



**MEETING OF THE  
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**

**DATE**

**FEBRUARY 2, 2021**

1 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021

2 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, looks like  
3 we've got a last docket today. Are you guys ready to tackle  
4 this?

5 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Let's rock and roll.  
6 Let's do it.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Well, good  
8 morning, all. This meeting is called to order. Mr. Trobman.

9 MR. TROBMAN: Good morning, Commissioners.  
10 We have no registrants for public comment this morning.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you very much, sir.  
12 Good morning, Ms. Miller.

13 MS. MILLER: Good morning, sir.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. This brings us  
15 to the end of Agenda Items 3 through 7. Let's pause for a few  
16 moments to reset for the rest of the meeting.

17 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: All right, thank  
18 you, team.

19 [pause]

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Let's go ahead and tackle  
21 Agenda Item 8. This is the discussion, consideration, and  
22 possible action regarding the acceptance for pledges for board  
23 contract year 2020 and 2021 childcare matching funds.

24 MR. WEAVER: Good morning, Chairman Daniel,  
25 commissioners, Mr. Serna. For the record, Travis Weaver,

1 Workforce Development Division. Today, workforce development,  
2 along with childcare and early learning, are presenting for your  
3 approval BCY 2020 and BCY 2021 childcare local match. I will  
4 present BCY 2020 first, request a vote, then proceed with BCY  
5 20201 childcare local match. First, BCY 2020 childcare local  
6 match. Annually, staff presents childcare local match amendments  
7 from boards requesting to increase their BCY 2020 local  
8 childcare match agreements previously accepted by the commission  
9 as a result of contributors being unable to certify expenses for  
10 their original map, or to capture certifications from approved  
11 partners who exceeded their original pledge. Today's summary  
12 includes 25 match agreements, amendments from 10 boards,  
13 Borderplex, Concho Valley, Dallas county, deep East Texas, Gulf  
14 Coast, heart of Texas, lower Rio, north central, northeast, and  
15 west central. One item of note--as you may recall, on August 11,  
16 2020, the commission voted to provide BCY 2020 childcare local  
17 match forgiveness for the following boards: Panhandle, north  
18 central, Dallas county, and Texhoma, for a total amount of  
19 \$891,710. As a result of today's pending action, match  
20 forgiveness will no longer be needed for these boards. Today,  
21 staff requests commission acceptance of childcare pledges or  
22 donations, transfers, and certifications of expense for BCY 2020  
23 in the amount of \$2,524,888. With today's action, the boards and  
24 the state remain secure. Commissioners, this concludes my  
25 presentation of BCY 2020. I'm happy to answer any questions.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Questions or comments?

2 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

3 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None here. This is  
4 good work on getting these matches [inaudible] boards.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do we have a motion?

6 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I move that we accept  
7 childcare match in the amount of \$2,524,888 for board contract  
8 year 2020. I move that we accept childcare match in the amount  
9 of \$5,760,100 for board contract year 2021.

10 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

11 MR. WEAVER: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and  
13 seconded.

14 MR. WEAVER: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, thank you. This  
16 is Agenda Item 9, discussion, consideration, and possible action  
17 regarding vocational rehabilitation vehicle modification  
18 services.

19 MR. VADEN: Good morning, commissioners. For  
20 the record, Jason Vaden, Vocational Rehabilitation Division.  
21 Vehicle modification services provide a transportation option  
22 for VR customers whose disabilities prevent them from operating  
23 a standard vehicle. The goal of these services is to promote  
24 greater independence and access to communities, educational  
25 institutions, and other supports necessary to find employment,

1 sustain work and living arrangements, and enable career  
2 advancement. Given the importance of these services, and based  
3 on the feedback from customers and stakeholders, staff  
4 [inaudible] review of the vehicle modification process. Based on  
5 that review, staff identified several process and procedural  
6 modifications that will reduce complexities while also reducing  
7 the time needed to complete a modified vehicle. However, staff  
8 also identified a needed policy modification that would not  
9 alter eligibility requirements for VR services, but would impact  
10 a customer's ability to participate in vehicle modification  
11 services. Currently, before approving services, staff must  
12 determine whether other means of accessible transportation,  
13 including public transportation, are available to the customer,  
14 and that consideration be given to whether a customer should  
15 physically relocate to an area where public transportation is  
16 available. Given that the current criteria do not [inaudible]  
17 consideration to customer's relocation and could result in a  
18 less desirable mode of transportation that could hinder  
19 achieving employment goals [inaudible] direction on replacing  
20 the current criteria with those set forth in your material,  
21 including making the determination to approve vehicle  
22 modification services based on the benefit a customer would  
23 receive from a modified vehicle in order to achieve their  
24 employment goals, and ensuring that the customer has the  
25 resources needed to pay for associated cost of a vehicle once

1 the vehicle modification process has completed. Commissioners,  
2 this concludes my remarks, and I'll be happy to answer  
3 questions, if you have any.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Comments or questions?

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: No questions,  
6 Chairman, but I did appreciate Jason's report, and I love the  
7 flag in his background.

8 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Chairman, basically  
9 the RCT, I'm glad we had input from the RCT on this, so,  
10 appreciate that [inaudible].

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, do we have a  
12 motion on this issue?

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I move that we  
14 replace the current criteria for obtaining vehicular  
15 modification services with determining whether the customer  
16 might benefit from the modified vehicle to gain greater  
17 independence and access, as discussed, and ensuring the customer  
18 has sufficient resources or will have sufficient resources  
19 through achievement of an employment goal to cover future costs  
20 associated with the vehicle, as discussed.

21 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and  
23 seconded, we're unanimous. This is item 10, discussion,  
24 consideration, and possible action regarding adoption of  
25 emergency rules 40 TAC chapter 815, unemployment insurance

1 regarding certain unemployment provisions in public law 116-260,  
2 the Consolidated Appropriations Act, which included the  
3 Continued Assistance for Unemployed Workers Act.

