

Civil Rights board will meet to discuss housing, taxes, immigration

By [David Pierce](#)

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STROUDSBURG — The Pennsylvania advisory board to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission will meet here Sept. 8 and hold panel discussions on housing, taxes and immigration.

"We thought it would be wise to focus on issues that affect all segments of the population," said Anthony Stevens-Arroyo, a Penn Estates resident and only Latino on the 11-member board.

Official announcement of the local meeting, believed to be the first held by the group in Monroe County, will come from the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, Stevens-Arroyo said. The session is expected to be held in the commissioners' meeting room on the second floor of the Monroe County Administrative Center in Stroudsburg.

Stevens-Arroyo was at the commissioners' regular meeting Wednesday to receive a certificate in recognition of his appointment to the civil rights group, which addresses allegations of discrimination based on race, gender, creed, age or other group identification.

"A lot of time people think of the last word in civil rights — rights," Stevens-Arroyo said. "There's also the other word — civility."

The retired Brooklyn College professor was appointed in June 2007 to a two-year term on the Pennsylvania advisory board.

The Pennsylvania board examines any civil rights issue of interest to Pennsylvanians and forwards recommendations to the Civil Rights Commission for addressing them.

"All this gets on the record and that's the point," said Stevens-Arroyo. "We need to talk about all aspects of civil rights and not just wait for the dam to break."

Stevens-Arroyo said it is particularly important for the advisory board to assist more rural areas of the state in addressing civil rights issues.

"A lot of local areas have more issues to deal with, with fewer resources" than urban areas, he said.