



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

MINUTES

CWCSEO ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2021

VIA ZOOM

PRESENT: Alan Tan, Cynthia Cartier, Leticia Colon de Mejias, Denise Cesareo, Jordan Grossman, Myron Genel, Nancy Heaton, Mui Mui Hin-McCormick, Diane Stone, Antonia Moran, Alfonse Wright, Penny Young

STAFF/INTERNS PRESENT: Steven Hernández, Werner Oyanadel, Rosemary Lopez, Denise Drummond, Meg Stellini-Yale Fellow and Chrissie Deutsch-Yale Fellow

GUEST: Dr. Fred McKinney, Professor at Quinnipiac University and Terri Clark, Executive Director at The CT Academy of Science & Engineering

Meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM on Thursday, January 14, 2021.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Co-Chairperson Tan welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year and thanked them for attending this meeting, and wished them Happy New Year.

He reminded everyone that the legislative session begun last week, looks forward to working with everyone helping to figure out the best data-driven policies to advance and to advise the General Assembly.

He also welcomed our two guest.

PRESENTATION

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONDUCTING A CT DISPARITY STUDY

Dr. Fred McKinney, Professor at Quinnipiac University spoke about the importance of conducting a CT Disparity Study.



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

He provided everyone with his thoughts regarding the necessity of the state of Connecticut funding and completing a new disparity study.

- There are historical inequality and economic disparity information:
 - Advanced policies laws practices and practices that were intentionally in some cases and unintentionally in others designed to provide economic advantages to white business owners and at the expense of black and brown business owners.
 - Explained that throughout the 1960s and early 70s the practice not only segregated Connecticut communities by race, but the restrictions also limited the ability of black and brown Connecticut residents from accumulating wealth through home ownership. Home ownership is one of the key determinants of entrepreneurial success.
 - Communities also suffered the consequences of the segregations on entrepreneurial and business development, this disparity developed over decades if not centuries in Connecticut and manifest itself even today.
 - The movement of the 1950s through the early 1970s brought change, those changes were based on the reality that barriers that impeded black and brown communities from being fully integrated into Connecticut and American Society. Required government intervention examples of that intervention. Which included bussing and public education to address historical de facto segregation of public schools, Equal Employment laws to eliminate discrimination, Voting Rights Act to eliminate political discrimination, and laws that were enacted to increase opportunities for black and brown businesses on federal state municipal contracts. It was these laws that were designed to increase black and brown participation on state of Connecticut contracts.
 - To a political leadership and the courts who were and continue to be controlled by whites, the argument of reverse discrimination against whites was a powerful crunch used to attack these nascent efforts at economic equality.
- He mentioned that while the studies are necessary, they are not sufficient to create an effective intervention. The study will not only document disparities in market outcomes, but they will also identify opportunities for black and brown business development
- Disparity studies need to be updated to address changes in technology, demography, and business conditions. It is unfortunate that these studies must be done to justify programs to support black and brown businesses.
- He recommends that Connecticut fund and conduct a through and well-designed disparity study.



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

PRESENTATION

CT DISPARITY STUDY UPDATE OF THE STATE'S SMALL AND MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

SET-ASIDE PROGRAM

Terri Clark, Executive Director of the CT Academy of Science & Engineering spoke on a Disparity Study Update of the State's Small Minority Business Enterprise Set-Aside Program.

- What is a Disparity Study?
 - Analyzes whether a disparity, or a difference, exists between the number of specified companies or groups:
 - That are available to participate in certain opportunities, and those that are actually utilized in those areas.
 - Helps to determine whether the environment is fair and equitable to all parties involved
- Objectives of a Disparity Study
 - Provide a litigation defense
 - Studies aren't challenged; programs are challenged
 - Meet regulatory & administrative requirements
 - Set overall, annual Minority/Women's Business Enterprise Program goals
 - Make administrative improvements
 - Obtain confidential customer feedback
 - Create a focus on data collection & monitoring
 - Recommend initiatives to reduce barriers
- Why CASE
 - Leadership from the Appropriations Committee of the CT General Assembly requested CASE conduct the study
 - CASE is a private, nonprofit, public-service institution patterned after the National Academy of Sciences
 - CASE provides unbiased, expert advice on science and technology related issues to state government and other Connecticut academic, industrial, and institutional communities
 - CASE makes every effort to serve the state as requested
- There are major elements of a Disparity Study
 - Different elements that the Academy completed and some that remained to be done.
 - The one aspect of the disparity study that wasn't completed was phase four.
 - The academy submitted a proposal several times, but no action was taken.



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

The purpose of a minority business enterprise program should be to eliminate discrimination in state contracting in the market area.

Although Connecticut's current program was intended to achieve this objective, it was not designed as a narrowly tailored program and does not meet the strict scrutiny judicial standard for maintaining a race-based program.