4 MR. STALINSKY: Good morning, Chairman  
5 Daniel, Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, and Mr.  
6 Serna. For the record, I am Jason Stalinsky, RID policy,  
7 planning, and prosecutions. The Consolidated Appropriations Act,  
8 enacted December 27, 2020, contained the Continued Assistance  
9 Act, or CAA, which pertains to unemployment benefits. The CAA  
10 amended the CARES Act and other federal laws by, among other  
11 things, providing for an additional benefit program, state  
12 flexibilities, and new requirements concerning the coordination  
13 of programs. In terms of benefit payments, these emergency rules  
14 will allow the commission to implement a new benefit program  
15 called mixed earner unemployment compensation. It operates  
16 similarly to federal pandemic unemployment compensation, and it  
17 affects certain individuals with histories of limited covered  
18 employment and independent contractor work. Additionally, new  
19 coordination rules could in some instances result in increased  
20 benefit payments to claimants by allowing them to stay on the  
21 pandemic emergency unemployment compensation program.

22 Furthermore, these emergency rules allow the commission to take  
23 advantage of the new state option for waiving overpayments which  
24 meet certain criteria under the pandemic unemployment assistance  
25 program. Previously, states were not afforded this flexibility

1 under the CARES Act. Another CAA flexibility the rules adopt  
2 concerns state extended benefits. Under section 209.025 of the  
3 Texas Unemployment Compensation Act, the commission has the  
4 authority to adopt a new waiting period waiver from the CAA.  
5 This provision waives the 14-week waiting period that arises  
6 when a state no longer meets extended benefit criteria for one  
7 week, but does in a subsequent week. Finally, these rules  
8 include a conformity assurance section so that the agency will  
9 be able to adapt to any potential additional changes in federal  
10 unemployment law. During the surge of unemployment, it is vital  
11 that Texans have prompt access to the full extent of  
12 unemployment benefits available, including new benefit programs,  
13 options, and requirements provided by the CAA. Therefore, staff  
14 requests the commissioners find imminent peril to the public  
15 welfare, which requires the adoption of emergency rules without  
16 30 days' notice in the Texas Register. On the same basis, staff  
17 also requests the commissioners find imminent peril to the  
18 public welfare requires the adoption of rules with an expedited  
19 effective date that is effective immediately upon filing with  
20 the secretary of state, so that these rules can be implemented  
21 immediately under the emergency rulemaking provisions of Texas  
22 government code section 2001.034, and section 2001.036. Staff  
23 will bring forward permanent rules to replace the emergency  
24 rules at a later date. Today, staff is seeking your direction on  
25 submitting these proposed rules to the Texas Register. If so



1 directed, staff seeks approval to make any minor, nonsubstantive  
2 corrections to the document for purposes of publication in the  
3 Register. I am here this morning as a resource to answer any  
4 questions you may have.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any questions or comments?

6 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

7 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None. Just Jason,  
8 again, appreciate the briefing of this very complex article.  
9 Appreciate the briefing.

10 MR. STALINSKY: Thank you, sir.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, do we have a  
12 motion on this issue?

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: On December 27, 2020,  
14 the federal government enacted the Consolidated Appropriations  
15 Act of 2021, which contained a Continued Assistance for  
16 Unemployment Workers Act of 2020. The Continued Assistance Acts  
17 amended the CARES Act and other federal laws in multiple ways,  
18 including an additional benefit program, state flexibilities,  
19 and new requirements concerning the coordination of these  
20 programs. Emergency rules are necessary to operationalize these  
21 new federal programs, state options, and requirements. During  
22 this surge of unemployment, it is vital that Texans have prompt  
23 access to full extent of unemployment benefits available,  
24 including new benefit programs, options, and requirements  
25 provided by the Continued Assistance Act. Out-of-work Texans who

1 are struggling to pay their bills need access to these  
2 unemployment benefits. These benefits serve as a stabilization  
3 factor in our local economies, which are critically needed due  
4 to the statewide disruptions caused by COVID-19 global pandemic.  
5 I move that the commission formally find that the immediate  
6 action is required to avoid imminent peril to the public  
7 welfare, which requires the adoption of emergency rules within  
8 30 days' notice in the Texas Register, and with an expedited  
9 effective date that is effective immediately upon filing with  
10 the secretary of state, pursuant to Texas government code  
11 sections 2001.034 and 2001.036.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's moved and seconded.  
14 Motion carries.

15 MR. STALINSKY: Thank you, Commissioners.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: This is Agenda Item 11,  
17 discussion, consideration, and possible action regarding the  
18 acknowledgement of gifts and donations of \$500 or more in value  
19 given to the Texas Workforce Commission in accordance with  
20 section 302.021 of the Texas labor code, and chapter 575 of the  
21 Texas government code.

22 MS. FLOOD: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,  
23 commissioners, and Mr. Serna. For the record, Gavra Flood,  
24 presenting on behalf of the office of general counsel. Under  
25 relevant authority in Texas government code chapter 575, and in

1 Texas labor code section 301.021, the commission must accept  
2 gifts and donations with a value of \$500 or more in an open  
3 meeting. For the first quarter of 2021, the only gift or  
4 donation with a value of \$500 or more is a donation to the  
5 agency, from Qualtrics LLC, with a value of \$807,765.07. The  
6 purpose of the donation is to make the donor technology  
7 available to the public who have questions about applying for  
8 unemployment insurance for TWC's other programs. Please note  
9 that in the materials, page five contains a resolution to be  
10 signed by the commissioners for acceptance of the donation. Page  
11 seven contains a description of the donation, in accordance with  
12 Texas government code 575.004. Pages nine through 45 contain the  
13 donation agreement that has been developed and reviewed in  
14 accordance with 40 Texas Administrative Code section 800.9. OTC  
15 has conducted our review and determined the donation meets  
16 statutory requirements. Accordingly, staff recommends acceptance  
17 of the donation. I'm available for any questions.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any question or comments?

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

20 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do we have a motion on  
22 this issue?

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I move that we  
24 acknowledge the donation from Aquatrics LLC [sic], valued at  
25 more than \$500, as discussed by staff.

1 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

2 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I just wanna clarify,  
3 Commissioner Alvarez. You got \$500--uh, you cut out; I missed  
4 part of that. Your motion was to accept the gift of \$500 or  
5 more?

