

Finding Aid to the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition Records

North Dakota Human Rights Coalition

North Dakota Human Rights Coalition records, 2000-2002

.4 linear feet

Collection number: Mss 327

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OVERVIEW

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

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HISTORY

The North Dakotans for a Human Rights Commission was formed on March 22, 2000, in a meeting at the Catholic Family Services Conference Room, 2537 S. University Drive, Fargo, North Dakota. The stated objectives of the organization were, first, to gain an understanding of the history and need for a human rights commission; second, to form a group of North Dakotans willing to advocate for the establishment of a human rights commission; third, to motivate community leaders and develop key tactics for influence. Those involved in this project believe that there are identified problems with human rights violations in the state, and that an official state human rights commission would be the best method for addressing those problems and others to come.

At the beginning of this organization, the City of Fargo was working on a human rights commission, and the North Dakota Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Human Rights endorsed the need for a North Dakota state commission. The principal obstacle to this proposal was that the majority of North Dakota legislators had preferred to place human rights concerns as a portfolio within the North Dakota Department of Labor, whereas North Dakotans for a Human Rights Commission believed this solution inadequate, lacking sufficient visibility and clout. Much of the activity of the organization during these three years has centered on discussions and negotiations with the Labor Commissioner and legislative committees, and with the submission of legislative bill drafts. The difference of opinion continued throughout the period of these records, which constitute a deposit of the documents from the first three years.

North Dakotans for a Human Rights Commission changed its name to North Dakota Human Rights Coalition on June 13, 2001. The organization was ongoing on May 9, 2002, when this collection ends. The body of records offers a good study of the importance of volunteer citizens' associations petitioning government entities, and how they go about it.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

A group of concerned citizens originating with the Fargo-Moorhead Human Rights Commission believed that the entire state of North Dakota should come under the care of a similar organization. They organized themselves to contact other concerned people in the state, and to develop information for their own further education in this area, and the education of citizens around the state. Much of their work was in making known to state legislators and administrative people why this project needs to go forward. They wished to change the legislature's mind about leaving the subject with the North Dakota Labor Commissioner in favor of establishing a separate commission for the sole purpose of the protection of human rights. Some of the material involves correspondence and live discussions with the Labor Commissioner in which each side expressed its views and concerns.

The North Dakota Human Rights Coalition records contains the series of meeting minutes from March 22, 2000, through May 9, 2002, a series of e-mail correspondence from August 2000 through July 2001, and a correspondence series, divided into general correspondence and two important sub-series: discussions with North Dakota Labor Commissioner Mark Bachmeier, and correspondence and documents relating to the successful request for a grant from the Bremer Foundation. There follows a series of newspaper articles and a legislative activities series concerning legislative contacts, bill drafts, and house and senate bills. Finally, there is a subject file series of significant individual topic documents.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Box Listing
1/1	Finding aid and historical material

Meeting Minutes Series

1/2 Meeting agendas and minutes from March 22, 2000, to May 9, 2002

E-mail Series

1/3 August 2000 to July 2001

Correspondence Series

1/4 General correspondence, September 26, 2000, to October 30, 2001

1/5 Labor Commissioner Bachmeier and the North Dakota Department of Labor
correspondence, June 28, 2001 to November 29, 2001

1/6 Bremer Foundation grant, correspondence and documents (1) n.d.,
(2) October 17, 2001, (3) November 2, 2001

Newspaper Articles Series

1/7 January 5, 2000, to May 15, 2002

Legislative Activity Series

1/8 Legislative and government relations, October 9, 2000, to December 21, 2000

1/9 Legislative bill drafts, November 2000 to February 7, 2001

1/10 House Bill 1315, January 25, 2001, to March 8, 2001

1/11 Senate Bill 2217, January 2001 to January 31, 2001

Subject File Series

1/12 Civil Rights Enforcement in North Dakota (book), 1999

1/13 North Dakota Department of Labor booklets and flyer, April 7, 2000

1/14 Fact sheets, October 2000 to January 2001

1/15 Interviews with politicians, 2000

1/16 North Dakota Human Rights Coalition, membership lists, contacts

1/17 Pros/cons: a human rights division, Dept. of Labor; recommendations; plans of action