

For Immediate Release:

October 31, 2018

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New State Racial Equity Advisory Panel Appointments Announced

Montpelier, Vt. – Today, the State of Vermont Racial Equity Advisory Panel (“Panel”) appointments are announced. The newly created Panel is established as a result of Act 9 passed in the 2018 Special Session and signed by Governor Phil Scott on June 28, 2018.

The five-member Panel consists of appointees by the Senate Committee on Committees, the Speaker of the House, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Governor and Human Rights Commission. One of the first duties of the Panel will be to recommend candidates to the Governor for the Executive Director of Racial Equity – a new position within state Government created under Act 9. The Panel will work with the Executive Director of Racial Equity to implement reforms, advise the Executive Director to ensure ongoing compliance with the purpose of the legislation, advise the Governor on strategies for remediating systemic racial disparities in statewide systems of government and report progress to the legislature. The Panel will be supported by the Agency of Administration and is comprised of the following members:

- Clarence Davis, appointed by Governor Phil Scott
- Superior Judge Nancy Waples appointed by Chief Justice Paul L. Reiber
- Andrea Brett, appointed by Speaker of the House Mitzi Johnson
- Stephanie Seguino, PhD, appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees
- Karen Richards, Esq., appointed by the Human Rights Commission

The Panel is scheduled to meet on November 16 at 1:00 pm in room 410 at 133 State Street, Montpelier.

Appointee bios:

Clarence Davis has over 20 years of leadership and management experience in both the public and private sectors, and currently serves as Vice President for Development at the University of Vermont Foundation. Most recently, Clarence served as Interim Deputy Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Human Services, where he helped oversee the largest agency in state government and was responsible for the oversight and management of the six departments that comprise AHS. Clarence has served in various leadership roles at Margolis, Healy, and Associates, Social Sentinel, University of Vermont, Central Vermont Community Land Trust and the First American Title Insurance Corporation. A passionate believer in community service, he was elected to the Burlington City Council in 2006 where he served the residents of Burlington until 2010 and was a Congressional Aide to Senator Bernard Sanders. He has served in the United States Navy and is a graduate of Norwich University. He is pursuing a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Vermont. Clarence resides in Shelburne with his wife and their two sons.

Judge Nancy Waples is a Superior Court Judge and was sworn in by Governor Peter Shumlin on January 30, 2015. The daughter of Chinese immigrants, she was born in Canada and became a U.S. citizen in 1977. She graduated from the College of William and Mary in 1982 and from St. John's University School of Law in 1987. She has served as President of the Board of Directors of Spectrum Youth and Family Services and volunteered as part of the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program. She also provided pro bono legal services to non-English speaking individuals. Before becoming a judge, Nancy was a criminal defense attorney in private practice and served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Criminal Division of the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Vermont. She has experience with a variety of civil and administrative matters, including adjudication of Act 250 cases as a Governor Howard Dean appointee to the State's Environmental Board.

Andrea Brett is a native Vermonter and longtime resident of Burlington. Andrea has worked in Chittenden County for many years in various social work roles, including with COTS, the State's Attorneys office, the Burlington Housing Authority, and as a BPD Victims' Advocate. Andrea has been employed by the UVM Medical Center for seven years and currently performs Case Management with the Health Assistance and Community Health Improvement programs. Andrea also is Secretary of the Commission for Native American Affairs. She is an active community volunteer, having supported fund raising and education efforts for the Heart Association, Suicide Awareness and Prevention and HIV/AIDS education programs, and the Pride Center of Vermont. Andrea has been married to her spouse, Philip, for 31 years and has two children, one of whom attends UVM. In her spare time, Andrea likes to read, knit and exercise with their family dog.

Dr. Stephanie Seguino is a Professor of Economics at the University of Vermont. Prior to obtaining a Ph.D. from American University, Dr. Seguino served as an economist in Haiti in the pre- and post-Baby Doc era. Her research focuses on inequality, especially by race and gender, in areas such as pay, employment, health, and housing. She has consulted with a number of international organizations including the United Nations, World Bank, and US Agency for International Development. As a former Commissioner on the Burlington School Board, she advocated for eliminating the achievement gap in schools and addressing racial and socioeconomic disparities in suspensions. She has also researched racial disparities in policing in Vermont.

Karen L. Richards is the former executive director of the Vermont Human Rights Commission (VHRC), the State's civil rights enforcement agency. In this role, Karen was involved at the Legislature and on various committees and commissions in the passing of legislation and development of the State's model fair and impartial policing (FIP) policy. Karen has also developed a training on implicit bias that has been presented to over 1000 Vermonters including state government employees, non-profit employees, housing providers and legal services providers. Prior to her position at the VHRC, Karen worked for Vermont Legal Aid as the Poverty Law Project Director for fourteen years and was legal counsel at the Department of Education for five years. She is a graduate of the University of Connecticut School of Law and Ohio University. She lives in Washington with her husband.

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