ALEXANDRIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025

7:00 P.M., City Hall 301 King Street Council Work Room

Members Present Staff Present

Marc Bendick, Vice Chair

April Breslaw

Anna McClure, Investigator/Acting Director

Miladis Martinez Gutierrez Adm. Support

Lisl Brunner Iulia Fratilla

Elisabeth "PJ" Palmer Johnson, Vice Chair

Kara Pitek <u>Members Participated over the phone</u>

Megan PrinceMatt HarrisSam SchwartzManisha ManiyarConrad SylvanusTom Reeder, Jr.

Jon Thompson, Chair

Guests

Rohmah Javed, Legal Director, and Daniela Czemerinski, Attorney, Legal Aid Justice Center Immigrant Justice Program.

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Chair Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Chair Thompson said that the Commission wanted to open this meeting, because the community is being faced with more threats from federal agents targeting those who are undocumented or are in an unprotected status. The Commission wanted to host training for commissioners and board members to learn what to do if a neighbor, friend, or co-worker is being targeted. He said, as citizens, we should be ready to act in any way we can, and he suggested taking red cards and yellow cards.

2. Guest: Know Your Rights Training Presentation

Chair Thompson welcomed Rohmah Javed, Legal Director, and Daniela Czemerinski, Attorney from the Legal Aid Justice Center Immigrant Justice Program (LAJC).

Ms. Javed said the community is scared. She reported that they are seeing more ICE enforcement, more collaboration with localities (police and sheriff), more detentions at the two Virginia detention centers, more deportations, and more fraud and scams. She said that there is a lack of immigration attorneys; representation and access to legal information are extremely prohibitive in Northern Virginia; it is a breeding ground for fraud and scams, especially in this climate.

Ms. Javed talked about the LAJC's services for undocumented community members, along with statewide resources, such as the Virginia Rapid Response Hotline. Ms. Javed stated that LAJC is not traditional legal aid; they do more than just take cases one at a time. They also do impact advocacy, through media, litigation, and community organizing to try to make holistic social change. They are also a community center. Lawyers and organizers work together so that they can see what the community needs directly, which informs their litigation and their advocacy.

LAJC intentionally seeks unrestrictive funding, and it is the only organization in Virginia that has attorneys who can take cases for detained individuals.

LACJ has six advocacy programs, but three of them have a significant presence in Northern Virginia, which are the following:

- Immigrant Justice Program- focusing on bond cases. They take as many bond cases as they can from the Farmville and Caroline detention centers. They also offer Free legal consults to referrals from the rapid response hotline.
- **Housing & Consumer Justice** They are prioritizing undocumented individuals, because many are prioritizing immigration concerns over evictions and housing concerns.
- **Health & Public Benefits** -There has been a lot of confusion about what public benefits undocumented individuals are eligible or not eligible for.

The LAJC team has had requests to give "Know Your Rights" presentations across the state, so they prioritized Northern Virginia and Charlottesville. They also developed a rapid response tool kit. They filmed two Know Your Rights presentations, one in English and one in Spanish. They also made a family emergency preparedness kit. The rapid response hotline was started by several groups that formed a campaign, and a coalition called Virginia for Immigrant Families, People across Virginia call the hotline to report enforcement or ICE activity and to connect to resources. LAJC partners with the hotline to receive the intake information.

There are two ICE detention centers in Virginia: Caroline Detention Facility (Bowling Green) and Farmville Detention Center (Farmville). Ms. Javed said these are intentionally rural, hard to get to places, creating a barrier to accessing representation, connecting with family, and gathering information for immigration cases. Since January, they have gotten sixteen people released on bond. Both facilities are at or near maximum capacity; there are reports of double bucking, sleeping on floors. Caroline started detaining women in December, which they were not doing before. They have heard increasing reports of complaints about conditions.

Ms. Czemerinski gave a Know Your Rights presentation (see attached slides), highlighting what Fourth and Fifth Amendment rights, types of warrants, and public and private spaces and how that impacts what ICE agents can do. She emphasized the importance for witnesses to write everything down that they see, because this may become important in later judicial processes.