6 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes, sir.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, so moved--

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: As discussed by  
9 staff.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay, perfect. It's been  
11 moved and seconded, and motion carries.

12 MS. FLOOD: Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I'd like to  
15 add, before we adjourn, that on Agenda Item 10, I thought we  
16 were gonna--we had two motions, and I only referenced the one  
17 regarding the Texas government code sections of 2001.034 and  
18 .036. I didn't include the second motion, which was the second  
19 part of Jason's discussion, or presentation, I should say.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So, would it be  
22 appropriate to go back and now reference my second motion, which  
23 I probably should have included?

24 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: We can. We're gonna go  
25 back to Agenda Item 10 and take your second motion.

1                   COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Thank you, sir. If I  
2 may, I also move that we adopt on emergency basis, pursuant to  
3 Texas government code section 2001.034, Texas labor code  
4 sections 209.025, and 301.0015(a)6, and 301.062, the proposed  
5 amendments to chapter 815 rules relating to the unemployment  
6 insurance benefits general provisions in section 815.4, extended  
7 benefits in section 815.175, and CARES Act provisions in  
8 sections 815.180 through 815.185, and publish them to the state  
9 register, with permission for staff to make minor,  
10 nonsubstantive changes.

11                   COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second that.

12                   CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and  
13 seconded, and the motion carries.

14                   COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Apologize for that.

15                   CHAIRMAN DANIEL: No worries. This'll bring  
16 us back to Agenda Item 13, discussion, consideration, and  
17 possible action regarding guidance on resource utilization,  
18 implementation, services, and strategies to target disaster  
19 relief efforts and public health emergencies, including those  
20 funded with the Department of Labor's disaster dislocated worker  
21 program.

22                   MR. SERNA: Mr. Chair, commissioners, for  
23 the record, Ed Serna, executive director. We have four update  
24 reports for you today, starting with Clay Cole over at UI, and  
25 then we'll proceed with a childcare update, a workforce update,

1 and then finally a vocational rehabilitation update. So with  
2 that, I'll ask Clay to provide an update.

3 MR. COLE: Morning, Chairman Daniel,  
4 Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, Mr. Serna. For the  
5 record, Clay Cole, Unemployment Insurance Division. Today I'm  
6 following up with the UI update regarding your request last  
7 week, Chairman, for an update of all measures taken in response  
8 to the COVID-19 pandemic in general, where we've been and where  
9 we are today. Beginning in March through yesterday--March 2020  
10 through yesterday, TWC's paid out approximately 40 billion in  
11 unemployment benefits and processed over seven million claims.  
12 Just to put this in perspective, if you look at calendar year  
13 2019, there were 738,000 claims, compared to the last 11 months--  
14 --over seven million claims. That's a 948 percent increase. And  
15 if you compare the two billion paid out in calendar year 2019  
16 with the 40 billion paid out over the last 11 months, that's a  
17 2,000 percent increase. In fact, in comparing March 8, 2020  
18 through yesterday, the 11-month period, the claim numbers were  
19 even higher for that 11-month period than the last six years  
20 combined from 2014 to 2019. And to handle the surge and assist  
21 our fellow Texans, we needed more technology, we needed more  
22 staff. The unemployment insurance division took immediate action  
23 by converting 450 current TWC employees from other departments  
24 to assist with UI claims, and we assembled approximately 1,514  
25 volunteers, even including volunteers from our own Texas state

1 senate and Texas house of representatives. Vendor partners'  
2 contracts were immediately signed, thereby doubling the number  
3 of active call centers from four to eight call centers, and  
4 increasing total claims processing staff to 3,392 individuals.  
5 During this time, TWC, UI, and our partners received a  
6 staggering 173 million calls. In addition, a virtual telecenter  
7 was also implemented for intake an inquiry calls, routing them  
8 to the first available and appropriately skilled customer  
9 service represent in any telecenter. Also, changes associated to  
10 the pandemic programs, we were able to increase workloads--the  
11 UI division rose to this challenge by a record-setting  
12 productivity of 8.5 million assignments handled, which was a 727  
13 percent increase compared with 2019. Proactively, TWC  
14 anticipated calls would continue to increase; therefore, we  
15 expanded our call center hours of operation to 12 hours per day,  
16 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., seven days a week, which we continue to  
17 do today. We also increased our server capacity for our UI claim  
18 systems from five to 20 servers. An interactive, automated web  
19 chatbot program was created to handle frequently asked questions  
20 from customers and employers. Larry the chatbot answered 11.5  
21 million questions during this time period, and a new and secure  
22 online document upload portal was also implemented in order for  
23 claimants and employers to more effectively provide necessary  
24 documents. TWC also created unique claims-handling tool, the DUA  
25 worker app, to distribute claim [inaudible] items to TWC staff

1 volunteers and contract call centers, which expedited claims  
2 handling and processing. Additionally, TWC engaged with another  
3 partner to deploy a cloud-based interactive voice response  
4 system to improve services. Since going live, the interactive  
5 voice response handled more than 11 million calls, and in  
6 addition, the interactive voice response includes a chatbot that  
7 leverages speech recognition and provides answers to common  
8 unemployment questions. To aid our fellow Texans who lost their  
9 job, TWC also suspended work search requirements, waived the  
10 waiting week, and temporarily suspended offset collection  
11 efforts for claimants who owe prior debts to TWC. As you  
12 remember, on November 1, work search was reinstated for most  
13 counties in Texas. We also assisted Texas employers by waiving  
14 chargeback requirements for covered employer layoffs due to  
15 COVID-19, and continue to search for every available option that  
16 will help all employers recover and rehire their staff as Texas  
17 works to return to normal. For appeals hearings, again, the  
18 pandemic brought extraordinary challenges, with about a 1,000  
19 percent increase in hearings, from an average of about 2,200 per  
20 week pre-COVID to an average of 22,000 appeals received per week  
21 since COVID-19 struck. Also, the same lines of our claims area--  
22 in line with our claims area, our appeals department hours were  
23 extended to 7:00 p.m. during weekdays, and we added Saturday  
24 hearings as well. We immediately brought on additional staff in  
25 appeals as well, but as you know, attorney staff that hold the



