



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

2020 MAY 15 AM 8:37

CLERK OF THE BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS

NATHAN FLETCHER

**SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: May 19, 2020

26

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

**CREATION OF THE LEON L. WILLIAMS SAN DIEGO COUNTY HUMAN
RELATIONS COMMISSION (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

The protection and promotion of the human relations of all San Diego County residents are of utmost importance, particularly as the incidence of hate crimes, attacks, and other violent rhetoric challenge society and harm our residents. San Diego County has racial, cultural, and religious diversity that should be encouraged and safeguarded. The County of San Diego has a vital role to play in protecting and promoting human relations, which an independent Human Relations Commission can play a vital role in fostering a more inclusive and equitable San Diego County.

While social justice is always important, the timing for this Commission cannot be more apt. The recent acts by a few residents using their COVID-19 face covering as an excuse to wear a KKK hood and swastika masks are deplorable and demonstrate that more work is needed to eliminate hate in our region.

Former County Supervisor Leon L. Williams worked for inclusive policies that would benefit all San Diegans, as the first African American City Councilman and County Supervisor, The Commission is named in his honor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SUPERVISOR NATHAN FLETCHER

1. Waive Board Policy A-74;
2. Adopt the Resolution titled: RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ESTABLISHING THE LEON L. WILLIAMS SAN DIEGO COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION.

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

CREATION OF THE LEON L. WILLIAMS SAN DIEGO COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (DISTRICTS: ALL)

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

Many Counties and Cities have established Human Rights or Relations Commissions, including, but not limited to: Alameda County; Humboldt County; Kern County; Los Angeles County; Marin County; Orange County; Sacramento; the city of San Diego; San Francisco; Santa Clara County; and Sonoma County. The County of San Diego previously had a Human Relations Commission, which dissolved in 2018. Advisory commissions were established in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement to promote civil rights, respect, and the integrity of every individual regardless of gender, religion, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, or citizenship status. These Commissions looked critically at government policies and practices as well as served as a liaison in the broader communities historically harmed by unjust practices, discrimination, prejudice, and bias.

The prior County's Human Relations Commission was established decades ago by County Supervisor Leon Williams. His objective in developing the commission was to promote positive human relations, respect and integrity within the County. Williams was a political pioneer who created inclusive policies to benefit all San Diegans during his 37 years in elected office. He was an early advocate of needle-exchange programs to combat AIDS and of freeway call boxes to help drivers stranded in a pre-cellphone world. Williams worked with the public defender's office to legislate stricter smoking laws. He pushed for community policing, smart growth and better transit options. Naming the Commission for Williams is a fitting tribute to a life of service.

While the prior Human Relations Commission was defunded in the late 1990s and dissolved in 2018, its impact – and now its absence – is felt throughout the County. Social injustice has always existed, but the COVID-19 pandemic exposed racist attacks against Asian Americans and offered an opportunity for white supremacists to use COVID-19 face coverings as an advertisement for hate.

The establishment of the Leon L. Williams San Diego County Human Relations Commission would be a positive step to reduce sources of tension and conflict in San Diego County. The Commission would make recommendations to alleviate discrimination and intolerance and serve as a resource to the Board of Supervisors and County departments on issues related to human rights and relations. The Commissioners would serve as a liaison to community groups, provide feedback on effective outreach and engagement tactics and review progress made to lessen hate crimes, bias, human rights violations and other related matters.

The Commission would consist of twenty-five voting members, and each County Supervisor would nominate two Commissioners. The Commissioners would include representatives from law enforcement, the Jewish community, the LGBTQ+ community, the Native American and the African American community and allow for the Commission to add unrepresented groups. The

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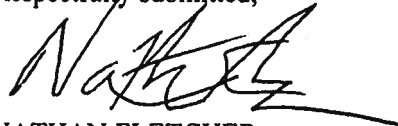
functions, duties, and governance structure of the Commission are identified in the attached resolution.

Today's action is to approve the resolution forming the Commission. The Board is also asked to waive Board Policy A-74, as this Commission has not been referred to the Chief Administrative Officer for a determination as to whether any existing Commission can fulfill the duties.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's action to create the Leon L. Williams Human Relations Commission aligns with the County of San Diego Strategic Initiative Sustainable Environments/ Thriving by creating and promoting diverse opportunities for residents to exercise their human rights, build relations, and be recognized for their valuable contributions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nathan Fletcher', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

NATHAN FLETCHER
Supervisor, Fourth District

ATTACHMENT(S) Resolution No: XX // *Resolution of the Board of Supervisors Establishing the San Diego County Human Relations Commission*

CREATION OF THE LEON L. WILLIAMS SAN DIEGO COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (DISTRICTS: ALL)

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED
 Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:
Click here to enter text.

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:
Click here to enter text.

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:
Click here to enter text.

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:
Click here to enter text.

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):
Click here to enter text.

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: D4 Board of Supervisors

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): Click here to enter text.

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