Ms. Czemerinski talked about ways to support undocumented community members, such as having protocol for when there is ICE presence in your workplace, sharing resources (red/yellow cards, powers of attorneys, standby guardianship), accompanying them to court and ICE checkins, and helping individuals avoid scams. If the individual is in immigration proceedings, they can also request a full copy of their file from USCIS.

Ms. Javed said that they have seen a lot of scams, especially in Northern Virginia. She said that there is a lot of unauthorized practice of law, and the word notario means something different in Central America than it does here. They have also seen scams in which people impersonate ICE and ask for money. She provided some links to resources that can help avoid fraud and scams. She said that people can donate to a bond fund. She mentioned that sometimes when they win bond, it can be hard to get the money needed to get person released. The training presentation was followed by questions from the Commission and members of the public.

3. Approval of April Minutes

Upon motion by Commissioner Schwartz, seconded by Commissioner Prince, the Commission approved the minutes of the April meeting. 9 commissioners voted aye and 1 abstained.

4. Executive Committee

CPRB Updates

Commissioner Schwartz stated that City Council did not approve subpoena authority for the CPRB and did not give the CPRB its power to initiate investigations. They did not include an HRC seat on the CPRB, contrary to assurances received from multiple Council members. Chair Thompson reported that they knew one Commissioner resigned from the CPRB after the vote.

Vice Chair Palmer Johnson announced that, on May 29 at 7:00 pm, at Charles Houston Rec Center, NAACP will have a panel discussion about the CPRB and how it has evolved.

Chair Thompson asked commissioners to stay vigilant and do what they can do within their ordinance. Vice Chair Bendick asked if there is something that explicitly forbids the Commission from touching police issues relating to issues between the Police and community. Commissioner Schwartz stated that these issues will come to the Independent Police Auditor.

Commissioner Schwartz asked about police issues, such as hiring, mentioning a lawsuit where an officer received a substantial judgment. Chair Thompson noted that the Commission will still have jurisdiction over employment matters. He said the Commission was unaware of the lawsuit and emphasized the importance of understanding their position on the issue, at least acknowledging that a claim had been filed without delving into details. Vice Chair, Palmer Johnson, remarked that the Commission must be informed about this. Chair Thompson stated that the Commission should establish a method for communicating with the City. He stated that that there should be no confidentiality or legal obstacles preventing the City Attorney's Office from simply informing the Human Rights Commission that a case has been filed against regarding employment civil rights violations.

Chair Thompson mentioned the ordinance giving the Commission investigative authority and subpoena power. Acting Director McClure explained that the subpoena authority applies when a respondent in a case filed in the office is not complying with the office's request for information or position statement. She noted that this does not happen, because respondents do comply. She also explained that, former Director Kelleher had, years ago, attempted to get the court to issue a subpoena to gain compliance from a respondent, and it was rejected. The judge stated that evidence of significant efforts from the office to obtain voluntary compliance before the court would consider issuing a subpoena. Essentially, it is next to impossible to get. Acting Director McClure also explained to the Commission that they do not have direct investigative authority in an individual case filed with the office but do have power to investigate systemic issues.

Acting Director McClure said the Police Chief is updating the hate crime policy, and this could be an opportunity for the Commission to hear about that and talk about other issues, such as hiring and retention, and promotion in the Police Department. Chair Thompson stated that it would be a good idea to invite the new Police Chief to either the July or September meeting.

Alexandria Pride Festival

Chair Thompson reported that the Pride Festival is happening on June 28. The following Commissioners volunteered to stuff the table: Chair Thompson, Commissioner Prince, and Commissioner Pitek. Chair Thompson said that he talked to Erika Kleiner, LGBTQ+ Task Force

Coordinator, and she said that two weeks before the festival, the Police will run an assessment and at that time, they will decide if they are going to increase Police presence or not. As of right now, there has not been any increase in threats. Chair Thompson reported that the Commission is also going to have a petition sheet for the rainbow crosswalk in Del Ray.

