

## **Ohio Civil Rights Commission**

**G. Michael Payton**  
Executive Director

## **Governor Bob Taft**

**Pastor Aaron Wheeler, Sr.**  
Chairman



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **OHIO CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS NAMED TO U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Columbus, OH (July 13, 2005)** -- The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR), an independent, bi-partisan investigatory agency, named Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) Chairman Aaron Wheeler, Sr. and OCRC Akron Regional Director Diane Citrino to its Ohio Advisory Committee, where they join long standing appointee OCRC Commissioner Altagracia "Grace" Ramos.

"It's an honor to accept this charge and this opportunity provided by the US Civil Rights Commission, Ohio Advisory Committee," said Chairman Wheeler of his appointment. "Because I am Chairman of The Ohio Civil Rights Commission, I have a better perspective of not just the laws that provide civil rights protections, but the needs of the citizenry of this state and of this nation."

The USCCR's mission is to investigate possible voting rights violations, to collect and study data relating to discrimination issues, to appraise federal laws regarding discrimination and equal protection, and to submit reports and recommendations on its findings to the President and Congress. The agency also acts as a national clearinghouse for information about discrimination.

The Ohio Advisory Committee, like the committees from each state and the District of Columbia, assists the USCCR with its fact-finding, investigative, and information dissemination functions. Members of the advisory committees, citizens from each state who serve without pay, advise the USCCR on matters relating to the state's particular concerns.

Ms. Citrino, who has been regional director of the OCRC Akron Regional Office since 2003, hopes that her position on the advisory committee will allow her to promote awareness of hate crimes in Ohio. "Unfortunately," she said, "the data shows a high incidence of hate crimes in this state.

(more)

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“These are not isolated occurrences,” Citrino continued. “While there has been some improvement in recent years, we still have a serious problem and we want to make sure what’s happening here isn’t ignored.” Hate crimes have been a specific focus of the Ohio Advisory Committee in recent years.

The OCRC receives and investigates charges of discrimination in employment, housing, credit and higher education on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, country of national origin age, ancestry, disability and families with children.

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