

Celebrating Universal Human Rights Month

In December, we celebrate the many achievements made in the name of Human Rights worldwide during the Universal Human Rights Month.

Specifically, December 10th, is International Human Rights Day. On this day, in 1948, 192 member states of the United Nations signed the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). ([UN.org](https://www.un.org/))



Eleanor Roosevelt holding the UDHR

This landmark document, drafted by representatives of various legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, is comprised of 30 Articles and outlines the standard achievements of all societies and all people. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt chaired the committee that drafted the document. ([UN.org](https://www.un.org/))

The preamble to the UDHR reads, in part, "*Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.*" ([UN.org](https://www.un.org/))

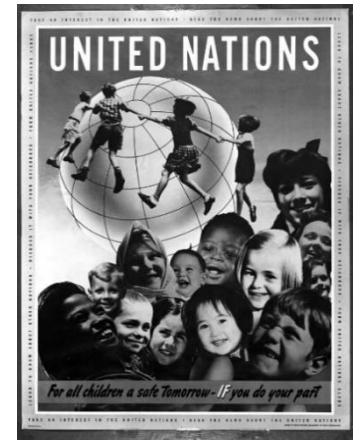
Articles of the UDHR include standards for equality in dignity and rights, protection from slavery and servitude, the right to leave and return to one's country of origin, and the assurance of freedom of thought and religion. While the UDHR is not legally binding, the articles have been incorporated into international and regional human rights treaties. ([Foundation of International Human Rights Law](https://www.foundationforhumanrights.org/))

[Some ratified treaties](#) that have origins in the UDHR are:

- The International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (1965).
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979).

The UDHR has been translated into almost 500 languages. Currently, all 192 member states of the UN have ratified at least one article, with the majority confirming four or more. ([Foundation of International Human Rights Law](#))

In 1959, the UN adopted the [Declaration on the Rights of a Child](#) (UNCRC) in response to the hardships children experienced during World War II. The UNCRC outlines fundamental rights for children, which includes allowing them to express their views in all matters that directly affect them, that member states will protect children from mental and physical abuse, and that member states will actively work to ensure that children receive a high standard of health care and medical treatment.



UNCRC Poster

These treaties paved the way for smaller and more local human rights organizations. In June 2020, Mayor Brian Arrigo reactivated the Revere Human Rights Commission (HRC) after approximately 20 years of being dormant. The newly-formed Commission held its first meeting on Thursday, October 1st of that year.

Mayor Arrigo recommends and the City Councilors appoint the commissioners whose mission consists of “empowering human and civil rights and empowering all people



Revere Human Rights Commission, October 1, 2021

of Revere by ensuring that everyone, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, have equitable opportunities, equal access, and are treated with dignity, respect, fairness, and justice.” ([Revere HRC, January 7, 2021](#)). Some of the topics discussed include cultural events, restorative justice (e.g., [the Restorative Justice Circle](#)), and community forums on diversity, race, equity, and inclusion (e.g., [UNH 21-Day Equity Habit](#)

[Building Challenge](#)) to educate and encourage residents of Revere to participate in civic engagement. These initiatives have been carried out in partnership with Revere Public Schools and other community-based organizations.

The HRC meets in person on the first Thursday of every month. The meetings are open to the public, and the Commission welcomes feedback and commentary. Community members can attend meetings in the Revere City Hall Council Chambers. Each session is also streamed live on the [RevereTV YouTube channel](#). Community members can also participate over Zoom.

Recently, four members of the HRC – Fire Chief Chris Bright, Dr. Lourenço Garcia, Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Inclusion, immigration lawyer Molly McGee, Esq., and Kourou Pich, Executive Director of HarborCOV, visited the Susan B. Anthony Middle School to participate in their Community Civics Event. They



Human Rights Commission

discussed community engagement, voting rights, local government, policy-making, and Ms. Pich's work to support victims and survivors of domestic violence. The

HRC encouraged all students to become agents of change by engaging in civic work and bringing their voices to the HRC meetings.

At Revere High School, Mark Fellowes (History teacher) runs the [Model UN](#) club for students who wish to learn more about the UN and learn strategies for presenting ideas on complicated issues. In the Model UN, students take on the roles of diplomats from various countries worldwide and work with other students to build solutions for human health, dignity, and safety. Students travel to local venues to participate in the Model UN process, representing countries or individuals on committees to discuss issues such as vaccine equity, cryptocurrency, and climate change.

For community members wishing to get involved in equity and human rights issues,



RPS Equity Advisory Board

students, families, and other community members are encouraged to join the Revere Public School [Equity Advisory Board](#) (EAB) and the Racial Equity Working Groups (REWG). The EAB meets once a month (Tuesday) at 3:00 pm in the School Committee room at Revere High School.

The EAB and its working groups meet monthly to discuss matters concerning diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging throughout the district and how these big concepts inter-relate to inform and shape institutional policies and practices for sustainable systems and classroom change to support all students.

In the 74 years since the signing of the UDHR, the global community has made great strides to ensure all citizens are afforded the same fundamental human rights. There are opportunities for everyone to get involved in this work. You can use [this resource](#)

from the Council of Europe to find simple ways to get involved in human rights issues this month and throughout the year.