Task Force Proposed to Settle Disputes Over Immigration Impact

In the latest of a series of reports on racial and ethnic tensions, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights recommends that a Federal task force be created to settle controversies over the impact of immigration on the U.S. economy.

The Miami Hearing Report in the series “Racial and Ethnic Tensions in American Communities: Poverty, Inequality and Discrimination” notes that various studies to measure the net effect of immigration reach conflicting conclusions arising from conflicting methodology and problems with data.

The report states that the task force, created by Congress or the President, “should be directed to facilitate and/or develop a consensus on methodology to produce sound studies driven by facts rather than assumptions.”

The report distinguishes the civil rights recommendation from a request by the Commission on Immigration Reform that the National Academy of Sciences study the economic and fiscal effects of immigration. The report says that an agreement on methodology could apply to all future studies of immigration’s impact on social and political as well as economic matters that might generate racial or ethnic tensions.

The recommendation is one of dozens for Federal, State, and local actions contained in the report, based primarily on a Miami hearing in September 1995 and approved last June on a 6-2 vote by the bipartisan Commission on Civil Rights.

Over the past six years the Commission has been investigating racial and ethnic tensions. It held the last hearing in the series earlier this year in the Mississippi Delta city of Greenville. Other hearings have

See MIAMI, page 4

Better Identifying of Students For Special Education Urged

Citing evidence that minorities are overrepresented in special education, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is recommending that Congress and the Department of Education take steps leading to better identification of students for the programs.

In its report “Equal Educational Opportunity and Nondiscrimination for Students with Mental Retardation, Learning Disabilities, Behavioral Disabilities, or Serious Emotional Disturbance: Federal Enforce-

ment of Section 504,” the Commission states that more accurate identification methods would not only protect minorities against discrimination but help to assure that all students receive the appropriate education to which they are entitled in public school.

The report, the second to be released in the “Equal Educational Opportunity Project Series” resulting from studies by the Commission’s Office of Civil Rights Evaluation, was approved in July by a unanimous vote of the Commissioners.

See CONGRESS, page 5
''98 Budget Increase Sought as Commission Addresses Pressing, Controversial Issues

Congress has been asked to reauthorize the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and increase its budget to $11 million in Fiscal Year 1998 from the $8.74 million appropriated in FY 1997.

In speaking for the budget increase, Commission Chairperson Mary Frances Berry told an oversight hearing by the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution that the Commission was in the midst of addressing "some of the most pressing and controversial civil rights issues of the day."

During FY 1998 the Commission plans to issue the last hearing reports and a separate summary of its findings and recommendations to conclude a multiyear investigation of racial and ethnic tensions in the Nation. The Commission also plans to complete a study of the crisis facing young African American males in inner cities, Berry said.

She said that in FY 1998 the Commission also planned to study enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act and to hold hearings on the issue of public schools and religious freedom. Other projects would include examinations of means of measuring discrimination and of the role of the Government in encouraging citizenship, she said.

The Commission's last, two-year reauthorization expired with the end of FY 1996. The Commission continued normal operations based on its enacted appropriation.

Agency's performance eyed for improvement

"I want to assure the members of this Subcommittee that the Commissioners are committed to making any necessary changes to improve the agency's performance," the Chairperson added.

The General Accounting Office report was made in July to Chairman Charles T. Canady of the Subcommittee on the Constitution. Based on a study requested by him, the report found fault with the Commission's management, budgeting, and accounting procedures.

Recommendations were that the Commission bring up to date agency regulations, make current its guidance for internal management, and establish a management information system for planning and tracking projects such as discrimination studies and hearings.

Commissioner Carl A. Anderson also attended the hearing and spoke for the reauthorization.

Ruby G. Moy Appointed Staff Director of Commission

Ruby G. Moy, a White House official for several years, is the new Staff Director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

The presidential appointment of Moy, who had been Executive Assistant to the Director of the White House Office of Public Liaison since 1993, was voted unanimous concurrence by the eight members of the bipartisan Commission on Civil Rights. At the independent Commission, she is in charge of day-to-day operations.

