



State of Connecticut  
**COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Central Office ~ 21 Grand Street, Hartford, CT 06106

*Promoting Equality and Justice for all People*

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

**Government Administration and Elections Committee  
Public Hearing  
March 12, 2008**

Good morning, Senator Slossberg, Representative Caruso and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Raymond Pech. I am the Executive Director of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities expresses its **support** of HB 5898, AN ACT CONCERNING AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PERSONNEL OF STATE AGENCIES. We are aware that the study mandated by this bill involves an assessment of a controversial subject. While we did not seek this bill or a role in the study, our staff is in the best position to undertake an objective review of the issue. We certainly do not shy away from taking on the responsibility.

CHRO staff are presently responsible for reviewing and evaluating the affirmative action plans of executive branch state agencies and making recommendations to the Commission. The Commission then formally approves, conditionally approves or disapproves the plans.

As a consequence of this process, our staff is familiar with all the affirmative action officers of the state, and the responsibilities they fulfill. We are acutely aware of the absolute need for an agency affirmative action professional to be free to make objective investigations of internal claims of discrimination, and to be able to make unfettered remedial recommendations without any fear of reprisal from agency management.

The CHRO has previously conducted comprehensive and well respected studies of issues within the Department of Children and Families, the Waterbury schools, the Department of Correction and other agencies. We stand ready to complete this assignment, should you so choose, in an equally comprehensive manner.

Thank you very much.

Main (860) 541-3400 ~ Fax (860) 246-5419  
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