

equal rights which result in equal treatment without regard to sex, race, color, creed, national origin or ancestry; assuring fair and equal treatment under law to all citizens; protecting the rights of all persons to enjoy public accommodations and facilities, and to receive equal treatment from all holders of licenses, contracts or privileges from the County; and maintaining equality of opportunity for employment and advancement in the County government.

Information in the hands of any department or agency shall be furnished to the Commission or to the Secretary when requested except for criminal investigation reports and individual personnel records. Upon receipt of recommendations, in writing, from the Commission, each department or agency shall submit a reply, in writing, indicating the disposition of an action taken with regard to such recommendations.

The Commission shall advise and consult with the County Executive and the County Council on all matters involving racial, religious or ethnic prejudice or discrimination, and recommend such legislative and executive action as it may deem appropriate to effectuate the policy of this law. The Commission shall submit an annual report to the County Executive and County Council which shall be published.

12.602—Cooperation with Civic Groups and Government Agencies.

The Commission shall invite and enlist the cooperation of racial and ethnic groups, community organizations, business organizations, fraternal and benevolent societies, veterans' organizations, professional and technical organizations, and other groups in the County carrying on its work. The Commission may aid in the formation of local community groups in such neighborhoods as it may deem necessary or desirable to carry out specific programs designed to lessen tensions or improve understanding in the community. The Commission shall cooperate with state and federal agencies whenever it deems such action appropriate in effectuating the policy of this law. The Commission shall counsel any citizen whose human rights are alleged to have been illegally violated and shall, if warranted, notify the appropriate law enforcement agencies subject to the provisions of subsection 12.605.

12.603—Research and Publications.

The Commission shall undertake studies of tensions, practices of discrimination, and acts of prejudice against any group because of sex, race, religion or ethnic origin; carry on research and obtain factual data to ascertain the status and treatment of racial, religious and ethnic groups in the County, and the best means of progressively improving human relations in the entire County, and issue such publications and studies, except as hereinafter provided, and make such recommendations to the County Executive and County Council as in its judgment will effectuate the policy of this law.

12.604—Commission Meetings.

The Commission shall hold public meetings once a month at a time and place of its choosing. At least three-fourths of the monthly meetings shall be held in the evening after 7:00 P.M.

12.605—Complaints.

Any person claiming to be aggrieved by an alleged discrimination occurring in Howard County on the basis of sex, race, creed, color or national origin, may make, sign and file with the Commission a complaint,