



State of Connecticut
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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CHRO

"Equality and Justice"

**Testimony of Raymond P. Pech
Executive Director
Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities**

February 16, 2007

**Raised Bill No. 1106: An Act Concerning Procedures for the Hearing of
Complaints Against State Contractors and Subcontractors by
The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities**

The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) supports Raised Bill 1106, *An Act Concerning Procedures for the Hearing of Complaints Against State Contractors and Subcontractors by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities*. It is intended to address some redundancies and inconsistencies in the current statutes as they relate to contract compliance.

CHRO currently reviews and approves (or disapproves) the affirmative action plans, or other employment data, for large state contractors. Through our contract compliance monitoring process, our staff sometimes discovers that a state contractor or subcontractor is not living up to its affirmative action, employment or set-aside obligations, representations of which were part of the process by which the contract was awarded in the first place. Under the statute as currently written, when our contract compliance staff discovers evidence of such failure, the commission must issue a complaint and perform another, duplicate investigation of the compliance failure, by another staff person in our Office of Field Operations, in accordance with CHRO's procedures for processing individual complaints of discrimination. Only after this second investigation can CHRO hold a hearing or invoke sanctions for the compliance failure. This duplicate investigation is a complete waste of time and resources. In addition, while the duplicate investigation is proceeding, work on the questioned contract draws nearer to completion, thus reducing the effectiveness of any relief that might be ordered.

Raised Bill 1106 would permit the commission, once our contract compliance staff uncovers evidence that a contractor or subcontractor has failed to live up to his or her obligations, to issue a complaint and immediately bring the complaint to a public hearing, without going through a duplicate investigation. It would streamline the entire process. Additionally, the bill would clear up certain inconsistencies in the statutes with respect to who can order relief in the event of a contract compliance failure, and when such relief can be ordered. The proposal would insure that a contractor would have a right to a due process hearing before any such relief could be ordered.

CHRO fully endorses this bill and urges a joint favorable report. Thank you for your consideration of the CHRO's views in this matter.