



MAYOR  
MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG

# CCHR NEWSLETTER

COMMISSIONER  
PATRICIA L. GATLING

## IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

CCHR's Immigrant Employment Rights Program educates the City's various immigrant communities on the Federal and City protections afforded under the Immigration and Reform Control Act of 1986 and the NYC Human Rights Law. As part of this program, Commissioner Patricia L. Gatling, along with CCHR's partner, NY Immigration Coalition led by Executive Director Margie McHugh, recently sponsored a forum on immigrant employment rights. Leaders from immigrant organizations and advocacy groups who attended the event are already bringing the information back to their groups.

The event featured Robin Stutman, Special Litigation Counsel, Office of

Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice, who discussed various types of immigration-related employment discrimination, Federal anti-discrimination laws, and the process of filing a Federal charge.

Also speaking was Terri Gerstein, Assistant New York State Attorney General, who outlined her office's efforts in the enforcement of immigrant workers' rights, including the creation of the Greengrocer Code of Conduct, bringing the greengrocer industry into compliance with minimum wage and overtime laws.

Commissioner Gatling attributes the program's success to a strong partnership with the Coalition and the 120 local immigrant organizations they represent and the outstanding efforts of the program staff. Additionally, vigorous outreach into these communities with extensive media coverage in the ethnic and community press have informed immigrants and employers of discrimination laws.

The Commission and the Coalition have already provided over 50 workshops throughout the City in English, Spanish, Chinese, Creole and Russian since the program kicked off late last year. The classes include informal discussions, literature and PowerPoint presentations on discrimination in employment based on national origin,



Commissioner Gatling, along with a sign language interpreter, addresses leaders of immigrant advocacy organizations.

citizenship status or alienage.

Working under a U.S. Department of Justice grant, CCHR plans to expand the Immigrant Employment Rights Program with additional languages, media outlets and communities.

## LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Commissioner Patricia Gatling testified before the City Council's General Welfare and Finance Committees on March 13, 2003 and May 19, 2003 about the Commission's budget. In March, Commissioner Gatling highlighted many of the Commission's achievements while detailing the Commission's FY03 and 04 tax levy budget cuts. During the May hearing, the Commissioner reported additional tax levy cuts imposed upon the Commission and the loss of the Ryan White CARE Title I funding, which necessitated the closing of CCHR's HIV Prison Project, a program which was in its thirteenth year.

### 3-1-1 CITIZEN SERVICE CENTER

- Need information on filing a discrimination complaint? Call 3-1-1
- Need information on scheduling an immigrant employment rights workshop? Call 3-1-1
- Need information on CCHR's Training Institute? Call 3-1-1
- Need more information on the NYC Commission on Human Rights and the services the Commission provides? Call 3-1-1

## COMMISSIONERS MEET

Commissioner/Chair Gatling discusses the Commission's enforcement activities, service programs, budget and future with CCHR's appointed Commissioners and executive staff during a recent meeting in Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church.





# MOVING FORWARD

## MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

After Mayor Bloomberg appointed me as the Commissioner/Chair of CCHR in February 2002, our first priority was to reduce the 5,000 case backlog that was immobilizing the Commission. We worked hard to thoroughly review each case and make the determinations that complainants had waited so long for. With the backlog now eliminated and the Commission operating effectively, we have been able to focus more resources on identifying systemic patterns of discrimination. Our Law Enforcement Bureau conducts testing everyday throughout the City, with a focus on discrimination in housing. We currently have around 800 cases under investigation and continue to take in new complaints everyday.

We have also been able to concentrate on the service programs our Community Relations Bureau provides. Our Immigrant Employment Rights Program reaches out to the City's

diverse communities to inform them of the protections they have under City and Federal law. We plan to expand the program to additional communities.

