

# Federal Register

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Monday  
June 9, 1980

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Part IV—Section C

## Commission on Civil Rights

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Final Adoption of Consumer Affairs  
Program

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 2, 1980

Dear Mr. Nunez:

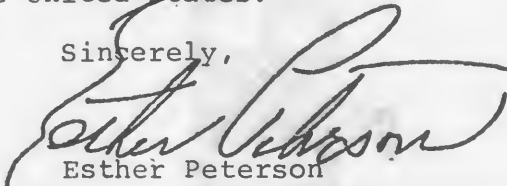
As Chairperson of the Consumer Affairs Council and on behalf of President Carter, I am pleased to approve conditionally the United States Civil Rights Commission's consumer program established under Executive Order 12160. I am well aware of the importance of the Commission's commitment to assuring that consumers' civil rights are safeguarded. The Commission's program will play a vital role in making certain that consumer interests will be an integral part of Federal agency decisionmaking.

The fact that the Assistant Staff Director for Congressional and Public Affairs will be reporting directly to you on the consumer program should give that person the opportunity to review policies, programs, and legislation to assess their impact on consumers. However, as the Assistant Staff Director has other responsibilities besides consumer affairs, this position does not fully meet the requirements of the Executive Order. For this reason, my approval is conditioned upon my finding in the course of the coming year that this arrangement does not detract from the effectiveness of the Commission's consumer program.

With the publication of each agency's final program, a new phase of our work begins. This office will work closely with you in monitoring the effectiveness of the Commission's consumer program in meeting the standards of the Order and in achieving the objectives you have set for the Commission. During this time my staff and I will be available to help in any way we can. I will be reporting to the President at the end of each fiscal year on government-wide progress under the Order, and I am sure that these reports will reflect considerable success.

Thank you for doing your part in this effort. I am confident that implementing this Executive Order will make an important contribution to consumer welfare in the United States.

Sincerely,



Esther Peterson

Special Assistant to the President  
for Consumer Affairs

Mr. Louis Nunez  
Staff Director  
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights  
Washington, D. C. 20425

**UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS****Consumer Affairs Program****AGENCY:** U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.**ACTION:** Notice of Final Adoption of Program for Consumer Affairs.

**SUMMARY:** The purpose of this document is to inform the public of the final adoption by the United States Commission on Civil Rights of a consumer affairs program as required by Executive Order 12160: Enhancement and Coordination of Federal Consumer Programs.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 9, 1980.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Frederick B. Routh, Director, Community Relations Division, Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, 1121 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Room 500, Washington, D.C. 20425, Telephone (202) 254-6345.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On Monday, December 10, 1979, in 44 FR No. 238 at pages 71192-71194, the United States Commission on Civil Rights published a notice of its proposed program for consumer affairs as mandated by E.O. 12160: Enhancement and Coordination of Federal Consumer Programs. In response to this publication, the Commission received a number of comments from the public, all of which have been considered in the adoption of this final program for consumer affairs. In addition, the proposed program was the subject of internal discussion among Commission on Civil Rights staff members and between Commission staff and staff of the Consumer Affairs Council.

A total of 12 public comments were received. Of these, eight were from organizations; two from trade associations; two from public interest legal foundations and four from consumer interest groups. Seven of the organizational comments were general in nature, dealing with the various aspects of the Executive Order and not specifically directed to the program proposed by the Commission on Civil Rights. The one program specific comment received from an organization suggested that a senior level Commission staff member be designated to serve full time on the consumer affairs program rather than in addition to other duties, as proposed, and that the responsible senior official be a program operations officer rather than a planning officer, as proposed.

The suggestion that a senior officer be designated to serve full time as director of the consumer affairs program has been rejected as contrary to the public interest. As an agency of which the entire staff of two hundred and eighty-five are occupied in investigating and reporting to the President, the Congress and the public with respect to discrimination and deprivations of equal protection of the laws, it is our view that the statutorily mandated program of the Commission is in aid of consumer interests and that it would not benefit this aspect of consumer interests to assign a senior official to assume full time responsibility for a specific consumer affairs program.

The recommendation respecting the assignment of consumer affairs responsibilities to a programmatic rather than a planning officer has been adopted in SECTION I, RESPONSIBILITIES of the program, on the basis of the public comment, as well as internal staff discussion of the proposed consumer affairs program.