5. Old Business & New Business

ACPS Student Newspaper proposed policy changes

Vic Chair Bendick talked about the ACPS student newspaper and said that, after they wrote articles regarding student transportation between campuses that the administration found embarrassing, it was decided to change policy to give the administration final veto power to censor what appears in the newspaper. The student newspaper fought back and got a lot of support from the community, including from the Mayor and multiple City Council members, every class in the school, and every student association in the school. When the new policy came up for approval, the School Board sent it back for reconsideration. There is a proposal on the table by the students from the newspaper that has been endorsed by a wide variety of people. Vice Chair Bendick drafted a letter from the Commission to the Superintendent and the School Board that states that the Commission supports and endorses the student's proposal. Commissioner Brunner will provide comments to Vice Chair Bendick to incorporate in the letter. Upon a motion by Vice Chair Bendick, seconded by Vice Chair Palmer Johnson, the Commission approved to send the letter with Commissioner Brunner's proposed changes.

Board Chairs Meeting

Chair Thompson reported that he attended the all-chairs meeting and said that the primary discussion was about the budget issues and the possibility of losing funding. He also added that he heard a lot of positive things about the Human Rights Commission's work.

Nominating Committee

Chair Thompson asked for volunteers to serve on the nominating committee. Commissioner Fratila and Commissioner Pitek will serve as the nominating committee.

6. Liaison Reports

Vice Chair Palmer Johnson reported that the Commission for Women had a presentation from LGBTQ Task Force Coordinator, Erika Kleiner, and another from Phil Caldwell, Center for Adult Services, about new special housing for people who have mental health disabilities. She reported that Mr. Caldwell is also asking for people who might be interested in serving on the Community Services Board. She also reported that the Commission elected a new officers. They are asking for volunteers to serve dinner at Carpenter Shelter on May 29, at 5:30 p.m.

Commissioner Prince reported that the ACPD heard from five guest speakers at their meeting, including Emergency Management Office staff, Fire Department staff, DCHS staff, and DOT Paratransit staff. DOT Paratransit staff requested support for more funding. Commissioner Schwartz asked if the Human Rights Commission could write a letter of support for Paratransit, too; Commissioner Prince gave the information of the contact person. She reported that they presented their slate for the election of the new officers, and they presented a new strategic plan. The ACPD also selected their winners for the Gerry Bertier and the John Duty Collins awards.

Commissioner Sylvanus reported that the Economic Opportunity Commission is focused on advocating for more on eviction prevention funding, childcare, early education programs, and

economic development initiatives. They met with Housing Department staff to discuss the 2040 Housing Master Plan; they also met with Matt Fitzgerald, Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, to discuss the funding with the CSBG (Community Service Block Grant) Program.

Commissioner Reeder reported that the Commission on Aging has worked with Erik Johnson, ARHA CEO, on the Ladrey Housing redevelopment and said that they think that they can come up with the money to do a complete renovation, which will require moving people out in very difficult situation. The Commission on Aging has expressed a lot of negatives about the yo-yoing of the residents. They also gave their annual awards last week.

8. **Public Comment**

There was a member of the public who discussed issues facing immigrants, trans people, and Palestinian activists.

9. Announcements/Adjournment

Acting Director McClure stated that she will keep the Commission updated on the Pride events. Chair Thompson suggested having a petition for a Del Ray rainbow crosswalk, so that they can try to get as many names as they can.

MOTION: Adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Fratila /Commissioner Prince PASSED unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 p.m.



Presentation for Alexandria Human Rights Commission

Rohmah Javed and Daniela Czemerinski Immigrant Justice Program, Legal Aid Justice Center

The information in this presentation is accurate as of May 20, 2025.