At the White House, Moy served under Alexis M. Herman, when the current Labor Secretary was Assistant to the President and Director of Public Liaison. Moy assisted in constituency outreach programs, many of which involved the President or Vice President.

From 1973 into 1992, Moy was Chief of Staff and Administrative Assistant to U.S. Representative Frank Horton, a prominent Republican from New York. She provided overall management for his Washington and district offices, developed legislation and programs, and served as liaison to, or coordinator for, committees and congressional organizations in which the now-retired Congressman was a leader, including the New York State Congressional Delegation.

Before joining the Congressman's office, she was a congressional liaison officer for ACTION, Administrative Assistant to Motion Picture Association of America, Inc. President Jack Valenti, and an executive aide in the White House Office of President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Ruby Moy is a native of Washington, DC. She has received recognition and appreciation citations from a number of organizations for Americans of Asian descent.
Briefing Weighs Whether Cuts, Restrictions In Legal Services Are Harmful to Civil Rights

At a briefing before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, some participants argued that civil rights had suffered significantly because of restrictions on litigation by and reductions in funding for Legal Services Corporation grantees, but another panelist challenged that view.

The briefing in May was arranged after various public assertions and questions about how the Federal funding reductions, the restrictions on litigation, and other legal aid issues were affecting, or would affect, access by poor people to the legal system. In proposing the briefing, Commission Vice Chairperson Cruz Reynoso expressed a special interest in exploring whatever civil rights implications there might be in such matters as the prohibition of class-action and other impact lawsuits by grantees.

1981 before a mixed pattern of dominant reductions but some increases began. The current funding of $283 million would have to be more than $600 million to provide the Fiscal Year 1981 level of service, Evans said.

Laster, of LSC, said that LSC is funding about 280 programs and that one or another of those programs provides legal aid in every county in America.

During a question period, Vice Chairperson Reynoso asked about impacts the ban on class actions and restrictions on representation of non-citizens were having on civil rights of the poor. Evans replied that the ban on class actions was “a very unfortunate development, I think, in terms of the ability to get justice done for many, many people.”

Funding reached inflation-adjusted high in the early 1980s

The panelists were Robert D. Evans, Director of the Washington Office, American Bar Association (ABA); Gail W. Laster, Director of Governmental Relations and Counsel, Legal Services Corporation (LSC); Michael J. Horowitz, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute; Jose R. Padilla, Executive Director, California Rural Legal Assistance; Phyllis J. Holmen, Executive Director, Georgia Legal Services Program; and David Cole, a professor at Georgetown University Law Center and columnist for Legal Times.

Evans, of the ABA, related LSC appropriations, which reached an inflation-adjusted high in Fiscal Year 1981 before a mixed pattern of dominant reductions but some increases began. The current funding of $283 million would have to be more than $600 million to provide the Fiscal Year 1981 level of service, Evans said.

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LSC’s funding ‘marginal to the fate of the poor’

Horowitz, of the Hudson Institute, contested what he said appeared to be the implicit assumption of the briefing. Horowitz said that whether LSC received more or less money was “marginal to the fate of the poor.” He added that the LSC leadership “left to its own devices has for the most part hurt the poor, damaged the poor in extraordinary ways.” He referred to cases in which legal services had imposed barriers to evictions from housing as triggering rent increases for other tenants and discouraging the construction of new housing for the poor. As harmful, he also referred to legal aid’s opposing suspensions of obstreperous students and seeking “income redistribution.”

Padilla, of California Rural Legal Assistance, emphasized three arguments: 1) legal aid encompasses traditional civil rights cases and that involvement has resulted in the curtailment of remedies, including “the most effective and symbolic procedural means for effectuating civil rights remedies, the class action”; 2) civil rights work takes up only a very small part of legal aid resources; and 3) access to legal aid “is itself a civil rights issue.”

In arguing that access to legal aid is a civil rights issue, Padilla said that “to the extent that legal aid is unavailable for the rural ethnic community, both civil rights and basic legal rights go unprotected.”

