



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois Celebrates Human Rights Day

December marks the 45th anniversary of the Illinois Human Rights Act

CHICAGO – Today, the [Illinois Department of Human Rights \(IDHR\)](#) and the [Illinois Human Rights Commission \(IHRC\)](#) commemorated International Human Rights Day with a celebration of the 45th anniversary of the [Illinois Human Rights Act \(IHRA or Act\)](#).

The celebration includes joint outreach and remarks at a [Chicago History Museum event](#) on 100 years of LGBTQIA+ rights activism provided in partnership with the Gerber/Hart Library and Archives. IDHR will also celebrate at an All-Staff meeting with employee recognition awards in Chicago and Springfield and through educational content on social media.

Inspired by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the IHRA was signed into law by Governor James R. Thompson on Dec. 6, 1979, establishing the IDHR and the IHRC as the state agencies responsible for enforcing the IHRA. The IHRA now prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, financial credit, and education on the basis of more than 20 protected classes. Those categories include race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability. Recent additions include anti-discrimination protections in employment for conviction record and work authorization status and in housing for source of income and immigration status.

“The Illinois Human Rights Act provides one of the most comprehensive sets of human rights protections in the country,” said **IDHR Director Jim Bennett**. “Amid attacks against human rights and reproductive rights across the country, IDHR remains committed to uplifting this historic legislation by informing people who live, work, or visit our state of their rights and obligations under state law.”

“For forty-five years, both the Illinois Human Rights Commission and the Illinois Department of Human Rights have enforced the Act without fear or favor, and as effectively and efficiently as possible,” said **IHRC Chair Selma C. D’Souza**.

In 2024, Governor Pritzker signed into law five bills that expanded the IHRA. Amendments to the IHRA include new protections for reproductive health decisions in all areas of the Act and family responsibilities in employment that go into effect Jan. 1,

2025. Another amendment expands the statute of limitations (time limit) for individuals to file a charge of discrimination from 300 days to 2 years, effective Jan. 1, 2025. The expanded time to file a charge applies only to employment, public accommodations, education, and financial credit cases. For housing cases, the time remains unchanged, one year to file a charge with IDHR or 2 years to file a complaint in circuit court.

In-Person Event

[OUT at CHM: 100 years of LGBTQIA+ Rights: Henry Gerber and the Society for Human Rights](#)

Tuesday, December 10, 6-9 pm

Chicago History Museum

1601 N. Clark St.

Chicago, IL 60614

[Tickets](#): \$8 members / \$12 non-members

Join the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) and the Illinois Human Rights Commission (IHRC) for an event to celebrate International Human Rights Day and the 45th Anniversary of the Illinois Human Rights Act. IDHR and IHRC will provide information on the agencies and present brief remarks.

IDHR and IHRC call on each of us to do our part to advance freedom and inclusion for all. If you believe you have experienced discrimination, contact IDHR by calling (877) 236-7703 or 7-1-1 for *TTY users or by visiting us online at dhr.illinois.gov/filing-a-charge.

To learn more about IDHR, visit dhr.illinois.gov.

To learn more about IHRC, visit hrc.illinois.gov.

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