to do the analysis.

Carnahan added that he recommended that the FPL be raised to 175% or above as a means of getting something passed. Whisenand agreed.

Carnahan made a motion to agree to items 1, 2, and 3 of the 2017 policy recommendations, with a change in the wording in the pregnancy accommodation recommendation to "aide" or "facilitate". Whisenand seconded the motion.

Discussion on the motion:

Peters added that the Commission should add HF118 as well to the recommendation to support an increase in the Community Advocacy and Services (CAS) budget.

Coonan added that the Commission had not discussed the second and third Commission recommendations. She added that she would like to see the Commission be more descriptive and state what it is asking for.

Carnahan agreed with amending the original motion to remove the sentence beginning with 2015 and ending with accommodation from this recommendation.

Friendly amendment to the original motion:

Motion to approve the 3 part policy recommendation of the Commission with slight wording changes (including addition of HF 118) in each of the three recommendations. Carnahan made amendment; Whisenand seconded the amendment to the motion.

Vote:

Aye: all

No: 0

Motion carried.

Peters asked commissioners if it would be appropriate to share recommendations with the Governor and legislators. Carnahan added that he would lend his name to the letter.

Corey explained how the Iowa Commission on Community Action Agencies does this. She added that the staff person for that Commission drafts the letter, the Commission approves it and then the office sends the letter out to the Governor, Lt. Governor and the leadership in the House and Senate.

Whisenand replied that she likes that plan for the Commission.

Corey agreed to revise the policy recommendations as discussed and then have chair Peters sign the letters and then will send those to the leadership in the House and Senate and then to the Governor and Lt. Governor.

Commission updates

Commissioners Whisenand and Gudenkauf commented that they are working with Monica Stone on the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame Solutions Council.

Whisenand agreed to chair the 2017 Iowa Women's Hall of Fame committee and commented that she would be speaking to commissioner Hunt Russian in the coming weeks regarding the process she used last year.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Carnahan, seconded by Gudenkauf. Vote was unanimous, 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Kristen Corey, staff.