Ability to meet legal needs of poor ‘dramatically impacted’

Holmen, of Georgia Legal Services Program, said that reductions in legal services funding and restrictions on legal services litigation had resulted in the poor being “unable to enforce their rights and gain the protection of the laws to which they’re entitled.”

She said that the funding reductions had “dramatically impacted” the program’s ability to meet the legal needs of Georgia’s poor and that it had begun to rely more on telephone conversations and on community appearances to provide limited assistance through advice.

Professor Cole, of Georgetown University Law Center, said that legal aid programs furnish the principal means of access to the courts for the poor.

“Our judicial system is legitimate only to the extent that the poor, as well as the rich, have access to courts,” Cole said.

Copies of briefing transcripts and executive summaries of the proceedings may be obtained free from the Publications Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 624 Ninth St., N.W., Room 600, Washington, DC 20425.
examined tensions in the cities of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Washington. The Commission’s Office of General Counsel is now completing the hearing reports and intends to write a comprehensive summary report on racial and ethnic tensions nationally.

Examining immigration-related issues arising in Miami and the city’s Dade County, the Miami report suggests its findings and recommendations have national bearing, since the issues are manifestations of those facing the Nation as a whole.

The report describes Miami as “an ethnic cauldron that periodically boils over when peace is shattered by one incident or another, leading to demonstrations, civil disturbances and other manifestations of racial and ethnic tension.”

‘A pervasive sense of powerlessness, resentment and despair’

It states that a “stark contrast between the economic success of many Cuban Americans and the limited economic success of African Americans in Miami has contributed to a pervasive sense of powerlessness, resentment and despair in Miami’s black community.”

The report recommends that Dade County authorize its Community Relations Board to create an Ethnic Relations Task Force to look into tensions and to promote a dialogue among racial and ethnic communities. It also urges that Federal, State, and local governments assure that small business loans, set-asides for minority contractors, and other economic benefits are distributed fairly to all racial and ethnic groups. A priority should be the full inclusion of African Americans in the Miami area prosperity, the report says.

In assessing questions of public benefits going to immigrants, the report concludes that Congress should amend welfare reform so that, except for a limited time for sponsored immigrants, non-citizens would have the same eligibility for Food Stamps and Supplemental Security Income as citizens.

Welfare participation rates distorted by grouping

The report supports Florida’s decision to cover immigrant recipients of Aid for Dependent Children and Medicaid. It states that the Federal Government should provide additional financial support for States like Florida in which larger than usual numbers of immigrants reside.

In policy consideration, welfare participation rates for refugees and asylees should be separated from those of other immigrants, the report recommends. Refugees and asylees often arrive with few resources and distort welfare participation rates for immigrants generally, the report finds.

INS and Florida should correct any inequalities found in immigrant treatment

For both immigrant advocacy groups and groups seeking to curb public benefits going to undocumented immigrants, the report has advice: For advocacy groups, be sensitive to the concerns of all residents in areas heavily populated by immigrants; for the second groups, avoid encouraging general anti-immigrant sentiment and community misperceptions such as that all immigrants are under attack.

Finding tensions arising from real or, in some ways, perhaps only perceived different treatment of Cuban and Haitian immigrants, the report recommends that the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the State act to assure whatever inequalities exist are corrected.

Among other findings and recommendations, a number deal with language policies in government, education, and private employment.

While noting that legislation to declare English the official language is not supported by a majority of the members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the report recommends that if any such legislation is to be enacted it be narrowly drawn and that costs of multilingual services not be a determinative argument in its favor, since the costs in most communities of greatest need are insignificant.

Monolingual blacks encounter difficulties in gaining jobs

Since 57 percent of the Dade County population has as a primary language Spanish or other non-English language, significant racial tensions arise from difficulties encountered by monolingual English-speaking blacks in gaining jobs, the report finds.

It recommends that the public schools and adult education emphasize foreign language teaching, in keeping with workforce considerations, and that Federal, State, and local laws recognize the unusual educational aid needs of areas where monolingual English speakers are minorities.