In order to meet this standard:

- Program goals need to be related to a recent assessment of whether there are disparities in state contracting in the market area among different groups
- The state must show, through inference by utilizing econometric modeling, that discrimination is present in state contracting in the market area
- Any corrective program must be narrowly tailored to eliminate the effects of discrimination by: specifically identifying which groups are experiencing discrimination; ensuring program flexibility to achieve program goals; and separating the MBE program from the SBE program
- Collect data on contractors and subcontractors for econometric analysis (and program management) to establish, monitor, and modify program goals on an ongoing basis; one effective method is to acquire and implement a diversity data management system

They have not done research on the disparity study since May of 2016 (almost 5 yrs), when they delivered their last phase of the report.

In Phase 3, evidence of disparities was found by race, ethnicity, and gender for the indicators across the marketplaces. Disparities were generally consistent with existing academic literature and disparity studies from other locations.

- A legally defensible disparity study would have needed CASE's proposed Phase 4 to be conducted. Which would require more detailed data on both prime and subcontractors. It would include: revising geographic marketplace and economy-wide analyses, if necessary; product market assessment; availability analysis; and utilization analysis.
- If not already undertaken, consideration should be given to undertaking the race-neutral policy measures recommended in Phases 1 & 2.
- Consideration should be given to updating all elements of the CT Disparity Study that CASE conducted due to the amount of time that has elapsed since initiation of the study in September 2012.
- Copies of the report are available for download online:
www.ctcase.org/reports/index.html



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

Several questions from the Advisory Board Members for both Dr. McKinney and Ms. Clark were addressed and answered.

Recommendation that our Commission hold the state accountable for both the completion of the study, and the disaggregation of the data. Also, after completion have a serious discussion about what should be the goals of the state when it comes to contracting with diverse suppliers.

SUB COMMISSIONS REPORTS

African American Sub commission – Interim Co-Chair Wright reported:

- They will be meeting tonight at 6pm, and will be scheduling monthly meetings
- They have a list of things that they are looking at Mental Health in the black community.
- The scholarship award, deadline for submission is by the 29th of this month.
- A discussion that was conducted today will be addressed at today's meeting

Latino & Puerto Rican Sub commission – Interim Co-Chair Colon de Mejias reported:

- They are working on the scholarships, they have raised \$3,000.00 in funding, and applications are coming in now. They will be reviewing them to select awardees.
- Working on the Workforce Development, and they have had several meetings with their sub commission and members of the State of Connecticut Workforce Development Planning, with David Lehman as well from the development economic division of the state. To raise awareness on the needs of the Latino population in our state for workforce development and entrepreneur.
- They have had many discussions on the need for disaggregated disparity study.
- They meet once a month as a sub commission.

Seniors Sub commission – Interim Co-chair Ms. Stone reported on the following:

- Most of the time right now is devoted on the vaccine access given to the 75+ now that it has been opened to this community.
- Some legislative proposals re things like cameras in nursing homes, and the importance of social visits. They look forward to supporting those issues.

Children's Sub commission – No report of the children's subcommittee

Dr. Grossman mentioned that there are many moving targets within the educational system that's happening with the state of Connecticut right now. Looking at it from a lens of equity, there's a lot of inequities going on regarding education. Some school districts that are in a full in



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

person K through 12, others that are remote and they've been remote for a long time and then you have others that they're both which are hybrid and remote. That's been difficult to manage as a Superintendent of schools and very difficult for parents.

- Educators are also waiting to see when they and staff are eligible for the vaccine. He believes that once they start getting vaccinated, we will see more schools that are going to be coming back into full in person learning.
- He is working with Mr. Hernandez on doing a forum in February or March on what are the lessons that we have learned from a student perspective, educator perspective and family/parents' perspective, as well as the community perspective. The Commission would sponsor along with the Department of Education.

Women's Sub commission – Rosemary Lopez reported on the following:

- She has reached out to the Governor's Council on Women and Girls to see what they are planning on doing with revisiting the policy recommendations that they first started, especially policies that did not move forward last year.
- Conversations on how many women are losing their jobs. Female unemployment rate here in CT has reached double digits. An issue that they are concerned with and will continue to work on during this legislative session. Items such as childcare acts across CT, the rights for domestic workers protection programs and family childcare home.

Asian Pacific Islanders Sub commission – Interim Co-chair Hin-McCormick reported on the following:

- They have not met yet, are scheduled to meet tomorrow
- They are participating in a community effort, there is going to be a parent workshop next week on January 22nd in the evening for parents' free resource. It's focus on talking Asian American identity and Racism. Mr. Hernandez and Ms. Hin-McCormick will be meeting with the organizers in hopes to include some of their APA sub commissioners and some of the APA coalition members as well.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Mr. Hernandez informed everyone that he has resubmitted the request to fill the four positions, and our administrator in the Office of Legislative Management is working on this issue.



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

OTHER AND NEW BUSINESS

Reminded everyone that the sub commissions should be meeting regularly.

Co-chairs had a meeting earlier this week and are working on scheduling meetings with the new legislative leaders to discuss the commissions vacancies.

Co-chairs and Mr. Hernandez are working on getting appointments filled.

A letter of congratulation was sent to our Commissioner of Education Mr. Cardona on his nomination for Secretary of Education in the U.S.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Wright moved to adjourn the meeting of January 14, 2021, adjourned at 11:35am. Seconded by Commissioner Stone