1 unemployment hearings are more have more limitations on  
2 recruiting from other departments, as these positions are harder  
3 to fill. Nonetheless, we did have an additional 62 volunteers  
4 from other areas that have since begun returning to their  
5 primary duties, so we don't have as many volunteers now, but  
6 continuing to assist, we were able to bring on an additional 160  
7 additional appeals staff from direct hires through temporary  
8 agencies, by working with contractors. We have access to  
9 attorney job seekers as well. And because of these additional  
10 hires, the next week, we've scheduled over 5,000 hearings, which  
11 is a record for us. And we'll continue to work to increase that  
12 productivity. The Texas Workforce Commission continues to  
13 explore options to keep the 2021 tax rates as low as possible  
14 for Texas employers, as Texas and the entire nation continue to  
15 deal with the economic disruptions of COVID-19 pandemic. TWC's  
16 partnering with federal and state officials on ways to reduce  
17 the impact of COVID-19 on Texas employers. We knew January would  
18 be an extremely busy month with all the new federal legislative  
19 changes under the Continued Assistance Act [sic] extensions.  
20 Also, being a change of quarter month and distributing over 2.9  
21 million 1099Gs. On top of that, we've experienced an increase in  
22 claim activity compared with December. Along with our IT and  
23 external relations teams, we've successfully implemented the  
24 vast majority of the Continued Assistance Act programs that  
25 extend the pandemic emergency unemployment compensation,

1 pandemic unemployment assistance, federal pandemic unemployment  
2 compensation, and state extended benefits programs. We continue  
3 to update approximately 10 to 20,000 unique customer claims of  
4 the over 1.2 million claims extended, as well as introducing  
5 overpayment tracking and mixed earners unemployment compensation  
6 automation under the federal programs. TWC did complete the  
7 distribution of the 1099Gs to roughly 2.9 million individuals  
8 paid in 2020. Things went smoothly; however, we are receiving a  
9 relatively small number of enquiries from individuals that  
10 received a 1099G, however indicated they never filed for  
11 unemployment. An even smaller number of customers that did not  
12 receive a 1099G that were initially under investigation for  
13 potential ID theft. And staff are working closely with these  
14 customers to resolve their enquiry. The UI team realizes the  
15 race is far from over. We continue implementing solutions to  
16 better serve our customers through new technology, continuous  
17 process improvement, staff development, increased resources, and  
18 strategic communication. We continue to work very closely with  
19 all our partners to improve customer service. UI teams,  
20 partners, and volunteers have been relentless and remarkable in  
21 responding to the pandemic, and I assure you, we are nowhere  
22 near done, and we will continue to further improve our service  
23 delivery for our fellow Texans. This concludes my update, and  
24 I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you, Clay. Any  
2 questions or comments?

3 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I'd just  
4 like to take this opportunity to thank Clay and his staff for a  
5 detailed report. It's obvious we still have challenges, and I  
6 appreciate the fact, Clay, that as these challenges come up,  
7 that you address them. So, thank you for that. And thank you for  
8 improving the wait times. I know that seems, again, your staff,  
9 the call center folks, have done an excellent job of responding  
10 as quick as possible. And I just wanted to take this opportunity  
11 to thank you for that, and please convey that message to  
12 everyone on your staff, and again, our front-line workers there  
13 with the call centers.

14 MR. COLE: Thanks, Commissioner Alvarez.  
15 You're welcome, and we'll let them know. Appreciate it.  
16 Appreciate the support.

17 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Clay, I wanted to  
18 just kinda let you guys know I appreciate the team's work on  
19 exploring ways to keep [inaudible] tax rates low, all the  
20 creative thoughts that are going into that, and [inaudible] a  
21 resource for you guys as much as we can as we proceed forward  
22 with those [inaudible]. Thank you for what you guys are doing.

23 MR. COLE: Thank you, and yeah, we'll  
24 continue to work closely with you, Commissioner Demerson.

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Clay, thank you. Great  
2 report, lots of things going on. We've got more work to do, as  
3 you've already pointed out. I know you guys have been at it for  
4 a long time, and I appreciate your willingness to continue to  
5 innovate and provide customer service that Texans should expect  
6 from us. And so we'll keep working toward that end. Let us know  
7 if you need additional resources or what you may need, but I  
8 know you have been thinking about these things, and obviously  
9 have a plan of action in place, and you're working your  
10 [inaudible].

11 MR. COLE: Thanks, Chairman Daniel.

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right [inaudible]--

13 MR. SERNA: Next, we have an update from  
14 Reagan Miller on our childcare activities.

15 MS. MILLER: Good morning, Chairman,  
16 commissioners, Mr. Serna. For the record, Reagan Miller with the  
17 Childcare and Early Learning Division. This morning I'm happy to  
18 provide you with an update on actions the agency has taken to  
19 address the childcare impacts of COVID. With the first set of  
20 federal funds approved under the CARES Act, Texas received about  
21 \$371 million in childcare development block grant funds. With  
22 those funds, we immediately implemented a childcare program for  
23 essential workers, enrolling over 29,700 children from April  
24 through May 20, with each child receiving three months of  
25 childcare. This was done at the time schools across the state

1 were closing, and many parents had not planned for nor budgeted  
2 for childcare. We supported this using approximately 55 million  
3 of the CARES Act funds. We also increased funds for our low-  
4 income program in both board contract year '20 and '21,  
5 investing about 52 and a half million here, and finally, the  
6 majority of these funds were invested to support a temporary  
7 enhanced reimbursement rate for subsidy providers who have been  
8 experiencing overall higher costs during the pandemic. Over 253  
9 million has been budgeted to support this temporary enhanced  
10 reimbursement rate, which began in March 2020 and will continue  
11 through July of 2021. In addition to the CARES Act funds, the  
12 Texas Workforce Commission also addressed the impacts of COVID  
13 using existing childcare funds. At the beginning of COVID, when  
14 the governor's executive order had closed all regulated  
15 childcare to everyone except the children of essential workers,  
16 TWC put in place a temporary measure to pay the parent copay.  
17 During the two months that this was in place, we invested about  
18 \$20 million. We also supported childcare providers who closed  
19 following COVID in the spring of 2020. Through the end of May,  
20 we continued to pay providers based on the number of active  
21 referrals they had in place at the time they closed, then in  
22 June we implemented a childcare stabilization grant for closed  
23 subsidy providers who planned on reopening around the time  
24 school started. So, looking from June through September, we  
25 supported 59 providers in June, 54 in July, 42 in August, and 30

