



County of Onondaga
Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Onondaga County/Syracuse Human Rights Commission

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Pending approval -pending approval -pending approval

**ONONDAGA COUNTY/CITY OF SYRACUSE
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING**

FEBRUARY 18, 2026, ONONDAGA COUNTY/SYRACUSE HRC Meeting

******Hybrid Meeting******

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| _ Chairman- H. Bernard Alex | _ Adam Leslie |
| _ Mary Grace Almandrez | _ Agnes McCray |
| _ Duane L. Reese II | _ Paul Harvey |
| _ Lauren Rosenstein | _ Lyla Hua (appointed June 18, 2025) |
| _ Taylor McFadden (appt. Aug. 21, 2025) | |

Absent: Commissioners Mary Grace Almandrez, Lyla Hua, Taylor McFadden.

Present (in-person): Chairman H. Bernard Alex, Commissioners Adam Leslie and Agnes McCray.

(online): Commissioners Duane Reese II, Laruen Rosenstein, Paul Harvey.

Quorum: No

County staff: Human Rights Specialist Anthony Heard, Monica Williams, Montanette Rocker

Opening: Meeting began at 5:35 p.m.

Community members present: None

Report and updates from ODI: Emilie Scardilla from the New York State Division of Human Rights will conduct a presentation on how the Onondaga County/Syracuse Human Rights Commission can partner and collaborate with the Division of Human Rights.

HRC activities: Montanette gave an update on the upcoming public recitation of “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” The event will be held in March and will still maintain its relevance as important Black history. Utica University Professor Clemmie Harris will speak during the event.

Upcoming: Street-sign unveiling for Human Rights Activist Donna Reese. Unveiling set for February 27, 2026, at the corner of Brighton Ave. and Webster Ave.

ONONDAGA COUNTY/SYRACUSE HRC MEETING (Cont'd)

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Discussions

Bullying allegations at SCSD high school: Commissioner Paul Harvey said a concerned Syracuse City School District parent reached out to him via a local LGBTQ Facebook group and asked for his assistance regarding a bullying incident with her son who's in high school. The mother claims other students are being bullied and have endured bullying as well. Commissioner Harvey said he discussed the NYS Department of Education's Dignity for All Students Act, known as DASA, and the NYS Human Rights Law. He also spoke to the parent about how schools should have non-exclusion policies. Chairman H. Bernard Alex encouraged Commissioner Harvey to contact the Director of Diversity, Equity and Belonging for the district, whose name is Reba Hodge Bailey Harvey also said the district plans to contact the mother.

Community member and his service animal

Commissioner Adam Leslie spoke about how some community members encounter employment discrimination because they have service animals who accompany them.

Good-Cause Eviction rally, hearing: Chairman Alex said the Syracuse Common Council plans to hold a public hearing on February 19th at 5 p.m. Prior to the hearing, a rally is planned at 4 p.m. outside Syracuse City Hall at 233 East Washington Street. Chairman sent a flyer to Montanette via email during the HRC meeting. Montanette sent the email to Commissioners at that time. Commissioner discussed the components of Good Cause Eviction, which is a legal standard that requires landlords to have a legitimate reason for evicting or refusing to renew a lease for their tenants. The law seeks to provide greater housing stability for tenants.

Centro Bus Routes: Commissioner Agnes McCray announced that the Centro Transit Bus system plans to alter and eliminate a few of its routes. McCray also stated that Centro no longer plans to have bus stops in front of businesses and private properties. Commissioner McCray

Hospital workers released: Commissioner Harvey shared the news that two SUNY Upstate Medical University workers had been released from Immigration and Custody Enforcement.

Meeting ended at 6:45 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Montanette Rucker on February 27, 2026