Of the four comments received from private parties, two expressed concern that the Commission lacked authority to resolve individual complaints, one requested nonspecific amendments to the civil rights statutes and one requested the Commission to establish more field offices. The Commission cannot act with respect to statutory

amendments and lacks the resources to establish a network of "grass roots" offices in addition to the 10 existing regional offices, as requested. Therefore, none of the comments from individuals were adopted in the final program.

Consumer Affairs Council staff suggested that the final program indicate that the Commission publishes a catalogue of its publications and that copies of the catalogue may be obtained by writing to the Commission. This suggestion has been adopted and incorporated in SECTION III, INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS, of the program.

The statement of statutory responsibilities and the Consumer Affairs Program of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is as follows:

The United States Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan, factfinding agency established by Congress under the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

The Commission is authorized to:

Investigate complaints alleging that citizens are being deprived of their right to vote because of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin, or, in the case of Federal elections, by fraudulent practices.

Study legal developments constituting discrimination or a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution because of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin, or in the administration of justice.

Appraise the laws and policies of the Federal Government with respect to discrimination or denials of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution because of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap or national origin, or in the administration of justice.

Serve as a national clearinghouse for civil rights information.

Submit reports of its activities, findings, and recommendations to the President and Congress.

The Commission is not an enforcement agency and has no power to apply specific remedies in individual cases. Complaints about denials of rights are usually referred to the appropriate Federal agencies for action.

**ACTIVITIES**

The Commission conducts factfinding hearings relating to discrimination or the denial of equal protection of the laws. Using its subpoena power, the Commission seeks facts from public officials, minority group members, and other citizens representing diverse interests and points of view.

The Commission conducts extensive research and investigations regarding the denial of equal protection of the laws in such fields as voting, education, employment, health services, housing, and administration of justice. The Commission also evaluates the Federal effort to further equal opportunity.

The Commission sponsors national, regional, and State conferences as part of its fact-gathering and as a method of disseminating information to specialized audiences. These conferences bring together Federal, State, and local officials, community leaders, and representatives of businesses, labor, and civil rights and women's groups.

The Commission collects, compiles, and disseminates information concerning civil rights problems, the laws relating to them, and various procedures for resolving such problems. These materials are called "clearinghouse reports."

**STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

The Commission has State Advisory Committees in each State and the District of Columbia to assist in factfinding, investigative, and clearinghouse functions. These Committees are composed of knowledgeable citizens who serve without compensation and who are familiar with local

and State civil rights problems. The Committees issue reports to the Commission that are published when appropriate. They also make recommendations to the Commission that may be used in its reports to the President and Congress.

The Commission maintains 10 regional offices. Addresses of these offices are:

Central States Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 911 Walnut Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106, (816) 374-2454.

Eastern Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 26 Federal Plaza, Room 1639, New York, N.Y., (212) 264-0400.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2120 L Street, N.W., Room 510, Washington, D.C. 20037, (202) 254-6717.

Midwestern Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 230 South Dearborn Street, 32nd Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60604, (312) 353-7371.

New England Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 55 Summer Street, 8th Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02110, (617) 223-4671.

Northwestern Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 915 Second Avenue, Room 2852, Seattle, Washington 98174, (206) 442-1246.

Rocky Mountain Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Executive Tower, Suite 1700, 1405 Curtis Street, Denver, Colorado 80202, (303) 837-2211.

Southern Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 75 Piedmont Avenue, N.E., Room 362, Atlanta, Georgia 30303, (404) 221-4391.

Southwestern Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Heritage Plaza, First Floor, 418 South Main, San Antonio, Texas 78204, (512) 229-5570.

Western Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 312 North Spring Street, Room 1015, Los Angeles, California 90012, (312) 688-3437.

Information regarding the organization and programs of the Commission may be directed to:

Office of the Staff Director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20425.

## PROPOSED CONSUMER AFFAIRS PROGRAM:

### I. CONSUMER AFFAIRS PERSPECTIVE

The Commission on Civil Rights has an authorized strength of 285 staff members. Of these, approximately 200 are located at headquarters in Washington, D.C., and the balance in the 10 regional offices.

Although a specific staff unit is directly responsible for the implementation of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Consumer Affairs Program, all staff members are accountable for considering consumer interests in carrying out their various assignments.

#### Responsibilities

The Assistant Staff Director for Congressional and Public Affairs, a position in the Senior Executive Service reporting directly to the Staff Director, is designated as Director of Consumer Affairs and serves in addition to other duties, as the official responsible for the coordination and oversight of U.S. Commission on Civil Rights consumer activities.

