

City and County of San Francisco
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY NOVEMBER 10, 2014
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**SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
RELEASES GROUND BREAKING REPORT ON
HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT OF THE WAR ON
DRUGS**

Report Reflects Community Testimony and Recommendations; Commission will work with City Departments to Release Its Own Recommendations

(San Francisco, CA) On Tuesday, November 4, 2014, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC) issued “Community Voices: The Human Rights Impact of the War on Drugs.” This document contains the testimony from the HRC’s 2012 hearing of the same name.

“This is a record that represents over 100 voices of formerly incarcerated individuals, community-based organizations, academics, youth activists, immigration and civil rights advocates and other members of San Francisco community,” stated Commission Chair Susan Christian. “We asked them to describe the local impact of the War on Drugs, and to engage in an on-going dialogue with the HRC on how to address its collateral consequences.”

As one of the first government agencies in the country to examine the War on Drugs through a human rights lens, the HRC aimed to hold a hearing that would assist City officials and community members not only in policymaking, but also in bearing witness and documenting the experiences of San Franciscans.

“We have received so much feedback on how important it was for the Commission to take on this issue and to parse out how the War on Drugs impacts education, health, economic opportunity, political engagement, and the right to be free from discrimination,” said Executive Director Theresa Sparks. “We are grateful to the many individuals and groups contributing to this report, particularly, the UC Hastings Community Advocacy and Social Change Lawyering Clinic. The Clinic worked in collaboration with Commission to put together this vital hearing and issue this report.”

Since the hearing, the HRC has been engaged in ongoing dialogue with City departments regarding the concerns raised at the hearing. The HRC has transmitted the findings and recommendations that emerged from the hearing to the various departments in order to solicit their input and feedback as to their views on the effectiveness and feasibility of the community recommendations.

Subsequent to these meetings, the HRC will publish a follow-up report that will include the information gained through these dialogues. The report will also document evidence-based, best practices which have been, or may be, employed by City departments to curb and redress the human rights impact of the War on Drugs. Regarding this process, Commission Chair Susan Christian stated “We are very much engaged in this continued dialogue and look forward to providing the community with the most current picture available about how San Francisco agencies are engaging these issues. And we look forward to the community’s responses.”

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