

Chicago Hearings on Human & Civil Rights Violations, ICE Raids & Community Harm

HART Truth Telling Commission will convene Jan. 21-22 at McCormick Theological Seminary; press conference Jan. 22 at noon

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, January 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The HART (Human Rights, Anti-Authoritarianism, Reparatory and Restorative) Truth Telling Commission will convene public hearings on Jan. 21-22, 2026, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., at McCormick Theological Seminary (5416 S. Cornell Ave, Chicago, IL 60615) to document community harms linked to ICE raids and institutional racism. A press conference featuring Commissioners and invited Honorary Chairs will be held Thursday, Jan. 22 at noon.

The hearings will document human-rights harms facing communities of color amid the federal militarization of neighborhoods, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids. Harms include family separation, detention, workplace and home raids, fear-based policing, and lasting community trauma.

"When enforcement is militarized, harm becomes policy," said Dr. Iva E. Carruthers, Director of McCormick Theological Seminary's Center for Reparatory Justice, Transformation and Remediation (CRJTR). "And we have seen this pattern before — power aimed at the vulnerable and called 'order.' ICE raids and fear-based policing produce predictable human-rights violations, but human dignity is not negotiable."

Proceedings will be transcribed and videotaped to support future education and justice efforts.

Notable Testifiers Expected

Among the many voices expected to testify are leaders across civic, legal, labor, public health, and civil liberties, including:

- Kwame Raoul, Illinois Attorney General
- Stacy Davis Gates, President, Chicago Teachers Union
- Daniel Biss, Mayor, City of Evanston
- Col. Damon T. Arnold, M.D., M.P.H., CMT (Ret.), former Illinois State Surgeon General; former Director, IDPH
- Juan Muñoz, Oak Park Township Trustee (detained during protests at the Broadview ICE detention center)

- Ben Ruddell, Director of Criminal Justice Policy, ACLU of Illinois
- Representatives from the Office of Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, the Office of Illinois Governor JB Pritzker, along with additional community leaders and organizational representatives

A Public Hearing Process Centered on First-Hand Testimony

Testifiers will share oral testimony before a panel of 12-15 Commissioners, followed by open Q&A. Written submissions will also be invited to strengthen the public record.

Confirmed Commissioners include:

- Father Michael Pfleger (Faith Community of Saint Sabina)
- Rev. Dr. Janette Wilson (Rainbow PUSH Coalition)
- Dr. Vickie Casanova (UN Human Rights Advocate)
- Rick Tulsky (Pulitzer Prize winner)
- Dr. Teresa Cordova (Great Cities Institute)
- Sol Anderson (Evanston Community Foundation)
- Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III (Trinity UCC)

The hearings will also include partner observers representing a cross-section of organizations committed to distributing findings and supporting next-step mobilization.

Event Details

HART Truth Telling Commission Hearings

Dates: January 21-22, 2026

Time: 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. (both days)

Location: McCormick Theological Seminary, 5416 S. Cornell Ave, Chicago, IL 60615

Press Conference (Media Opportunity)

Date: Thursday, January 22, 2026

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: McCormick Theological Seminary, 5416 S. Cornell Ave, Chicago, IL 60615

Featuring: Commissioners and invited Honorary Chairs

Media Access: Credentialed media must register in advance. To request access, contact Hugo Perez at Hugo@localboycreative.com or 312-848-0714.

Photo/Video: Photo and video opportunities will be available during the hearings and at the January 22 press conference.

A Phased Chicago-to-National Process

What happens in Chicago matters everywhere. These hearings represent Phase 1 of a national process aimed at telling the story, curating community truth, and mobilizing voices as a critical step of resistance amid threats to democracy.

The HART Truth Telling Commission is part of a broader Truth Telling & Harm Documentation Commission model being facilitated through partnership between McCormick's CRJTR and the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference. The initiative will document testimony, develop recommendations for remedy, and strengthen a national alliance of partners prepared to hold the United States accountable to universal human rights standards.

Honorary Chairs

President Maisha Handy of McCormick Theological Seminary, President Brad Braxton of Chicago Theological Seminary, Fr. Enzo Del Brocco, President of Catholic Theological Union, and President Javier Viegas of Garrett Theological Seminary have been invited to serve as Honorary Chairs of the Commission.

About McCormick and the Organizing Partners

- McCormick Theological Seminary (founded 1829) equips leaders for faithful, inclusive, and justice-rooted ministry.
- The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference nurtures, sustains and mobilizes the African American faith community to address human rights and social justice.
- McCormick's Center for Reparatory Justice, Transformation and Remediation focuses on advancing reparatory justice, aiming to address systemic racism and historical injustices.

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