A copy of the report may be obtained free from the Publications Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 624 Ninth St., N.W., Room 600, Washington, DC 20425.
The report examines implementation and enforcement of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act by the Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR). It also considers other Federal laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act to the extent that they apply.

Although finding that Federal laws furnish extensive protections to students with disabilities and that OCR provides “comprehensive and progressive” implementation and enforcement, the report makes a number of specific recommendations for improvements to Congress, to the Education Department and its OCR, and to state and local education agencies.

In a transmittal letter to the President and to Congress, Commission Chairperson Mary Frances Berry states that the report resulted from “the Commission’s long-standing commitment to ensuring that the Nation’s public schools are free of discrimination and that all children in this country are afforded equal educational opportunity.”

Among the recommendations for Congress is that it institute programs to develop and retain teachers for special education. The report states that a shortage of such teachers may be denying students the assistance of appropriately trained instructors. Funding incentives should be provided by the Government, the report suggests.

The report also calls on Congress to fulfill its commitment to pay at least 40 percent of the excess costs of providing special education and related services to students with disabilities.

For better identifying of students with disabilities, Congress should consider changing legislative definitions of behavioral disabilities and emotional disturbance to take into account cultural or ethnic norms based on community standards. Moreover, Congress should, in reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, review its overall approach to defining disabilities to determine whether another approach might be superior in assuring students with disabilities equal educational opportunity, the report states.

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**Misidentification problem needs studying**

In addition, it is recommended that Congress appropriate funds for OCR initiatives to address the problem of misidentification.

The report states that OCR should work with experts such as educators, administrators, psychologists, clinicians, and social workers to develop clear criteria for identifying students with disabilities. The criteria should include the measuring of subjective factors such as behavior and emotions that might affect classification, according to the report.

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**Criteria on behavior, emotions questionable**

The report also recommends that the Department of Education promote an examination of criteria for behavior and emotions that might point to the presence of a behavioral disability or emotional disturbance. The Department should collaborate with researchers, physicians, psychologists, social workers, and other experts to determine factors beyond an impairment that could affect a student’s behavior or emotions, such as home life and culture, according to the report.

Furthermore, the Department should work with experts to deal with current problems of defining Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Among other recommendations for the Department are these:

- Expand efforts to create technical assistance materials for identification of disabilities.
- Hold regional conferences or hearings on issues related to parental involvement in decisions about student classification and education.
- Collaborate with state and local educational agencies to develop uniform standards for special education teacher certification.
- Promote an understanding of the effects of disability classifications, or “labeling,” on students and on minority parents especially; and advance research on the classifications and their use.

Among other recommendations for OCR are these:

- Investigate the impact of student/teacher ratios.
- Promote the participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular and other social and recreational activities.
- Educate schools and districts on the information investigators examine in determining whether the education afforded to a student meets his or her individual needs.
- Create a formal guideline for determining whether facilities used by students with disabilities meet the requirement of law.
- Revise, clarify, and bring up to date various regulations and policies.

The first volume of the educational series, besides containing much background information for the series, furnished a general evaluation of, and recommendations for, civil rights enforcement by the Department of Education and its Office for Civil Rights.

The first two volumes of the series may be obtained free from the Publications Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 624 Ninth St., N.W., Room 600, Washington, DC 20425.
Commission Chair Joins Committees
At Meetings on Race Relations in 3 States

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Chairperson Mary Frances Berry joined Advisory Committee representatives in three States this summer at community meetings to explore developments in race relations since forums a year earlier on church burnings.

A new community forum was held in Boligee, AL, and round-table discussions were held in Baker, LA, and Ruleville, MS.

While in Mississippi, Dr. Berry and Commission Regional Director Melvin L. Jenkins also met with Governor Kirk Fordice. The Governor promised to consider asking the Legislature to establish a State human rights agency. He and the Commission Chairperson also discussed race relations in the State, public education, and church burnings, among other subjects.

Later Alabama Advisory Committee Chairperson Rodney A. Max and Jenkins met with Alabama Governor Fob James, who said that he would take establishment of a human rights agency under consideration.

