

IMMIGRATION RIGHTS COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 1, 1998

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The Immigration Rights Commission meeting was held Thursday October 1, 1998, in the Board of Supervisors Legislative chambers at 401 Van Ness Avenue, Room 404 in San Francisco.

<b>Members Present</b>	Renato Ecarma Rene Saucedo Thou Ny	Nati Ramirez Philip Nguyen Marie Mallare	Isabel Huie Richard Ow	Anita Friedman Penelope Chronis
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<b>Members Absent</b>	Lee Sprague	Fidel Jiminez	Nam Thai	Martin Schenker
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<b>Others Present</b>	John Young, Immigration Special Assistant to the Executive Director of DHS Thomas Schiltgen, District Director of INS Rosemary Fan, Community Relations Officer of INS Tonji Walker, Secretary
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<b>Roll Call</b>	Rene Saucedo called the meeting to order at 4:40pm, noting that the Commission was present with the exceptions of Lee Sprague, Fidel Jiminez, Nam Thai and Martin Schenker.
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<b>Agenda</b>	On motion by Rene Saucedo, seconded and carried, the Commission adopted the agenda as posted.
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<b>Minutes</b>	The minutes of the September 3, 1998 meeting were adopted as circulated.
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<b>INS</b>	Thomas Schiltgen, District Director of INS addressed the Commission stating that he had met with the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to help reach an understanding of INS' dual responsibility for service and enforcement.
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Mr. Schiltgen reported that ½ of the INS staff is bilingual. They have interpreters and a very diverse staff. 95% of applicants are required to speak English. Only the elderly are exempt. The applications and claims forms are on line. CBO's will be provided with software as well as training and information session. CBO's should Contact Rosemary Fan regarding these matters.

It has also been determined that there is a lack of knowledge around citizenship issues.

INS is severely backlogged. In September of 1998 they were still processing applications from September and October of 1997.

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Over the next 5 months INS will engage the community with information.

The commission can help the INS by helping the community to understand what INS does.

**Public**

**Comment** There was no public comment.

**No. Calif.  
Citizenship  
Project**

Ms. Lina Avidan, Coordinator, of the Northern California Citizenship Project addressed the Commission and identified key contact persons and helpful information. Ms. Avidan started her presentation by stating that the INS has Web page that is very informative and can be located under the U.S. Department of Justice. Janet Seldon is the Director of Volunteer Legal Services and can be reached at 777-5761 x19. Eric Cohen is the contact person for the Immigrant Legal Resource Center and can be reached at 255-9499 x 264.

Ms. Avidan also informed the Commission that George Soros, a Hungarian philanthropist granted a consortium of 12 Bay Area counties a combined \$5 million dollars towards citizenship efforts. Each county had to match their dedicated amount and each county has a liason who attends monthly meetings with the grantees.

**Public**

**Comment** There was no public comment.

**Committees:**

**The Immigrant Access Committee** suggested that they provide refreshments at the public hearings held in immigrant areas. They also recommended that they meet with City departments to assure immigrant access and make recommendations regarding educational materials.

**The Policy & Legislation Committee** agreed to meet Tuesday before the standard Commission meetings. This committee asked that local, State, County and Non profit organizations be informed and on the IRC's mailing list in order to coordinate information. It was also determined that at times there would be a need to meet with some of the other committees regarding policy & legislation. The policy & legislation Committee hopes to have more say in Local & State Policy & Legislation and address the Board of Supervisors.

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**The Welfare Reform Committee** met and discussed what the City's role should be to mitigate adverse effects of the Welfare Reform law in San Francisco and what funding role should the City play in mitigating these gaps. Proposed a 4 point policy to extend the immigrant population in San Francisco. (Handout)

**The Citizenship Committee** would like to establish a working relationship with INS and focus on Naturalization. (Handout)

**Public Comment** There was no public comment

**Budget** A draft budget proposal for start-up of staffing was presented to the Commission and adopted as circulated. John Young will present the budget to the Board of Supervisors.

**Public Comment** There was no public comment

**Immigrant Pride Day** Immigrant Pride Day was held on October 4, 1998 and someone from the Immigration Rights Commission should be present to represent the Commission.

**General Discussion** Following discussion, the Commission voted to adopt a resolution presented by Commissioner Saucedo supporting the underlying principles of the October 4, 1998 Immigrant Pride Day.

**Public Comment** There was no public comment

**Next Meeting**

Can we put timeframes on discussions for future agenda's? It was identified that handouts should be given prior to meetings.

**Public Comment** There was no public comment

**Adjourn** There being no further business Rene Saucedo adjourned the meeting at 7:00pm