Communications to the Assistant Staff Director for Congressional and Public Affairs should be addressed as follows:

Assistant Staff Director for Congressional and Public Affairs, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1121 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Room 500, Washington, D.C. 20425, (202) 254-8090.

#### Staffing

Ten members of the staff of the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, reporting to the Assistant staff director for Congressional and Public Affairs, serve as the staff

responsible for the consumer affairs program of the Commission, in addition to their other duties. This staff relates to and communicates with other staff units of the Commission through the Assistant Staff Director who is a member of the Commission's executive staff.

Communications to the Consumer Affairs staff regarding consumer affairs generally, should be addressed as follows:

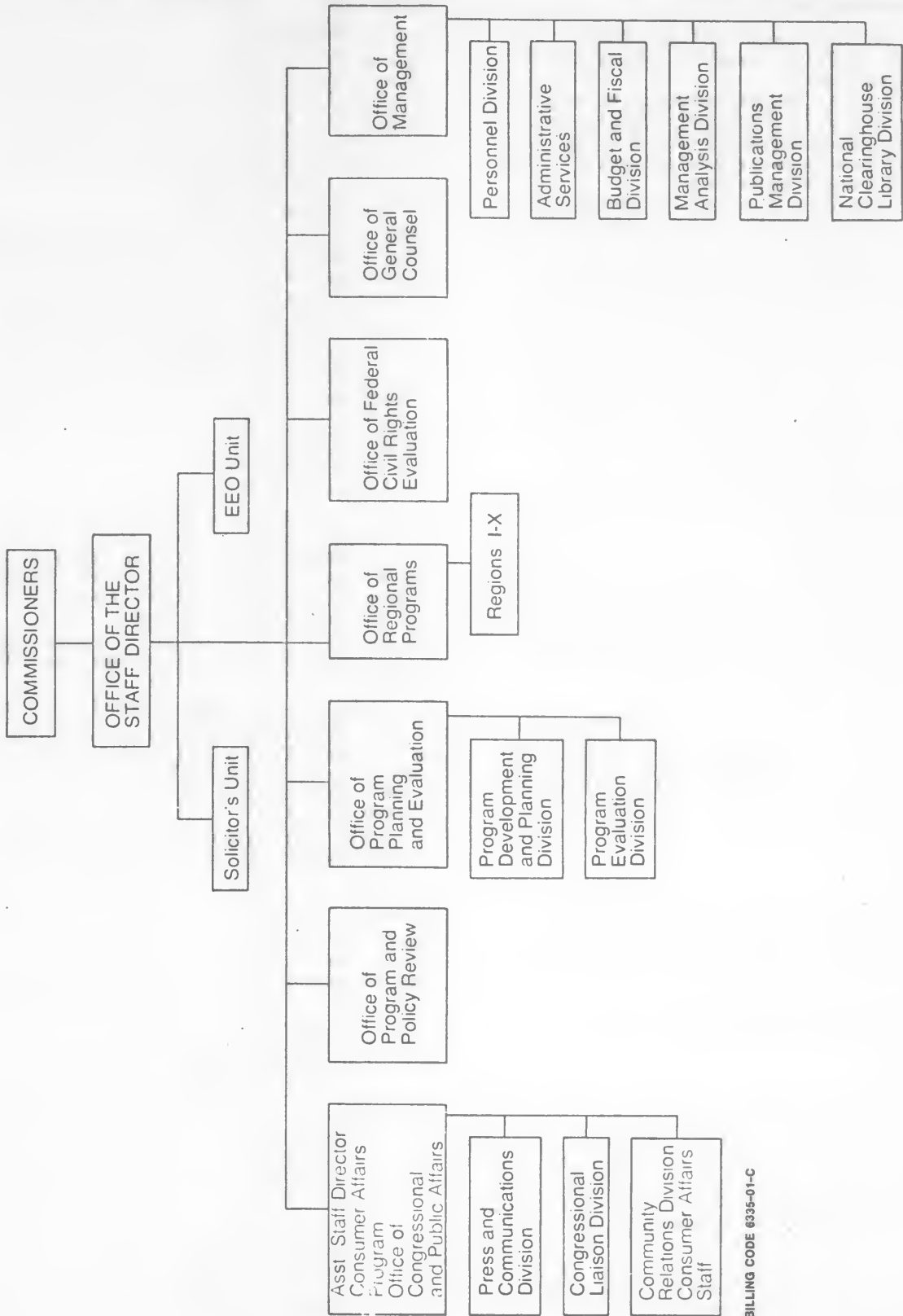
Director, Community Relations Division, Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1121 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Room 503, Washington, D.C. 20425, (202) 254-6345.