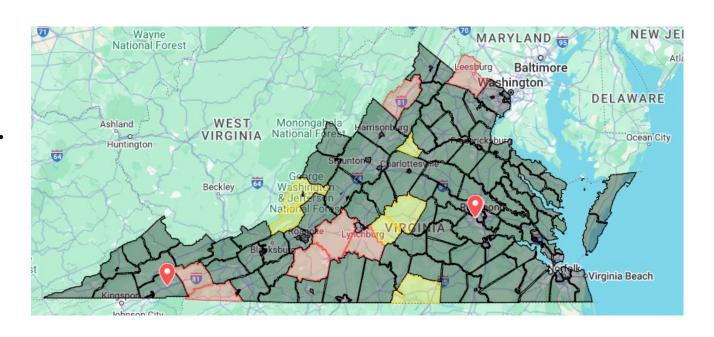
Agenda

- 1. LAJC's services for undocumented community members
- 2. Virginia Rapid Response Hotline
- 3. Resources
- 4. General Know Your Rights quick review
- 5. What can people do now?
- 6. Q&A



What are we currently seeing?

- More ICE arrests.
- More collaboration with localities (police and sheriff).
- More detentions.
- More deportations.
- More fraud and scam.





LAJC services for undocumented community members

Immigrant Justice Program

- Bond (any VA resident 200% of poverty line, as long as not represented, bond eligible, subject to capacity)
- Free legal consults to referrals from rapid response hotline (for Northen Va and central VA counties around Charlottesville)
- Other consults and legal services depending on location of client and team capacity (consults for Alx residents, possible rep, bc of grant; whether can be placed in GMU or UVA immigration clinic; etc.)
- Advocacy at local level and state level, community organizing campaigns

Housing & Consumer Justice

- Eviction prevention
- Consumer fraud cases

Health & Public Benefits

• Enrollment in Medicaid and other public benefits



"Raid Response"

 Provide legal consultations to anyone subject to an ICE raid in Northern Virginia, including: Fairfax, Falls Church, Herndon, Alexandria, Loudon, Prince William, Stafford County. Provide legal consultations to anyone subject to an ICE raid in Charlottesville, including: Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Nelson, Buckingham.

NOVA



Charlottesville



- Provide a "best practices" raid response toolkit + emergency preparedness resources to share with communities and advocates to implement.
- Share our resources and toolkits broadly.

The rest of Virginia





Rapid Response Hotline





(855) AYU-DAR1 2 9 8 - 3 2 7 1 LINEA DE AYUDA URGENTE INMIGRATORIA RED DE RESPUESTA RAPIDA EN VIRGINIA SI LA MIGRA (ICE) ESTA EN SU PUERTA ¡No abra! Llámenos por asistencia SI VE LA MIGRA (ICE) EN LA CALLE

¡No se acerque! Llámenos para verificar lo

*Unase a la red para defender familias

Guarde el silencio y no firme nada

que está pasando

EN TODOS CASOS

*Para situaciones urgentes tratando con ICE



Immigration Detention Centers

There are two ICE detention centers in Virginia:

- Caroline Detention Facility (located in Bowling Green, VA)
- Farmville Detention Center (located in Farmville, VA)

Use the ICE detainee locator to find a detained person: https://locator.ice.gov/

Legal Assistance:

Amica Center (MD/DC): https://amicacenter.org/get-help/ (202) 331-3329

Legal Aid Justice Center (VA/assistance with bond proceedings): (703) 778-3450



LAJC's Rapid Response Resources

WHO WE ARE WHAT WE DO HOUSING **IMMIGRATION** WORKPLACE **Tenants Rights Information** Rapid Response Toolkit YOUTH, FAMILY, & **SCHOOLS HEALTHCARE & PUBLIC** CRIMINAL LEGAL **BENEFITS** SYSTEM Special Education Expungement Fines and Fees **CONSUMER & MEDICAL** DEBT **Pretrial Justice**

HOME / WHAT WE DO / IMMIGRATION

IMMIGRATION RAPID RESPONSE TOOLKIT
PREPARING YOURSELF IN CASE OF AN IMMIGRATION
EMERGENCY





LAJC's Rapid Response Resources

On this page you will find **resources that will allow you to prevent and be prepared for immigration emergencies** such as raids, ICE visits to your home, detention, or risk of deportation. Use the menu below to navigate between resources.