Staff members working in our Equal Access Program vigorously advocate on behalf of people with disabilities and the elderly. We have successfully negotiated over twenty accommodations during the last three months, including: a ramp and lift for a blind amputee in a Brooklyn apartment building; relocation of a disabled woman to a first floor apartment; the installation of a low window for wheelchair users in a Manhattan check-cashing business; and negotiating a pricing policy for disability seating at a chain of Broadway theaters.

NY 1 alerted us to a case that was especially moving. An elderly man who uses a wheelchair had been confined to his apartment for several months. The ramp outside his building was stolen and the management refused to replace it. We worked with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to obtain the necessary funds and within two months of the complaint, a new ramp was installed.

The Commission has also brought back its Training Institute to educate more individuals on the City's rigorous Human Rights Law. Additionally, we are meeting with interested principals about their school's participation in the Commission's Peer Mediation Program.

I invite you to browse our website, which now includes the full text of the Human Rights Law, and the Center for NY Law's website, [www.citylaw.org](http://www.citylaw.org), which contains all of our trial decisions since 1995.

Patricia L. Gatling Commissioner/Chair

### THE LAW

THE NEW YORK CITY HUMAN RIGHTS LAW IS ONE OF THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS IN THE NATION.

THE LAW PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING AND PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS BASED ON RACE, COLOR, CREED, AGE, NATIONAL ORIGIN, ALIENAGE OR CITIZENSHIP STATUS, GENDER (INCLUDING GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT), SEXUAL ORIENTATION, DISABILITY, OR MARITAL STATUS. IN ADDITION, THE LAW AFFORDS PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT BASED ON ARREST OR CONVICTION RECORD AND STATUS AS A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. IN HOUSING, THE LAW AFFORDS ADDITIONAL PROTECTIONS BASED ON LAWFUL OCCUPATION AND FAMILY STATUS. THE CITY HUMAN RIGHTS LAW ALSO PROHIBITS RETALIATION AND BIAS-RELATED HARASSMENT.

## Grants Honors

### Colleges Honor Commissioner:

Commissioner Gatling delivered this year's John Jay College of Criminal Justice 17th Annual Lloyd G. Sealy Lecture; her topic was "The Role of

Law Enforcement Professionals/Police In Protecting and Promoting Human Rights." She also delivered Brooklyn College's Annual Samuel Konefsky Memorial Lecture speaking about "Incarceration - A Temporary Solution: The Formerly

Incarcerated Return Home."

**Employee Recognized:** CCHR Staten Island Community Service Center co-Deputy Director Roy Pingel, was recognized by the Cypress Hills LDC for his work in the community.



### EEOC:

CCHR is one of ten recipients nationwide awarded a \$29,600 grant to mediate cases filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Also, EEOC awarded CCHR a 40% increase on its work-share agreement.

### Queens Field Office:

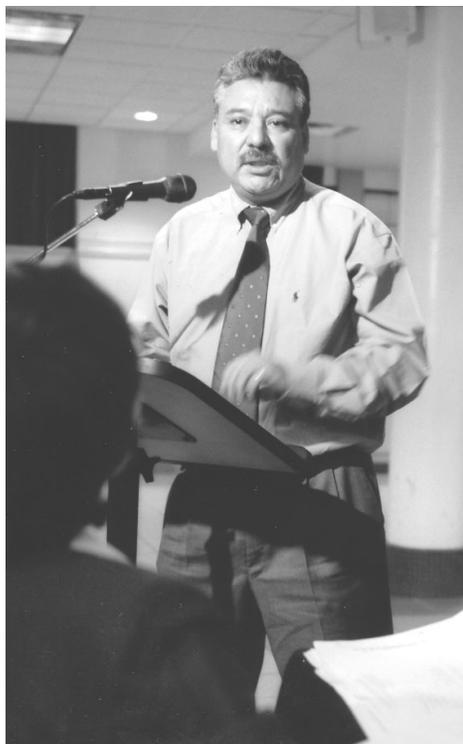
Queens Borough President Helen Marshall recognized CCHR's Queens Community Service Center for their work in providing support and assistance to the Queens housing community.

