



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO IMMIGRANT RIGHTS COMMISSION

**San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission
Full Commission Meeting
San Francisco City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 416
May 12, 2025 at 5:30 pm PDT**

Overview: Members of the 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 the time.

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, Commissioners Abdou, Fara, Kennelly (6:08 p.m.), Ng, Paz, Ratanapakdee, Ruiz, Wang (5:54 p.m.).

Not present: Commissioners Gaime, Obregon (excused), Senghor.

OCEIA staff present: Director Rivas, Clerk Shore, Assistant Sarabia, Language Access Supervisor Ruiz, Spanish Language Specialist Cosenza, Chinese Language Specialist Wong.

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 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)*

a. Interpretation Announcement

This item allows Director Rivas to provide a brief announcement about interpretation services for today's meeting.

Director Rivas provided an announcement about how to access interpretation services for

today's meeting in Spanish, Cantonese, and Arabic, and interpreters repeated the announcement in each language.

b. Community Resource Announcement

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

Director Rivas provided a brief announcement on the San Francisco Immigrant Forum (sf.gov/immigrants), where community members can access information about immigrant services and resources in San Francisco.

c. Officer Elections Announcement

This item allows Director Rivas to congratulate Commission Chair Sarah Souza and Commission Vice Chair Kudrat Chaudhary on their election, and to thank Chair Emerita Celine Kennelly for her leadership as chair of the Commission.

Director Rivas congratulated Chair Souza and Vice Chair Chaudhary on their elections.

d. Recognition of Commissioner Elahe Enssani

This item allows Director Rivas and Commissioners to recognize Commissioner Elahe Enssani for her many years of service on the Commission.

Director Rivas recognized Commissioner Enssani for her 20 years of service as an Immigrant Rights Commissioner.

e. Reappointment Hearings for Board-Appointed Commissioners

This item allows the Director to discuss Commissioners up for reappointment.

Director Rivas reminded Commissioners to re-apply for their seats on the Commission, and invited members of the public to apply to serve on the Commission.

4. General Public Comment

This item is to allow 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.

1. David Pilpel of the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force stated that the Task Force wants to ensure that bodies comply with the Sunshine Ordinance, and reminded Commissioners that every agenda item requires opening public comment, including Agenda Item 3 on today's agenda (Announcements).

2. Susan George, CEO of the Intelligent Advocacy Network (IAN), said her organization recently submitted a complaint to the Department of Justice asserting that the Council on American Islamic Relations California had engaged in financial mismanagement. She noted that CAIR's founder and current national executive director declared that he was in support of the Hamas movement, and that in 2018, the FBI formally severed ties with CAIR.

3. Matthew Finklestein, a founding board member of the Intelligent Advocacy Network (IAN), stated that CAIR's leadership has celebrated acts of terror, including the attacks of October 7, 2023, and he urged the Commission to recommend a full review of CAIR California's financial and ideological conduct, and advise the City to pause partnerships and funding until the DOJ's investigation is complete.

4. Azeen ZiaEbrahimi discussed California state bills including the importance of Assembly Bill 91, State and local agencies: demographic data (Harabedian). She said that her father was deported in 1979, and her grandfather was deported shortly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and she is afraid other people may be deported soon.

5. Action Item: Approval of previous minutes

(Discussion/Action)

Discussion and possible action to approve the minutes of the Immigrant Rights Commission's Full Commission meetings of April 14, 2025.

Commissioner Abdou made a motion to adopt the minutes of April 14, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Fara. Chair Souza called for public comment, and there was no public comment on this item. The minutes were adopted.

[Minutes from the IRC's April 14, 2025 Full Commission meeting](#)

6. Discussion/Action Item: Expected Travel Ban (Commissioner Fara)

- a. Presentation on Expected Travel Ban (Spojmie Nasiri, Law Office of Spojmie Nasiri, PC, and national board member of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR)

(Introduced by Commissioner Fara)

(Information/Discussion)

This item allows invited speaker Spojmie Nasiri to provide an overview of the federal administration's plans for a travel ban, lessons learned from the previous travel ban, what community members need to know, and what the Commission can do.

Chair Souza introduced the Immigrant Rights Commission's hearing on the expected travel ban, and Commissioner Fara stated that the purpose of the hearing is to learn about plans for the expected ban, to hear from community members, and to formally oppose the reinstatement of a travel ban.

Spojmie Nasiri provided an overview of the impact of the previous travel ban (2017-2021) and provided an update on the travel ban proposed for 2025. She answered questions from Commissioners on how nationals of other countries could be impacted, and what actions the Immigrant Rights Commission and the City can take. She suggested that the Commission help build a coalition of organizations, find ways to support detained individuals, and educate community members to counter misinformation, including through in-language Know Your Rights information and legal services. Director Rivas discussed the community-led Rapid Response Network, which connects individuals with immediate legal support when they have an interaction with immigration authorities. He has shared information with the San Francisco International Airport (SFO) and provided trainings to their staff. Ms. Nasiri also recommended connecting with the San Francisco Bar Association.

Chair Souza thanked the speaker and invited members of the public to make comment.

1. Michael Pappas, executive director of the San Francisco Interfaith Council, thanked the Immigrant Rights Commission for holding this hearing, pledged the support of the city's faith communities in combatting discrimination against immigrants, and urged the Commission to support the resolution.