1 in September, and provided almost \$750,000 to help them pay for  
2 those fixed costs while they were closed, so they could reopen.  
3 And today we continue to support subsidy providers who must  
4 temporarily close due to confirmed COVID cases. Boards can play  
5 for closures that last up to two weeks, and anything that goes  
6 beyond two weeks may be considered on a case-by-case basis with  
7 TWC approval. And we also used some of our regular childcare  
8 funds to develop a new online childcare availability portal.  
9 This website remains up and running and allows parents to search  
10 for available childcare seats across the state. And then as  
11 Travis Weaver has mentioned in his childcare match agenda item,  
12 you did approve match forgiveness for four boards as a result of  
13 COVID, but fortunately, as Travis mentioned, those boards were  
14 able to identify sufficient local match, and so that match  
15 forgiveness is no longer needed. We also took several program  
16 and policy actions to help address the COVID impacts to  
17 childcare. From March through November, TWC waived its rule  
18 regarding work requirements and extended the length of time  
19 parents had to secure employment if they lost their job. And  
20 during this timeframe, we also allowed for the blanket extension  
21 of eligibility redeterminations. Regarding our policies for how  
22 we pay providers, we have existing policy and rules that we pay  
23 providers based on the enrollment of a child, and we coupled  
24 this with our rules on attendance standards. And after 40  
25 absences, a child's eligibility may be terminated. However,

1 during COVID, we have waived the 40-day absence policy and this  
2 waiver remains in effect today. I'll also highlight the work  
3 that we did with the Texas Division of Emergency Management, or  
4 TDEM, to help childcare providers access PPE and cleaning and  
5 sanitation supplies. Early on in the pandemic, those materials  
6 were really hard to find. So, to help them, we were able to use  
7 that online availability portal to reach out to providers using  
8 the system. TDEM helped with three rounds of distributions,  
9 making those available across the state through the local Texas  
10 A&M AgriLife locations. We had over 3,300 providers in June and  
11 again in July, and then 1,400 providers in August that were able  
12 to purchase supplies through this new distribution chain. In  
13 closing, I'll mention, of course, the new COVID release package  
14 that was signed into law at the end of December. We still have  
15 not received official guidance from the U.S. Department of  
16 Health and Human Services, but estimates show that Texas will  
17 receive over \$1 billion in federal childcare and development  
18 block grant funds, and of course we'll continue to work with you  
19 on our future strategies to invest those resources. That  
20 concludes my presentation.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. Questions or  
22 comments?

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.  
24 Good report.

25

1 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Reagan, thank you  
2 guys at [inaudible] for the excellent work in the childcare  
3 space. Essential workers are very, very, very necessary and I  
4 like the fact that you've been very proactive in a lot of ways.  
5 And this was a good report with a lot of information, and it  
6 shows what we've been doing in that space.

7 MS. MILLER: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: [inaudible]

9 MR. SERNA: And now, Courtney Arbour, with a  
10 workforce update.

11 MS. ARBOUR: Morning, commissioners, Mr.  
12 Serna. Courtney Arbour, Workforce Division. I have a few updates  
13 related to the workforce division COVID recovery activities. As  
14 you know, many of these activities are--which were approved by  
15 the commission are carried out by agency staff in multiple  
16 divisions, workforce boards [inaudible] grantees, and other  
17 partners. On the employer front, most notably, the workforce  
18 division and employer initiatives continue to work with  
19 employers and partners to provide training in the skills  
20 development fund. Since May of 2020, when you all approved funds  
21 specific for this purpose, 12 million--a little over 12 million  
22 was made available and is in grant contract, with a planned  
23 number to train of 81--almost 8,200. Four thousand, six hundred  
24 and twenty-six people have been trained to date in that program,  
25 and we're hearing great feedback about the flexibilities that



1 are afforded through that contracting process. Employers have  
2 really been able to adapt to what they need as quickly as they  
3 need to for COVID. Training is on topics like safety,  
4 disinfecting, patient care, manufacturing, and they're also  
5 using it to provide new skills to workers, and also to  
6 transition their operations to more COVID-related needs. So  
7 that--we're hearing, again, great things about the skills  
8 development flexibilities. In January, we continued to see  
9 increased enrollments in the metrics online learning courses  
10 that you all approved very early in the pandemic. Texans began  
11 using it in July 2020, once we were able to get under contract,  
12 and as of the end of January, we have close to 53,000 folks  
13 registered in the metrics online learning platform. They've  
14 completed 92,721 courses and about 90,000 learning hours. So  
15 they're able to add that to their resumes and mention that in  
16 interviews, and they're able to go on if they would choose to do  
17 this on their own, and get certifications--go on for testing for  
18 certifications. The call centers that the Workforce Division  
19 procured have outreached 657,355 claimants to help them connect  
20 with local offices and other resources they may need, helping  
21 54,170 to register for work and answer questions about uploading  
22 their resumes and finding help with that, if needed. Through the  
23 WIOA-funded grant that you all approved at the very beginning of  
24 the pandemic and were awarded in May 2020, 424,032 Texans--  
25 424,032 Texans have received services through virtual job

