

Minutes of the April 13, 2026 meeting of the Immigrant Rights Commission

Date and Time

April 13, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

Location

- San Francisco City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 416
- [View the meeting online](#)
- Call in to listen:
 - 415-655-0001
 - Access code: 2660 415 3943 / Webinar password: 2026

Overview

Members of the Immigrant Rights Commission will attend this meeting in person. Members of the public are invited to observe the meeting in-person or remotely using Webex or by calling the phone number and entering the access code above. Everyone attending the meeting in person is encouraged to wear a mask throughout the meeting. Each member of the public attending in person may address the Commission for up to two minutes. Public speakers using consecutive interpretation assistance will be allowed to speak for twice the amount of time. For each agenda item, there is one comment per person. Members of the public may also submit public comment by email to: civic.engagement@sfgov.org.

Agenda items

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Souza called the meeting to order at 5:41 p.m.

Present: Chair Souza, Vice Chair Chaudhary (5:45 p.m.), Commissioners Abdou, Aljiran, How, Kennelly, Ng, Padilla, Paz (left at 7:30 p.m.), Ruiz (left at 7:16 p.m.), Traore.

Not present: Commissioners Fara (excused), Obregon (excused), Ratanapakdee (excused), Wang (excused).

OCEIA staff present: Director Rivas, Clerk Shore, Spanish Language Specialist Cosenza, Assistant Sarabia.

2. Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgment

We, the San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission, acknowledge that we are on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone who are the original inhabitants of the San Francisco Peninsula. As the indigenous stewards of this land and in accordance with their traditions, the

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Ramaytush Ohlone have never ceded, lost nor forgotten their responsibilities as the caretakers of this place, as well as for all peoples who reside in their traditional territory. As guests, we recognize that we benefit from living and working on their traditional homeland. We wish to pay our respects by acknowledging the ancestors, elders and relatives of the Ramaytush Community and by affirming their sovereign rights as First Peoples.

Chair Souza read the land acknowledgment statement.

3. Announcements (Director Rivas)

(Information)

This item allows Director Rivas to provide a brief announcement on community resources.

This item was tabled until Director Rivas arrived and was combined with Staff Reports (Item 10).

4. General Public Comment

This item allows members of the public to address the Commission on matters that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission and that do not appear on today's agenda.

Chair Souza called for public comment and Commissioner Aljiran volunteered. Chair Souza and Deputy City Attorney Gerchow discussed whether a commissioner could provide a public comment.

Commissioner Aljiran stated that she had proposed a neutral educational item on the CEO and billionaire tax measures, and has asked Chair Souza to state her conflict of interest. Commissioner Aljiran stated that it is the Commission's right to ask questions and hold a discussion, and noted that a recent email from the City Attorney's Office said they could not do that.

5. Commendation of Richard Whipple (Commissioner Ng)

(Information)

This item allows Commissioner Ng to present Richard Whipple with a [commendation](#) from the Immigrant Rights Commission recognizing Richard Whipple for his contributions to San Francisco's immigrant communities, and allows Richard Whipple to provide brief remarks.

Commissioner Ng read the Commission's resolution commending Richard Whipple for his contributions to San Francisco's immigrant communities. Richard Whipple made brief remarks highlighting the duty to keep the City accountable and preserve San Francisco's values of belonging.

Chair Souza called for public comment, and three members of the public spoke.

1. Lilian, a DreamSF senior fellow, expressed appreciation for the Commission's recognition of Richard Whipple.

2. The second speaker thanked the Commission for making space to recognize Richard Whipple and asked the Commission to hold people accountable.

3. Angelina Romano thanked the Commission and asked them to take Richard Whipple's words to heart, expressed the loss that she felt after his departure, and noted that he thought outside of the box to solve problems.

Commissioner How, Commissioner Abdou, Vice Chair Chaudhary, Commissioner Kennelly, Commissioner Paz, Commissioner Traore, Commissioner Ruiz, and Chair Souza each expressed their appreciation for Richard Whipple.

6. Action Item: Approval of previous minutes

(Discussion/Action)

Discussion and possible action to approve the minutes of the Immigrant Rights Commission's Full Commission meeting of March 9, 2026.

[IRC Full Commission meeting minutes 3.9.26](#)

Vice Chair Chaudhary motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner How. Chair Souza called for public comment and there was no comment on this item. The minutes were approved.

7. Chair's Reports (Chair Souza)

(Information)

This item allows Chair Souza to provide brief updates on the work of the Executive Committee and other announcements, including the Awards Committee.

