

Task Force on Equality holds first meeting

The Governor's Task Force on Equality held its first meeting on April 12, 2006. Governor Ted Kulongoski and Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner welcomed the task force and talked about the important job before the members of the task force. "As a people, we must respect the rights of all, regardless of race, gender, national origin, religious affiliation, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any of the differences among us that too often cause disadvantage or suffering. To do any less is to live with injustice" the Governor told task force members.

This first meeting was an organizational meeting and a chance for task force members to get to know each other. The group discussed the scope of the taskforce's charge. They also discussed ways to engage the public, including the possibility of appointing a subcommittee of the taskforce to travel around the State to get public input from across Oregon. They asked staff to prepare a memo for the members discussing the legislative history of SB 1000, the comprehensive anti-discrimination bill from the 2005 legislative session, to help them as they move forward. The group will meet again on May 25 at 9am in Salem for a working meeting. The group will not be taking public comment at this meeting.

On February 9, 2006, the Governor signed Executive Order No. 06-03, which established the Governor's Taskforce on Equality in Oregon. The Governor appointed Paul Kelly, retired Global Director of Public Affairs at NIKE and Portland attorney, to Chair the taskforce. In April, the Governor appointed Annabelle Jaramillo, Bruce Samson, Calvin Henry, Clara Padilla Andrews, Dan Bryant, Eugene Ross, Kenneth "Rick" Brissette, Sara Mason, Sho Dozono and Tiffany Telfer to serve as members of the taskforce. Non-voting members of the taskforce include Amy Klare from the Bureau of Labor and Industries and Don Arnold from the Oregon Department of Justice.

The Governor charged the taskforce with analyzing current laws and identifying statutory changes necessary to guarantee that all Oregonians receive adequate protection from discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and other opportunities, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Governor also instructed the taskforce to review anti-discrimination legislation adopted by other states, as well as the proposals introduced during the 2005 legislative session.