LAJC's Rapid Response Resources

- Spanish language resources available reminding people of their rights when interacting with ICE
- Family preparedness documents:
 - Emergency planning documents (contacts, health info, etc.)
 - Power of attorneys for property and finances (must be signed and notarized)
 - Standby guardianship forms
- Red cards (reminders of what to say and do if ICE comes to the door)
 - Order or print your own here: https://www.ilrc.org/red-cards



The US Constitution provides the following rights/amendments to everyone living in the country (documented and undocumented):

The Fourth Amendment: Protects people from body searches, searches of their belongings, and unreasonable seizures by the government. Additionally, it establishes requirements for the issuance of warrants: warrants must be issued by a judge or magistrate, justified by probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and must particularly describe the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized. The Fourth Amendment, however, is not a guarantee against all searches and seizures, but only against those considered unreasonable under the law.

The Fifth Amendment: Contains the right not to self-incriminate and requires that any *person* facing loss of life, liberty or property receives due process. Due process applies to people in immigration court proceedings, and not just to U.S. citizens.

The protections of these amendments apply in different ways depending on the circumstances of an encounter with federal agents, such as: which agents (police, ICE, others), where (at home, on the street), what the outcome was (testimony or other evidence), and what type case is (criminal or immigration)



- Public vs. private spaces
- Fourth and fifth amendment protections apply to documented and undocumented people
- ICE is immigration police
 - o do not give them information that will harm or prejudice you
 - o i.e. showing them a passport from another country, consenting to search without a warrant

General Concepts: Types of Warrants

This is issued by DHS, NOT a court

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECU	URITY Warrant for Arrest of Alien
	File No.
	Date:
To: Any immigration officer authorized pu Immigration and Nationality Act and p Regulations, to serve warrants of arres	oart 287 of title 8, Code of Federal
I have determined that there is probable cause to is removable from the United States. This determined that the United States is the state of the United States.	
☐ the execution of a charging document to	initiate removal proceedings against the subject;
☐ the pendency of ongoing removal proceed	dings against the subject;
☐ the failure to establish admissibility subs	equent to deferred inspection;
□ biometric confirmation of the subject's ideatabases that affirmatively indicate, by the information, that the subject either lacks in is removable under U.S. immigration law; a	mselves or in addition to other reliable migration status or notwithstanding such status
☐ statements made voluntarily by the subjection reliable evidence that affirmatively indicate notwithstanding such status is removable under the status is	the subject either lacks immigration status or
YOU ARE COMMANDED to arrest and take in Immigration and Nationality Act, the above-nam	
minigration and variously Act, are above-half	Signed by an immigration officer, NOT a judge
	(Signature of Authorized Immigration Officer)
(Pr	inted Name and Title of Authorized Immigration Officer)
Certificate	of Service
reby certify that the Warrant for Arrest of Alien v	
	(Location)
(Name of Alien)	(Date of Service) , and the contents of this
ice were read to him or her in the(Lang	language.
Name and Signature of Officer	Name or Number of Interpreter (if applicable)

This is an ICE administrative warrant. It does NOT authorize immigration agents to enter your home!

Form I-200 (Rev. 09/16)

This is a judicial search warrant. It DOES authorize agents to enter your home.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT | Issued by a COURT.

for the

Eastern District of Cattfornia

In the Matter of the Search of)
(Briefly describe the property to be searched)
or literary the person by rome and address)) Case N
540 Oak Avenue	,
Devia, California 95616)

SEARCH AND SEIZURE WARRANT

	SEARC	HAND SEIZORE WA	THE PARTY OF THE P		
To:	Any authorized law enforcement offic	er	2: 11 - 5	W-0161 EFB	
(habout)	An application by a federal law enforce following person or property located in the beautiful that the property to be more ATTACHED HERETO	the EASTERN	District of	CALIFORNIA	
SÉE	The person or property to be searched, to be selector. ATTACHEMNT B. ATTACHED HERETO I find that the affidavit(s), or any record	AND INCORPORATED BY	d to concest (identify REFERENCE	the person or describe the	
prope	YOU ARE COMMANDED to execu	re this warrant on or before	5-9-	to arroad 1.4 days	
c	I in the daytime 6:00 a.m. to 10 p.m.	at any time in the day established.		asonable cause has been	
	Unless delayed notice is authorized be to the person from whom, or from whose where the property was taken.				
invent	The officer executing this warrant, or or ory as required by law and promptly retu				

(Name)

Ountil, the facts justifying, the later specific date of

Date and time issued: 4-25-2011 9+-10: 00 4M May Company

Signed by a JUDGE.