1 readiness, coaching sessions, occupational training, boot camps  
2 geared to specific occupations that are in demand in their  
3 areas. The grants have supported 8,276 employers with rapid  
4 response activities and layoff aversion, which, as you know,  
5 commissioners, helps to offset some costs that they've faced  
6 during COVID, and also help them address the challenges with  
7 staffing, and sometimes even assist with layoff and helping  
8 those workers to connect to resources and transition to other  
9 available positions. With that grant, boards have also--the WIOA  
10 funds, boards have also purchased technology platforms to expand  
11 and continue their virtual services, which continue on today.  
12 TANF funds that you all approved, again, in I believe it was  
13 April, very early in the process, have also provided similar  
14 support for boards. They've been able to support the purchase of  
15 the technology platforms and keep the doors open, even when the  
16 doors weren't open. We'll be briefing your offices on the  
17 specifics of the expenditures later this month. The largest of  
18 all the grants in place administered by the Workforce Division  
19 is the Department of Labor's disaster grants. That was so  
20 granted to boards at just under 39 million is the total grant  
21 for TWC. We were congratulated. Commissioners, I wanted to share  
22 with you and Mr. Serna that we were congratulated by the  
23 Department of Ed for the Texas performance on this grant. Over  
24 four and a half million dollars of that funding have already  
25 helped 757 Texans and the employers they're hired with

1 participate in paid short-term employment that provides disaster  
2 relief and recovery in local areas, and also provides career and  
3 training services to everybody that's enrolled. Boards continue  
4 to focus on increasing the enrollments in meaningful job  
5 activity for anyone that is enrolling in that program. I wanted  
6 to highlight something [inaudible] county board is doing with  
7 their grant dollars that DoL congratulated them on, and we've  
8 been excited to see. Through these grants, they've purchased  
9 some technology that helps them outreach and screen potential  
10 job candidates, and in partnership with the health department  
11 there in [inaudible] county, the board has been able to do  
12 prescreening of a number of applicants for some of those crucial  
13 jobs that the health department has, so that by the time--very  
14 quickly, the board has been able to send referrals over to the  
15 health department, and the health department then can select  
16 from a small group of highly qualified Texans and fill their  
17 positions very quickly. So, that's one example of some of the  
18 partnerships that are growing and being strengthened through the  
19 innovative purchases and work that has come about because of  
20 this shift in service delivery. With the Ikea donation that you  
21 all approved last month, staff in many areas of the agency are  
22 working on projects to provide data analytics and tools for  
23 employers as they transition to curbside contact lists and  
24 learning more about how COVID has changed their consumer  
25 behaviors. The home project provides funds to boards to directly

1 support employers as they transition to telework and contact  
2 lists. Texas restaurants will benefit from the restaurant  
3 recovery initiative. That is the partnership we have with Texas  
4 Restaurant Association, providing instructional videos with tips  
5 on going and staying curbside, and contact lists. Also providing  
6 food-handling permits and ServSafe certifications to Texans at  
7 no cost, so they can go to work in the industry as that very  
8 valuable industry continues to bounce back. Job-seekers, again,  
9 through the Ikea project, job-seekers are benefitting through a  
10 pre-apprenticeship program, specifically young people, who will  
11 be able to start in a program that will lead them either into  
12 higher education in that field or into a full-blown registered  
13 apprenticeship program. The funds also provide grant-supported  
14 consumable supplies. These projects were approved just last  
15 month, but they're in development now, commissioners, and you  
16 know we'll give you updates along the way. The last project  
17 funded with the Ikea donation was the My Texas career portal,  
18 which launched last month. We're hearing good feedback from  
19 users. That is all the employers who were [inaudible] Texas are  
20 fed into this job-matching portal, and users--those claimant, or  
21 customers and others that wouldn't traditionally use our system  
22 can go in a very quick, streamlined fashion, upload a resume,  
23 and begin job-matching. On to AEL, adult education front. We  
24 continue to provide support to providers as they support  
25 students in an all-new learning environment. Since you all

1 granted funds specific to virtual and remote learning in May  
2 2020, providers have made it available with about 40 percent of  
3 all of our AEL learners now using a virtual or a hybrid process  
4 for their AEL classes, and support from their instructors. Our  
5 enrollments are lower than we'd like right now in AEL. We're at  
6 just under 24,000, which is much lower than we normally would be  
7 at this time. But honestly, all states are struggling in this  
8 area, and commissioners, because you all have been focused on  
9 virtual means for adult ed in past years, we were on good  
10 footing--better footing than many states going into this  
11 pandemic. So, we're hearing on our calls with Department of Ed  
12 and other states that really, as much as we hate to see these  
13 low numbers and we're working hard to get more adult ed students  
14 enrolled and engaged through these hybrid models, it's common  
15 across the U.S. I'll just make one more mention, that the  
16 Workforce Solutions offices continue to provide services either  
17 by walk-in, with the doors fully open, or by appointment.  
18 Everybody continues to do one or more services virtually, just  
19 as a way to bolster the services that are available out there.  
20 They're having many hiring events, most virtual to date, since  
21 the pandemic, and I believe we started calculating this in May  
22 of 2020. We've had--the local offices have posted 717 virtual  
23 hiring events, 119 in-person hiring events, and those events  
24 represent 229,000 job openings with 8,616 employers  
25 participating. So clearly, a lot of hiring going on, and good

1 work continuing, whether in-person or virtually. That concludes  
2 my update. I would be happy to answer any questions that you  
3 have.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any comments or questions?

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I have a  
6 comment for Courtney. Courtney, I wanna thank you, your staff,  
7 of course the agency as a whole, for how quickly workforce  
8 pivoted the meet the demand of not only the employers, but job-  
9 seekers. Thinking outside the box, as you've heard me mention  
10 multiple times, I appreciate that. And I also appreciate the  
11 fact that you, Ed, and other members of our team meet with our  
12 local workforce boards to kind of provide them with updates. I  
13 really wanna compliment, and I actually should say I wanna thank  
14 Ed for allowing those that have made a presentation today at  
15 this particular Agenda Item, very good information. Again, I  
16 would encourage not only staff to be a part of these discussions  
17 or listening to our commission meetings, but also our boards. I  
18 think there's a lot of important information that you're  
19 sharing, especially when you talk about [inaudible] county or  
20 other communities. I think they need to be recognized for all  
21 the great work that they do. But again, I do--this is a team  
22 effort, and what you have put together with your staff to make  
23 these programs and these opportunities available to job-seekers  
24 and assisting employers is very crucial, and we all understand  
25 that we have challenges and we can't forget that we have folks

1 that are waiting, still, online, to get through. But we're doing  
2 it together. And so, I'm glad that folks are--those that are on,  
3 listening to today's call, hopefully they're paying attention to  
4 some of the good things that the agency has done, even though  
5 we're facing challenging times. So, thank you, Courtney, and  
6 again, convey that message to your staff.

