



Civil Rights Department • Commission on the State of Hate

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Minutes

COMMISSION ON THE STATE OF HATE

May 11, 2024, 1:30 pm PT

The Apex at Red Hawk Resort + Casino

1 Red Hawk Parkway

Placerville, CA 95667

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87834772162>

and/or

1-669-444-9171 and Webinar ID: 878 3477 2162

Commissioners Present

Chair Russell Roybal

Commissioner Cynthia Choi

Commissioner Regina Cuellar

Commissioner Andrea Beth Damsky

Commissioner Cece Feiler

Commissioner Brian Levin

Commissioner Shirin Sinnar

Civil Rights Department (CRD) Staff Present

Alec Watts, Assistant Deputy Director

Monica Chavez, Associate Governmental Program Analyst

Rebecca Goodsell, Research Data Specialist

Kevin Thomas, Research Data Specialist

Shilpa Ram, CRD Counsel

Alex Hernandez, Information Officer

Others Present

An estimated 35 members of the public participated in person.

An estimated 19 members of the public participated virtually.

I. Welcome

Commissioner Cuellar welcomed everyone to the Commission on the State of Hate's second community forum of 2024 and shared that there is translated closed captioning available.

Blessing was provided by Daniel Burnett from the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians.

Commissioner Cuellar discussed the goals of the Commission and the forums and shared information for CA vs. Hate resource hotline as well as the Community Conflict Resolution Unit. She also reviewed the public comment process, guidance, and disclaimer.

II. Informational Presentations on the Theme, “Resilient Roots: California’s Indigenous Communities and the Struggle Against Hate”

Commissioner Cuellar introduced the first presenter, James C. Ramos, Assemblymember of California’s 45th District.

Presentation by Assemblymember Ramos:

- Shared one of the Cahuilla tribal songs.
- Discussed the genocide faced by Native Americans in California during colonization.
- Highlighted ongoing impacts, including high suicide rates, mental health issues, and missing and murdered indigenous women.
- Emphasized efforts to pass legislation to improve policing and address issues in Native American communities.
- Stressed the need to dispel myths that all tribes are the same.
- Highlighted long-lasting trauma from historical massacres and genocides and shared the importance of educating about these histories in schools for true healing.
- Celebrated the passing of a 2022 bill outlawing a derogatory term for Native American women.
- Highlighted the renaming of a law school previously named after an individual who funded killing campaigns against Native Americans.
- Emphasized the importance of Native voices in defining offensive terms and shaping policies.
- Encouraged acknowledgment of ancestors and elders and stressed the resilience of Native American communities.

Commissioner Cuellar thanked Assemblymember Ramos and introduced Morning Star Gali, Executive Director of Indigenous Justice.

Presentation by Morning Star Gali:

- Highlighted local initiatives and legislative measures aimed at removing derogatory terms from place names.
- Discussed human rights violations against Indigenous women and girls and emphasized the lack of accurate data.
- Shared personal stories of violence against Indigenous women, including specific cases of abduction and murder along with statistics on violence and murder rates among Native women and girls.
- Discussed an income project in San Francisco to support survivors of violence.
- Described efforts to raise awareness and advocate for policy changes.

- Highlighted ongoing challenges in law enforcement and the justice system, including racial discrimination and the use of offensive terms.
- Shared successes in legal cases and community healing efforts to illustrate the need for continued advocacy and structural change.

Commissioner Cuellar thanked Morning Star Gali and introduced Tribal Affairs Secretary, Christina Snider-Ashtari and Deputy Tribal Affairs Secretary, Loretta Miranda for the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom.