2. David Pilpel of the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force asked the Commission to post the speaker's presentation. He suggested that the Commission ask the Director to follow up in writing about what resources the City has and can make available, and how to strengthen partnerships with SFO, in order to help educate those who come to San Francisco about their rights and provide updates on what they need to know.

3. Susan George, CEO of the Intelligent Advocacy Network, thanked the Commission for holding this hearing and allowing diverging opinions. She discussed the DOJ Accreditation Program that allows non-profit organizations to provide legal services to help asylum seekers, and said that one of these organizations, CAIR-California, has potentially misused taxpayer dollars and is led by people who publicly support Hamas.

4. Annette Wong, managing director of programs for Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), described the travel ban as a form of racial, ethnic and religious exclusion. She

noted that many Asian Americans have fled their countries of origin for safety and the opportunity to build a better life, and urged the Commission to vote in support of the resolution.

5. Ivy, who spoke in Cantonese with an interpreter, said she immigrated to San Francisco from China 30 years ago. She said the travel ban does not enhance safety; it increases tensions and divisions. She said she hoped everyone will oppose the travel ban, and ensure that the United States continues to uphold the values of inclusion and liberty.

6. Christina, who spoke in Cantonese with an interpreter, said she is an outreach specialist with Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA). She said many residents are worried about traveling abroad, and said the travel ban would disproportionately harm families. She called on San Francisco to defend immigrant and diverse communities and stand firm against any travel ban.

7. Annie, who spoke in Cantonese with an interpreter, said the travel ban would increase fear among community members, especially those who face language barriers. She said the travel ban would lead people of color to be targeted and profiled, and urged the Commission to oppose the ban.

8. Ah Yee, who spoke in Cantonese with an interpreter, described herself as an immigrant and a parent. She said she is concerned about the erosion of human rights, the rule of law, and the values of diversity, and encouraged the Commission to oppose the travel ban.

9. Shanti Elise Prasad, advocacy manager for Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) who spoke on behalf of the Stop AAPI Hate Coalition, voiced support for passing a resolution condemning any future travel ban. She said the travel ban could impact nearly 168,000 people from Asian and Pacific Islander countries each year. A report by Stop AAPI Hate illustrates a link between anti-immigrant policies and anti-AAPI hate incidents. She said the ban would make all communities of color less safe, regardless of immigration status.

10. Matthew Finklestein of the Intelligent Advocacy Network said the Immigrant Rights Commission should be discerning in its partnerships and should not feature organizations such as CAIR California.

11. Muhammad Yasir, the son of an immigrant family, called on San Francisco to stay united and continue to protect immigrant communities.

Chair Souza and Commissioner Fara thanked members of the public for their participation.

b. Proposed Resolution on Travel Bans (Commissioner Fara)
(Discussion/Action)

This item allows Commissioner Fara to propose issuing a resolution condemning any future travel ban. The Executive Committee edited Commissioner Fara's draft resolution at its March 26, 2025 meeting and voted to move this item forward to the Full Commission.

Commissioner Fara presented an overview of the proposed resolution condemning any future travel ban and invited Commissioners to make suggested edits. Vice Chair Chaudhary and Commissioner Ng made suggested edits to the draft resolution and Commissioner Fara agreed. Commissioner Abdou motioned to issue the resolution as amended, seconded by Commissioner Wang.

Chair Souza called for public comment on this item.

1. David Pilpel of the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force made three suggested edits to the resolution.

Chair Souza invited Director Rivas to provide guidance before the Commission's vote. Director Rivas noted that Commissioners may not address public commenters directly. If they wish to include the amendments from the public comment, they must make another motion.

Commissioner Paz motioned to issue the resolution as amended with the five suggested edits, seconded by Vice Chair Chaudhary. The motion passed with all 10 Commissioners present voting in favor.

Chair Souza thanked everyone for their participation in the hearing.

7. Awards Committee Reports
(Information)

This item allows Awards Committee Co-Chairs Chaudhary and Obregon to provide an update on the 2025 Immigrant Leadership Awards. The event is scheduled for June 9, 2025 at San Francisco City Hall.

Vice Chair Chaudhary provided an update on the Awards Committee's work, and Director Rivas encouraged Commissioners to invite guests to the Immigrant Leadership Awards event on June 9, 2025.

Chair Souza called for public comment on this item.

1. A member of the public asked where immigrants can get help in San Francisco.

Chair Souza said the Commission would follow up with the individual.

8. Old and New Business *(Information)*

This item is to allow Commissioners to provide updates on items the Commission has previously discussed, and to introduce new agenda items for future consideration by the Commission.

Commissioner Paz suggested inviting the City Attorney to a future Commission meeting to provide updates on his work.

Commissioner Fara and Vice Chair Chaudhary provided updates on the small businesses they highlighted as part of the Commission's small business resolution.

Chair Souza said she will introduce a resolution on affordable housing at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Chair Souza called for public comment on this item.

1. A member of the public asked about resources for immigrant-owned small businesses.

Chair Souza noted that Commissioners may not respond to public comment, but will follow up with him after the hearing.

9. Adjournment

Chair Souza thanked the public, OCEIA staff, and all Commissioners for their participation, and adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m.