At the meetings in communities where churches had burned, reports of progress in relations between whites and blacks were scarce, but a number of participants did praise the opportunities afforded for discussion. The participants included Government officials, ministers, other local leaders, and other community members.

In Boligee, a new forum was held because the 1996 forum had discovered racial polarization to be especially prevalent in Greene County, where the town is located.

The 1996 forum was held after three African American churches in Greene County had been destroyed by fires.

After forums held by State Advisory Committees (SACs) in six Southern states last year, SAC and Commission representatives in attendance, including Berry, concluded that severe racial divisions were a significant factor in arson at African American churches. It was decided that the racial problems demanded further attention from the Commission and its State Advisory Committees.

The Commission is preparing transcripts and executive summaries of the 1997 meetings. Transcripts and summaries from the 1996 forums remain available, and copies may be obtained free from the Publications Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 624 Ninth St., N.W., Room 600, Washington, DC 20425.

‘Bridges of Understanding’ Urged in Kentucky

In a report titled “Bias and Bigotry in Kentucky,” the State Advisory Committee (SAC) calls on communities and residents to build “bridges of understanding” that will lead to action on conditions of despair among minorities and perceptions of discrimination.

At briefing meetings in Louisville, Lexington, and Bowling Green, the SAC found that the views on race relations by public officials conflicted with those of minorities and social leaders appearing before it.

“Public officials see communities with improving race relations, infrequent bias- and bigotry-related incidents, and greater opportunities,” the SAC concludes in the report.

“Minorities and others see communities where bias, bigotry, intolerance, and discrimination continue to fester and breed mistrust and occasional eruptions of violence.”

In the report, the SAC expresses a special concern about the targeting of middle and high school students for hate materials. The SAC was told that hate materials had been distributed near schools in all three cities and that in Bowling Green such materials had appeared on school grounds. Schools should have programs responding to the intrusion of hate materials and for improving race relations, the report concludes.

Statements by briefing participants also suggest a continuing of discrimination in such areas as access to credit, rental housing, and employment, the report asserts.

The report expresses concern that bigotry incidents appeared to be increasing with the arrival of new minorities, including people of Asian and Hispanic descent, in the cities.

The report suggests local government officials, private organizations, and residents:

- Recognize the concerns, fears, needs, and interests of racial and ethnic minorities and their sense of local disenfranchisement.
- Acknowledge the existence of racial, ethnic, religious, and other biases that can contribute to acts of violence.
- Develop a broad range of programs and activities to improve intergroup relations.
- Promote a long-term commitment to the acceptance of diversity.
- Hold prejudice-reduction workshops.

The briefing meetings were held in 1992. Later information was obtained before the writing of the report. The report notes that it is not a comprehensive review of racial problems but a representation of the experiences of briefing participants.
Washington State Taking Steps to Ensure Equality for Minorities in Juvenile Justice System

In Washington State the Advisory Committee has concluded that other States and localities could profit from a consideration of efforts there to deal with an overrepresentation of minorities in the juvenile justice system.

The Advisory Committee, in its report “Dealing with Disproportionality in the Juvenile Justice System: The State of Washington’s Approach,” also encourages juvenile justice officials to continue their efforts to ensure that all juveniles, regardless of race or national origin, are afforded equal protection of the law.

The report, based on research by committee members and Commission staff and a June 1995 forum in Seattle, is being released after a unanimous vote for acceptance by the Commission.

At the forum, participants reported on numerous and varied efforts to deal with disproportionality, or the overrepresentation of minority youths in the juvenile justice system in comparison with their percentages of the population. The report concludes that the efforts should be analyzed for success rates. Until such an analysis, the impact of the efforts will be speculative, although they appear to be effective, the report states.

Among the efforts has been the Reaching Back/Giving Back project in Seattle’s King County. The report describes the effort as a “bellwether program” that no doubt will be studied by other localities. The program provides an alternative to detention for African American youths. Once a youth is detained, the program seeks to match him or her with a mentor or a community organization that will be responsible for oversight if the youth can be released into the community.