#### Staff Location

The Consumer Affairs staff are located in the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, a first level unit in the table of organization of the Commission. Through its chief, the Assistant Staff Director for Congressional and Public Affairs, this office reports directly to the staff Director who is the administrative head of the agency, and laterally to the other Assistant Staff Directors of the Commission.

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## II. CONSUMER PARTICIPATION

Opportunities for consumer participation in the development of Commission policies and programs are available as follows:

(a) Attendance at Commission functions, including: open meetings, hearings, consultations, civil rights conferences, and press conferences. Such attendance may, at the discretion of the Commission, include an oral presentation or the submission of written statements.

The majority of witnesses who testify at Commission hearings appear in response to a Commission subpoena. Any person who wishes to testify and has not been subpoenaed may contact Commission staff during the course of the scheduled hearing and ask to appear and offer testimony. Such testimony must concern the subject matter of the hearing. Rules for the hearing will be stated and appropriate staff contacts will be identified during the opening remarks of the Commission's chairman. The testimony and written statements submitted by subpoenaed and nonsubpoenaed witnesses will be given full consideration in the formulation of Commission policies and recommendations and in the preparation of Commission reports.

(b) Attendance at the frequent open meetings of the Advisory Committees established by the Commission in each State and the District of Columbia and, at the discretion of such committees, the presentation of oral and/or written testimony.

(c) Potential appointment by the Commission as members of such State Advisory Committees.

(d) Comment on Commission publications prior to publication as may be requested by the Commission and subsequent to publication at any individual's discretion.

### Staff Involvement in Consumer Participation

All Commission staff members involved in the conduct and preparation of the activities outlined above are responsible for assisting in consumer participation in such activities and the analyzing and consideration of consumer views for the purpose of planning and executing future Commission programs.

## III. INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

### Mailing List

Any individual or organization may be included on the Commission's mailing list and may obtain a copy of the current catalogue of published reports, hearing transcripts and other documents by writing to:

Office of Management, Publications Management Division, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1121 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20425, (202) 254-7381.

### Public Notice

Notice of all Commission activities which are appropriate for public participation are widely publicized through press releases prepared and distributed by the Press and Communications Division of the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs and by staff contacts with interested organizations. The agenda for Commission meetings and other activities and response to inquiries regarding the agenda may be obtained by contacting:

Press and Community Relations Division, Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1121 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20425, (202) 254-6697.

## IV. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Responsibility for Training

The Assistant Staff Director for Congressional and Public Affairs and the consumer affairs staff of that Office are responsible for directing the attention of all agency staff members to their individual responsibility for consumer affairs. Such effort includes the preparation and dissemination of written material and oral briefings for headquarters and field staff members.

### Technical Assistance

The Director of the Press and Communications Division of the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs or his/her designee responds to consumer inquiries respecting consumer technical assistance and consumer participation in Commission planning, programming and policymaking.

Communications regarding technical assistance and consumer participation should be addressed as follows:

Director, Press and Communications Division, Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1121 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Room 503, Washington, D.C. 20425, (202) 254-6697.

## V. COMPLAINT HANDLING

### Complaints of Deprivations of Civil Rights

The Commission has no authority to resolve individual complaints of deprivations of civil rights. To the extent complaints are received regarding such deprivations they are transmitted to the appropriate Federal, or other agency.

Complaints regarding discrimination or deprivation of civil rights should be addressed as follows:

Complaints Unit, Office of Federal Civil Rights Evaluation, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1121 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Room 606, Washington, D.C. 20425, (202) 254-6681.

### Complaints and Comments Regarding the Commission

Complaints, views, comments and suggestions regarding Commission policies, programs and activities receive full consideration and a substantive response is made by senior Commission staff members.

Such communications should be addressed as follows:

Office of the Staff Director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1121 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Room 800, Washington, D.C. 20425, (202) 254-5190.

Dated: April 11, 1980.

Louis Nunez,

Staff Director.

[FR Doc. 80-16857 Filed 6-6-80; 8:45 am]

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