



Illinois Accountability Commission – Public Hearing #3

Tuesday, February 24th 2026

9:00AM to 1:00PM

Michael A. Bilandic Building

160 North LaSalle St.

Chicago, Illinois 60601

I. Welcome and Call to Order – 9:04am

- a. The February 24th Public Hearing was called to order by Ric Estrada at 9:04am, followed by a brief opening statement about the purpose of today’s hearing.
- b. Commissioners Roll Call

Illinois Accountability Commission Leadership	
Commissioner Cindy Sam	X
Commissioner Linda Xóchitl Tortolero	X
Commissioner Susan Gzesh	X
Commissioner Ric Estrada	X
Commissioner Aurora Austriaco	X
Commissioner Jimmy L. Arce	X
Commission Vice Chair Patricia Brown Holmes	X
Commission Chair Hon. Rubén Castillo	X

II. Witness Panel 1: Health, Mental Health, and Social Well-Being

- a. 9:14am – Commissioner Ric Estrada introduces the topic of the first panel of witnesses, as well as an introduction to three witnesses testifying before the commission today.
- b. 9:15am – 9:31am - Dr. Minal Giri, pediatrician and child health advocate, gives her testimony.

- c. 9:32am – 9:41am – Dr. Rebecca Ford-Paz, from the Coalition for Immigrant Mental Health, gives her testimony.
- d. 9:42am – 9:53am – Dr. Karen Susan Vanderkamp, pediatrician, gives her testimony.
- e. 9:53am - 10:04am – Commissioner Q&A

III. Witness Panel 2: Education, Youth and School Communities

- a. 10:05am – Commissioner Ric Estrada – provides transition into second panel, touching on the importance of education for the stability of communities; introduces three panelists.
- b. 10:07am – 10:20am - Mariana Souta-Manning, president of the Erikson Institute, gives her testimony.
- c. 10:21am – 10:31am - Juliet de Jesús Alejandre, executive director of Palenque LSNA, gives her testimony.
- d. 10:31am – 10:38am - Seth Lavin, principal of Brentano Math and Science Academy, gives his testimony.
- e. 10:39am – 10:50am – Commissioner Q&A
- f. Commissioner Ric Estrada – 10:50am – thanks panelists; announces recess.

IV. Witness Panel 3: Economic Vitality and Household Stability

- a. 11:01am – Commissioner Ric Estrada calls meeting back to order.
- b. 11:04am – 11:14am – Kathryn Bocanegra, PhD, LCSW, Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois - Chicago, gives her testimony.
- c. 11:14am – 11:22am – Garien Gatewood, Deputy Mayor of Community Safety, gives his testimony.



d. 11:22am – 11:31am – Dominique McCord, Chief Program Officer at Metropolitan Peace Initiatives, gives her testimony.

e. 11:31am – 11:38am – Commissioner Q&A

V. Witness Panel 4: Economic & Household Stability

a. 11:38am – Commissioner Ric Estrada introduces the next panelists.

b. 11:40am – 11:50am – Anna Valencia, City Clerk, gives her testimony.

c. 11:50am – 12:06pm -- Marcela Rodriguez, Executive Director of Enlace Chicago, gives her testimony.

d. 12:06pm – 12:10pm -- Mike Salvatore, Founder of Heritage Hospitality Group, gives his testimony.

e. 12:10pm – 12:19pm – Commissioner Q&A

f. 12:19pm – Vice Chair, Judge Patricia Brown-Holmes thanks the panelists.

g. 12:21pm – Ric Estrada provides a summary of the topics covered and emphasizes the importance of staying engaged with hearings and Commission work.

VI. Public Comment

a. 12:23pm – 12:27pm - Emily Wheeler of Sanctuary Working Group provides public comment.

b. 12:27pm – 12:30pm – Kiara Cortez, a caseworker at Casa Michoacan and a mother, provides public comment.

c. 12:31pm – 12:33pm – Angela Sedeno, Executive Director of the Kinzie Center, provides public comment.

d. 12:33pm – 12:35pm – Vero Ortiz, Senior of Director of Community and Wellness at Enlace Chicago, provides public comment.



VII. Commission Business

- a. 12:37pm – 12:58pm - Chair Judge Ruben Castillo delivers remarks; plays video.

VIII. Adjournment

- a. Hearing adjourned at 12:58pm.