According to the report, the State Legislature enacted laws in 1993-94 stimulating the efforts against disproportionality. Those measures required that regional committees study and report on issues connected with disproportionality, including juvenile disposition standards, the effectiveness and cultural relevance of rehabilitation services provided by county organizations and facilities, diversions from the juvenile court system, and parole and probation services. They provided for diversity training of law enforcement and juvenile justice officials. Among other steps, they also required that prosecutors develop standards for prosecuting juveniles.

At the time of the forum, 28 of the State’s 39 counties had some form of cultural diversity training. Many of the counties were routinely collecting and analyzing information on the problems of minority youths. There were also efforts under way in some counties to hire more minorities for positions involved with juvenile justice.

Other programs stressed the impact of schools on delinquency and sought to reinstate youths in school and arrange for needed mental health and social services. Yet other programs offered role models and strove to instill values while providing counseling and tutoring and recreation.

Participants at the forum also spoke of what they saw as problems that remained to be addressed. Some cited inadequate guidance by parents and the environment in which children are reared. There were calls for the hiring of more bilingual staff and criticisms of reductions in group homes.

The Juvenile Justice Racial Disproportionality Work Group, in a study ordered by the State Legislature and released in early 1995, found that minority youths were four times more likely than white youths to be sentenced to confinement.

New Public Service Announcement Distributed to Radio Stations

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights recently launched its second radio public service announcement (PSA) campaign designed to discourage discrimination.

The new PSA, “Teach the Children,” encourages parents, by example, to teach their children to respect and be tolerant of others and to value others despite their differences. Parents should, in the words of the PSA, “Teach tolerance. Because open minds open doors for all our children.”

Two television stars, Phylicia Rashad and Eriq La Salle, volunteered their talents and time to record the message. The PSA has been distributed, in 30- and 60-second versions, to more than 4,000 radio stations with a variety of formats in the top 100 media markets, including stations in every State in the Nation. The Commission’s target audience are people in their mid-20s to early 50s.

The Commission’s first PSA, “Discrimination: Just Out of Tune with America,” recorded by Mary Chapin Carpenter, was widely aired by radio stations across the Nation.
Journal to Mark Commission’s 40th Anniversary With Looks at What the Future Holds for Society

The coming edition of the Civil Rights Journal, scheduled to be published later this Fall, will observe the 40th anniversary of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

In keeping with the Commission’s impact on civil rights in the latter half of this century, the Journal will provide dozens of looks from experts on what the foreseeable years of the 21st century are likely to hold for U.S. society, in terms of equity both under the law and in those relationships that are above and beyond the law. Leaders of civil rights-related organizations are contributing their views in statements, and scholars and journalists are providing longer essays on critical issues facing the Nation and what should be done to address them.

Scholars, Journalists, Civil Rights Leaders Will Furnish Views

The second edition of the Journal, a periodical whose first issue appeared two years ago, will also feature an article on the Commission’s first 40 years by Hugh Davis Graham, the Vanderbilt professor and author of “The Civil Rights Era.”

In a change of pace, Rabbi Marc Gellman, who appears regularly with Monsignor Thomas Hartman on television and radio, writes about a moral core, or sacred beliefs, that supported the Nation and the civil rights movement and should be depended on again.

C. Eric Lincoln, the Duke University scholar and novelist and poet, examines racial divisiveness and sounds a call for its end.

When planning the Journal, editors wanted a Books department that would become required civil rights reading. In the coming edition, the Journal will offer a full section of reviews and essays dealing with books important to civil rights.

The Commission was originally established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

To get on a mailing list for the Journal, a person or organization should send the request to the Publications Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 624 Ninth St., N.W., Room 600, Washington, DC 20425. Single copies will be available free of charge while supplies last.

CIVIL RIGHTS UPDATE: The Staff Director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has determined that publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law of this agency. Use of funds for printing it has been approved by the Director, Office of Management and Budget, through September 30, 1997.

UPDATE does not necessarily represent Commission policy. Address corrections are requested. USCCR headquarters are at 624 Ninth St., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20425. 202/376-8312, or 202/376-8116 for the deaf/hearing impaired. FAX: 202/376-8315.