7 MS. ARBOUR: Thank you, for sure.

8 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: [sounds like] And  
9 Commissioner, I'm excited having [inaudible] I've heard from  
10 Clay, Reagan, and now Courtney. I mean, the ball is moving and  
11 has been moving, and we're doing some [inaudible] and that heads  
12 off, Ed, your leadership, and Courtney, you guys and what you're  
13 doing. If I can do anything from my standpoint, I'm right there  
14 with you guys. But I love the fact [inaudible] county utilizing  
15 their technology. I was talking to Paul Fletcher the other day  
16 at one of the local boards, and he was sharing with me the  
17 retail analysis that's going out now. He has the [sounds like]  
18 five there in how his community's excited about putting that  
19 out, and putting it to work. And that tells me that you guys are  
20 taking what you have and putting it out there in the community.  
21 The boots on the ground at the local level, and that's where  
22 everything happens. And I'm excited to hear about what's taking  
23 place, so good work. Thumbs up, as they say. Appreciate it.

24 MR. SERNA: One last presentation, from  
25 Cheryl Fuller, and then that concludes our presentations.

1 MS. FULLER: Good morning.

2 MR. SERNA: One quick thing, though--I'm  
3 sorry, Cheryl, to interrupt you. One quick thing, commissioners,  
4 I wanted to add that Courtney didn't mention. When she talked  
5 about the call centers and the number of people that they have  
6 reached out to and worked with, one thing that she didn't  
7 mention was that we had about over 40,000 that they didn't need  
8 to call us back, but they called us back and told us that they  
9 had found employment already [inaudible] those contacts. So,  
10 just wanna make sure that you all were aware of that as well.

11 MS. FULLER: All right, good morning, Mr.  
12 Chairman, Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, and Mr.  
13 Serna. For the record, Cheryl Fuller, Vocational Rehabilitation  
14 Division. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic [inaudible]  
15 this last March, the VR division has focused its efforts in  
16 three primary areas. First is adapting our business processes  
17 and service delivery strategies to ensure continuity and  
18 services to our current customers, access to VR services for new  
19 customers, and to implement innovative ways to serve all our  
20 customers using technology. Second is we focused on improving  
21 our services by collaborating with providers and stakeholders.  
22 [inaudible] also focused on improving our internal process using  
23 rapid process improvement. And third, we have focused on  
24 developing plans to maintain what is working and continue to  
25 identify and implement innovative strategies for service



1 delivery after the pandemic. So this morning, I'd like to share  
2 just a few highlights from each of these focus areas.  
3 [inaudible] adapting business process and finding innovative  
4 ways to use technology, on March 30, which was two weeks into  
5 the onset of the pandemic in Texas, we issued temporary  
6 exceptions to our business processes to enable our staff,  
7 providers, and customers to receive, sign, and submit documents  
8 electronically. The exceptions also enabled us to move to  
9 virtual strategies to continue services to current customers and  
10 engage new customers. Not only are these exceptions important  
11 for service continuity, they also include ease of access for our  
12 customers, and reduce their need to travel to an office or  
13 another location to work with us. To maintain these  
14 improvements, in September we incorporated many of them into our  
15 standard business processes. Throughout this time we've also  
16 worked closely with TWC IT, not only to ensure that our staff  
17 are equipped to work and serve customers remotely, but also to  
18 continue to identify and implement technology solutions to  
19 better engage and serve our customers. To highlight just a few  
20 of those, shortly after it launched we added VR questions to  
21 Larry the bot, which has provided VR information to 8,280  
22 individuals to date. We established a small rapid engagement  
23 team that is available to interested individuals through one  
24 statewide number and email address. Since its launch in July,  
25 this team has connected 2,456 individuals to VR. We also adapted

1 a virtual hiring fair platform by using it to provide career  
2 exploration activities to students with disabilities. By the end  
3 of 2020, VR staff had conducted more than 25 virtual student  
4 transition fairs attended by more than 2,000 individuals. In  
5 just a few weeks, we will launch a portal that will enable  
6 interested individuals to self-refer to VR by clicking a link on  
7 our website. And we're working with IT and business operations  
8 on an automated attendance system that will facilitate ongoing  
9 communications and increase engagement between VR staff and  
10 customers. With regard to improving our services and processes,  
11 we have collaborated with our providers and stakeholders to  
12 increase the efficiency and quality of our services by taking an  
13 in-depth look at where we need to improve. They've provided  
14 input about challenges, recommended solutions, and they're  
15 providing ongoing feedback on our efforts to improve the vehicle  
16 modification process that you just heard about earlier this  
17 morning. [inaudible] the employment services we offer are  
18 supported employment services, and also services to our  
19 customers with mental health conditions. In addition, we're  
20 using what we've learned about rapid process improvement to  
21 deploy tools and techniques that help our VR counselors,  
22 rehabilitation assistance, and [inaudible] support team members  
23 to work together to serve their customers. As we prepare for the  
24 future, we understand that the future of service delivery and  
25 customer engagement will be different than what we did before

1 the pandemic, and we're excited about our plan to adopt a hybrid  
2 approach to service delivery. Our goal with this plan is that  
3 our customers will be able to choose whether to engage with us  
4 in person, remotely, or both. We're also working with IT on  
5 solutions to move more toward a paperless approach. We're doing  
6 this by implementing systems that enable electronic document  
7 transmission and storage, and in fact, we're currently piloting  
8 a new system that will allow providers to submit reports and  
9 invoices electronically. That [inaudible] will be stored  
10 electronically and connected to the customer's case file in our  
11 case management system. We are also looking forward to serving  
12 students this summer. Last summer, we were able to convert about  
13 17 of our planned summer programs to virtual format, serving  
14 over 1,100 students. However, we were so disappointed to have to  
15 cancel our largest summer program, summer earn and learn. It was  
16 necessary, though, for the safety of our students and  
17 communities. But this year, as of last Thursday, we've executed  
18 contracts for summer earn and learn 2021 of all 28 workforce  
19 boards, and our goal with our workforce board partners is to  
20 provide work readiness training and work-based learning to more  
21 than 2,500 students this summer. And this year, we have included  
22 options for virtual work readiness and remote [inaudible]. So,  
23 while the pandemic has been very challenging for the VR program  
24 and especially for our customers, the last almost year has given  
25 us an invaluable opportunity to adapt, to improve, to innovate,