City and state: SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA

EDMUND F. BRENNAN, U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE



What can ICE do?	Public Spaces Lobbies, waiting rooms, parking lots	Private Spaces Private rooms for employees-only; offices
Enter the space	ICE DOES NOT need an administrative warrant nor a judicial warrant to enter a public space	ICE needs a judicial warrant, signed by a judge or magistrate, to enter, unless someone gives authorization for ICE to enter.
Search a space	ICE DOES NOT need an administrative warrant nor a judicial warrant to search public space	ICE <u>does need</u> a judicial warrant, signed by a magistrate or judge, to search a private space , unless someone gives authorization for ICE to enter the space.
Arrest someone in a space	 To arrest someone, ICE needs: 1) An administrative warrant, or 2) Probable cause that someone doesn't have immigration status or has committed a crime 	After entering a private space (with a judicial warrant or authorization), ICE needs the same as what is needed in a public space to arrest someone.

This information is provided for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. You should consult with an attorney regarding your specific situation.



What can community leaders and service providers do?

Ways to support undocumented community members:

- Make a plan and a protocol for ICE presence in your workplaces
- Share resources:
 - red/yellow cards,
 - POAs, Standby guardianship
- Accompaniment to court, ICE check in, immigration court
- Helping individuals avoid scams
- What if someone is detained
 - o EOIR hotline / online case status check (immigration court dates/status)
 - ICE detainee locator (locating a detainee in ICE custody)
 - USCIS FOIA request (request a full copy of an immigration file)
 - La Colectiva bond fund



Avoiding Immigration Fraud and Scams

- Attorneys must be licensed to practice law in the U.S.; notaries are not attorneys.
- Represented parties should understand what must be done in their cases and why, before proceeding.
- Represented parties should understand a document before signing it and should never sign forms with inaccurate information.
- Attorneys should provide copies all applications and documents in a case.
- Represented parties should request a receipt with each payment for legal services.
- Represented parties should seek help if their attorney threatens to harm them or their immigration case.
- Represented parties have the right to end the representation and to be informed about their case.



Resources to Help Avoid Fraud and Scams

- Pro Brono Legal Service Providers:
- https://www.justice.gov/eoir/list-pro-bono-legal-service-providers
- DOJ Recognized organizations and accredited representatives:
- https://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognized-organizations-and-accredited-representatives-roster-state-and-city (or call 703-305-9029)
- Search American Immigration Lawyers Association for attorneys (AILA): https://ailalawyer.com/ (or call1-800-954-0254)
- To check if the person is licensed in your state: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_services/flh-home/flh-lawyer-licensing/



Action items to get prepared

- Create an emergency plan: with churches, neighbors, community groups, and families about what to do in case of:
 - An ICE raid
 - The detention of a friend or loved one
 - Urgent risk of deportation
- Noncitizens should have all their immigration documents organized and in one place. To request immigration documents, they can complete a FOIA request here: https://www.uscis.gov/es/registros/solicitar-expedientes-a-traves-de-la-ley-de-libertad-de-informacion-y-la-ley-de-privacidad
- Make a plan: examples on LAJC website
 - Emergency planning toolkit
 - Powers of Attorney (property and finances)
 - Standby Guardianship (care of children)
- Know status of immigration case
 - EOIR case hotline / online system
 - https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/en/
 - USCIS FOIA for entire immigration case file ("A-file")
 - https://www.uscis.gov/records/request-records-through-the-freedom-of-information-act-or-privacy-act



Ways to provide support: bond funds

• Free them all Virginia





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Campaign: Virginia for Immigrant Families

How to be a volunteer:







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Questions?