Chair Souza provided brief updates on planning for the Immigrant Leadership Awards, the approval of the letter on immigrant priorities, and the work of the Executive Committee. Commissioners Paz and Padilla provided an update on planning for an upcoming hearing on public health, and Vice Chair Chaudhary provided an update on follow-up actions from the Commission's October 2025 resolution. Chair Souza called for public comment and there was no comment on this item.

8. Information/Discussion/Possible Action Item: Overview of the S.F. City Attorney's Political Activity Memo and Potential Legal Implications of Adding a Presentation and Discussion Regarding a Pending Local Ballot Measure to a Future IRC Agenda (Deputy City Attorney Michael Gerchow)

(Information/Discussion/Possible Action)

Commissioner Aljiran has asked the Commission to consider placing a presentation and discussion regarding a pending local ballot measure on a future agenda. This item is only meant to allow discussion around the decision to place a pending ballot measure on the agenda and not to discuss a specific ballot measure.

[February 2026 Political Activity Memo](#)

Chair Souza noted that procedurally, when items are introduced, they are submitted first to the Executive Committee, and then sent to the Full Commission. However, because of Chair Souza's concerns about the ethical implications, she decided to bring this discussion to the Full Commission for Commissioners to vote on whether to place the item on a future agenda.

Deputy City Attorney Gerchow noted that the question in today's meeting is whether a Commission can agendaize a ballot measure. He provided an overview of the general prohibition, exceptions, and questions that arise around this topic, and answered questions from Commissioners. Commissioner Padilla motioned to table this item, seconded by Commissioner How. Chair Souza called for public comment and there was no comment on this item. The Commission voted to table the item, with eight Commissioners voting in favor and one Commissioner (Commissioner Abdou) opposed. Commissioners Paz and Ruiz had left the meeting early.

9. Discussion/Possible Action Item: Proposed Letter Urging the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to Take Action re: Potential SFUSD Cuts to Newcomer Services (Commissioners Padilla and Paz)

(Discussion/Possible Action)

This item allows Commissioners Padilla and Paz to present a draft letter urging the Mayor or the Board of Supervisors or both to take action re: potential cuts to SFUSD's newcomer services, and allows Commissioners to discuss and take possible action.

[Draft IRC letter on SFUSD](#)

Commissioner Padilla provided an overview of the letter and answered questions from Commissioners. Commissioner Ng suggested providing a copy of the letter to the Board of Education, and Commissioner Padilla agreed. Commissioner How motioned to approve the letter, seconded by Commissioner Abdou. Chair Souza called for public comment and there was no comment on this item. The letter was approved.

10. Staff Reports (Director Rivas)

(Information)

This item allows Director Rivas to provide brief updates on activities and announcements.

Director Rivas provided updates on the Immigrant Leadership Awards, layoffs impacting OCEIA's Community Ambassadors Program, and the San Francisco Immigrant Forum's upcoming webinar on health access.

11. Old and New Business

(Information)

This item allows Commissioners to provide updates on items the Commission has previously

discussed, and to introduce new agenda items for future consideration by the Commission.

Commissioner Aljiran noted that she wrote a draft statement on the war in West Asia that was not included on today's agenda, shared about her personal experience growing up impacted by war, and expressed concerns regarding the Commission Chair's role in the matter. Director Rivas reminded Commissioners not to personalize comments to a specific commissioner. Regarding procedure, Director Rivas said it is the practice of this Commission to send an item to the Executive Committee first before moving it forward to the Full Commission. He noted that the item on the war in West Asia appeared on the agenda of the last Executive Committee meeting, but no draft was available at the time and no action was taken.

Commissioner Abdou stated that she can connect Director Rivas with the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) by email to plan for a future presentation.

Commissioner Abdou proposed that the Commission issue a statement or resolution in support of AB-2017 (Haney) to make Eid a state holiday.

Commissioner Abdou expressed the need for Commissioners to be more educated on their roles and what they can and cannot do as Commissioners.

Commissioner Padilla proposed holding a discussion on how to engage on policy and policy analysis as a Commission. She proposed this as a discussion item only.

Commissioner Aljiran proposed an item of personal testimony to allow her to speak.

Commissioner Ng proposed that the Commission issue a statement or resolution on birthright citizenship.

Commissioner Ng thanked OCEIA Language Access and Policy Manager Ana De Carolis and OCEIA staff for their help with the Police Commission's language access policy.

12. Adjournment

Chair Souza adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.