# Training Institute

CCHR launched its revamped Training Institute as part of the Commission's vigorous educational efforts. In response to the numerous requests the Commission receives, CCHR now provides training in all areas of the Human Rights Law to community groups, employers, housing and public accommodation providers, government agencies, and student groups. CCHR's General Counsel Randolph Wills recently conducted two seminars for brokers from Brown Harris Stevens, the reputable 130-year-old real estate firm. Mr. Wills discussed a variety of housing discrimination cases affecting co-ops, including issues of accessibility, domestic partner succession rights, racial steering by brokers, refusal to permit purchase based on national origin, and the obligations of brokers as well as the responsibilities of the co-op board.



CCHR's General Counsel Randolph Wills conducts a seminar for the Commission's Training Institute.



Right: This is a small sampling of the press coverage for the Immigrant Employment Rights Forum, which addressed employment discrimination issues.

Left: Miguel Ramirez outlines the Immigrant Employment Rights Program.

Bottom right: Commissioner Gatling (2nd from right) and NY Immigration Coalition Executive Director Margie McHugh (2nd from left) with US DOJ Special Litigation Counsel Robin Stutman, (right) and Assistant NY State Attorney General Terri Gerstein (left).

# COMMISSION IN NEWS

**City Agency Addresses Employment Discrimination**  
 Article and Photos by [Name] immigrant communities today.  
 Addressed Housing Issues The [Name] linked off...

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**News India**  
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**報明** 2003-04-27

**A9 要聞**

華人就業工作屢遭歧視 投訴僅占全市6%  
**人權委員會籲舉報不公僱主**

RUSSIAN FORWARD

**форвертс** Известно с апреля 1997г.  
 FORWARD № 3142  
 35 центов в г. Нью-Йорк, 70 центов по стране

№ 388 Май 2 - 8, 2003 Ежедневное для выходного чтения

**ДИСКРИМИНАЦИЯ ИММИГРАНТОВ?** ..... 2  
**История семьи Шехтер** ..... 4  
**Кровавая шахта** ..... 5  
**Чопитие с террористами** ... 6  
**Остал Бендер из Коканда** ... 18  
**Равнин в России** ..... 26  
**Больше чем равнин** ..... 26

**South Asian INSIDER**  
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# Equal Access

CCHR's Equal Access Program responds to situations that involve individuals with disabilities whose independence is threatened because of a few steps or other barriers outside their building, or at restaurants, doctor's offices or other public accommodations.

Under the City Human Rights Law, building owners, employers and business owners are required to provide a reasonable accommodation unless it is architecturally infeasible or a financial hardship. Each case is thoroughly reviewed at the Commission to determine if the accommodation is reasonable under the Law.

These cases require a speedy resolution and it is often accomplished through early intervention and negotiation. If that proves unsuccessful, we assist the disabled individual with the necessary legal actions, including litigation.

Through the Equal Access

Program, we work to provide disability access assistance and education to senior citizens and the disabled community. We also assist in identifying the necessary resources that are available, and advocate for the disabled when dealing with landlords and/or service providers.

As a result of the Commission's aggressive efforts during both pre-and post-complaint filings, 75 modifications were made in 2002 for individuals with disabilities. These modifications include ramps and banisters in housing and ramps, accessible bathrooms, grab bars, disability parking spaces, the removal of barriers, and the widening of aisles in public accommodations.

CCHR is in the process of expanding its Equal Access Program, in order to expedite the installation of modifications and provide additional educational outreach to those individuals in need of our services.



Top: Equal Access Program Director Ted Finkelstein informs a Washington Heights wheelchair user that a ramp outside his building will be completed that same day. Below: At the end of the day the ramp is completed and the man safely wheels himself back into his building, regaining some of his independence.

NEW YORK CITY  
COMMISSION ON  
HUMAN RIGHTS

THE NEW YORK CITY COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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