Presentation by Secretary Christina Snyder-Ashtari:

- Highlighted her role as the Governor's Tribal Affairs Secretary.
- Outlined the struggles faced by Native people in policy spaces not designed for them.
- Noted the constant need for Native people to educate others about their history and experiences, which hinders their ability to move forward with policy initiatives.
- Posed a question to the Commissioners about their knowledge of local tribes
- Discussed a widespread lack of awareness about Native history and culture even among policymakers.
- Discussed the violent and complex history of Native people in California.
- Highlighted the creation of the California Truth and Healing Council, established by Governor Gavin Newsom's executive order in June 2019.
- Shared that the Council's purpose is to elevate Native stories and experiences, shifting the historical narrative to include the true cost of California's development.
- Underscored the importance of understanding this history for all Californians to recognize their complicity in ongoing injustices and to take action.
- Referenced her experience working in Washington, DC, and the challenges of being a Native voice in policy spaces. Read a passage from a book titled "Exterminate Them," to illustrate the historical violence and disrespect faced by Native people.

Presentation continued by Deputy Tribal Affairs Secretary Loretta Miranda:

- Discussed the California Truth and Healing Council and how the Council was established through an executive order.
- Shared how their community-driven initiative involves traveling across the state to engage with as many communities as possible.
- Highlighted how the Council holds quarterly meetings and monthly listening sessions to gather testimony from local tribes and native people to understanding the true history of California and shifting the dominant narrative to a native perspective. That testimony will be compiled into a report due in 2025.
- Mentioned that a documentary project is underway to educate the broader culture about the California native story. The documentary aims to serve as an educational tool and a roadmap for other communities.

- Announced that directly after the forum, a regional hearing will be held to collect more testimonies from local tribes.

Commissioner Cuellar thanked Christina Snider-Ashtari, Loretta Miranda, and all other presenters. Commissioner Feiler reviewed the process for public comment.

Public Comment

The first commenter discussed the data gaps with respect to native populations and how that lack of data is erasing native history. This especially happens as many are placed under the “multi-race” category in data.

The second commenter expressed their desire for local policymakers such as Senator Alvarado-Gil and Joe Patterson to be actively involved in community initiatives and discussions.

The third commenter highlighted that native leaders attempting to address homelessness are being threatened.

The next commenter brought up making changes to curriculum in schools and adding native history to K-12 systems.

One commenter highlighted that private businesses in Fresno county still have the Sq--- word posted on their business even though their town had gone through a name change.

Another commenter shared their experience with local churches having violent and outdated depictions of Native Americans.

The next commenter discussed intertribal conflict through tribal disenrollment. They emphasized the importance of unity between recognized and unrecognized tribes and hopes the Commission can address that issue.

The last commenter discussed violent instances of hate in Fresno County that were deemed hate crimes by law enforcement but not classified as such by the DA’s Office. They described how one DA has a pattern of not classifying hate crimes due to prosecutorial bias.

Commission Discussion

Chair Roybal said that the Commission should collaborate with the Racial Equity Commission in a future project. They also mentioned not knowing native history until they were in college and had elected to enroll in related courses.

Commissioner Sinnar asked presenters if they could speak more to issues related to Native communities’ preferences for the amount and availability of law enforcement, concerns about the

kinds of law enforcement that they have, and the extent to which any of them are involved with restorative justice practices in their own communities (which have roots in indigenous practices).

Commissioner Choi asked presenters to share about models of restorative justice (i.e. how they partner with tribal and community leaders regarding tribal justice and to discuss more about the intersections of harm and how that presents).

Commissioner Damsky asked about the intersections of tribal sovereignty, the native community's relationship with the justice system, and the gaps within that system.

Morning Star Gali highlighted gaps and jurisdictional issues in the notification system for missing Native individuals in California, citing a lack of awareness and responsiveness from the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

Secretary Christina Snyder-Ashtari added that the jurisdictional confusion and lack of resources stem from historical policies and emphasized the need for improved collaboration between tribal and state justice systems.

Commissioner Levin expressed heartfelt apologies for historical and ongoing injustices faced by Native communities, emphasizing the importance of public statements.

Chair Roybal thanked the presenters for recognizing queer and gender expansive people in their work.

III. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

The Commission may not discuss or act on any matter raised during the public comment section that is not included on this agenda, except whether to decide to place the matter on the agenda of a future meeting.

Public Comment

One public commenter discussed the connection between historical trauma and breastfeeding among Native communities.

Another commenter shared a personal experience of inadequate breastfeeding support at a hospital.

IV. Adjournment of the Meeting

Forum adjourned at 3:52pm