1 and to plan for the future. And we've been able to do this at an  
2 accelerated pace thanks to the support from other TWC divisions,  
3 including IT, business operations, operational insight, and  
4 external relations. And also thanks to the support and  
5 engagement from our stakeholders and providers. As we  
6 [inaudible] 2020, for the calendar year, more than 22,500 people  
7 applied for VR. More than 56,000 of our VR participants received  
8 services to help them prepare for, obtain, and retain  
9 employment, and more than 10,000 of our participants completed  
10 their planned services and achieved successful employment. So,  
11 we are committed to continuing to implement what we've learned  
12 and improve as we go forward. That concludes my remarks, and I'd  
13 be happy to answer any questions.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any questions or comments?

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Thank you, Ms.

16 Fuller. Great report.

17 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Cheryl, I'm gonna  
18 continue to recognize employers that are playing in that  
19 disability space [inaudible] space and other boards [inaudible]  
20 for doing that and working with the RCT, pushing forward in that  
21 regard. So, thank you for what you're doing.

22 MS. FULLER: Yes, sir.

23 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, thank you.

25

1 MR. SERNA: Thank you, sir. That's the last  
2 update that we had. That's it for this Agenda Item.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, thank you so  
4 much. This is Agenda Item 14, discussion, consideration, and  
5 possible action regarding approval of local workforce  
6 development board nominees.

7 MS. WILLIAMS: Morning, Chairman,  
8 commissioners, and Mr. Serna. For the record, Shunta Williams  
9 with the Workforce Development Division. And before you for  
10 consideration today we have workforce board nominations for  
11 Workforce Solutions Alamo, Borderplex, deep East Texas, north  
12 central Texas, and Golden Crescent. Staff recommends that all  
13 nominees be approved, and I'm here to answer any questions you  
14 may have.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, questions or  
16 comments?

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, do we have a  
20 motion on this issue?

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that  
22 we approve board nominees for Alamo, Borderplex, deep East  
23 Texas, north central Texas, and Golden Crescent.

24 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second that motion.

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and  
2 seconded, motion carries. All right. Agenda Item 15, we don't  
3 have any legislative proposals to discuss today. Is there a  
4 legislative report today?

5 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir, there is.

6 MR. BRITT: Good morning, Chairman Daniel,  
7 Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, and Mr. Serna. For  
8 the record, Michael Britt, governmental relations. Currently,  
9 the Texas house and senate are adjourned until next Tuesday,  
10 February the 9. The house will reconvene at 1:00 on Tuesday and  
11 the senate at 3:00. It's also being reported that house  
12 committee assignments will be released sometime this week. And  
13 finally, wanted to update you all that the senate finance  
14 committee has scheduled their hearing for articles seven and  
15 eight, which will include TWC, for Thursday, February 18, at  
16 9:00 a.m. The exact order of the agencies for the hearing and  
17 protocols for personnel testifying are still being finalized,  
18 and we will keep you updated as those become more clear. And  
19 that concludes my remarks, and I'm happy to answer any that you  
20 all may have.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you, any questions  
22 or comments?

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

24 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None, thank you.

25 MR. BRITT: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thanks very much. All  
2 right, now an executive director's report.

3 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir, I have one item that  
4 Tom McCarty will lay out for us.

5 MR. MCCARTY: Good morning, Chairman Daniel,  
6 Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, Tom McCarty, with  
7 external relation. It's my pleasure to present to you all that  
8 Kim Berry [sic] was nominated by her supervisor, Michael Britt,  
9 for the individual star award due to her demonstration of  
10 dedication and service to the governmental relations department  
11 and the agency during the 86 Texas legislative session. I'll  
12 provide a few highlights from the substantial write-up of Kim's  
13 actions as it relates to this award. While maintaining her own  
14 assessments and workload, which during a legislative session is  
15 significant, Kim, on her own initiative, trained new staff on  
16 departmental daily and legislative operations, software used by  
17 the government relations department, and invited staff to  
18 meetings to help build knowledge in program areas. Her actions  
19 not only demonstrated clear performance above and beyond her  
20 assigned duties, but also demonstrated the very definition of  
21 teamwork. Please join me in congratulating Kim and thanking her  
22 for her exceptional service to the agency.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you.

24 MR. SERNA: Did you wanna have Kim--  
25

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Well deserved. A well  
2 deserved award.

3 MR. SERNA: Did you wanna have Kim say  
4 anything?

5 MR. MCCARTY: I think you all can see Kim on  
6 your screen now.

7 MR. SERNA: There she is. Kim, you wanna say  
8 a few words, or are you good?

9 MS. BERRY: I'm appreciative and just thank  
10 you, and I am lucky to work with a very good team.

11 MR. SERNA: All right. Congratulations, Kim.  
12 Good job.

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Congratulations, Kim,  
14 good job. Well deserved.

15 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: [Inaudible] gave you  
16 the hand clap, so appreciate all that you're doing. And so  
17 [inaudible].

18 MR. SERNA: Our legislative folks normally  
19 work behind the scenes, so it's always fun for me to bring one  
20 of them out into the light. Especially for one that's done an  
21 outstanding job, so. Mr. Chairman, that concludes the executive  
22 director's report.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you so much. Is  
24 there any other order of business to come before the commission  
25 today?



1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I'd just  
2 like to acknowledge that February is two things that are very  
3 dear to me. One is CT awareness month, and the other is  
4 celebrating Black History Month. So, I'd like for everyone to  
5 join me in that.

6 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: We're joining you in  
7 all of those as well.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Absolutely. Absolutely.  
9 Anything else? Do we have a motion to adjourn today?

10 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that  
11 we adjourn.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second that  
13 motion.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and  
15 seconded to adjourn, and we are adjourned. All right, y'all have  
16 a great week.

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