Testimony On Behalf Of The
Connecticut Regional Office of the
Anti-Defamation League

IN OPPOSITION TO
PORTIONS OF HB 6365
AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2011, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR

February 11, 2009

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was founded in 1913 with a mandate to fight the defamation of the Jewish people and secure justice and fair treatment for all. Today the ADL is one of the country's leading civil rights and human services organizations. The Connecticut Regional Office of ADL is based in Hamden and serves the entire state of Connecticut.

We submit this testimony today to express our opposition to the portions of HB 6365 that would eliminate the African-American Affairs Commission, Commission on Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, and Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, and in support of the maintenance of those Commissions as separate entities in Connecticut's state government.

The Commissions are an invaluable resource to the community and provide an important voice representing the interests of African-Americans, Latinos, women, and Asian Pacific Americans in the state. Their role monitoring legislation, helping to develop significant policy and initiatives and holding government accountable is vital to serving the needs of their respective communities. Their existence as separate entities dedicated to this objective is of particular importance, since many of their constituents may not be in a position to retain private lobbyists or others to speak on their behalf, and they may otherwise have no presence or participation in the state's lawmaking process.

In ADL's efforts to fight hate, build hope and safeguard liberty, we work with the Commissions on a regular basis. The Commissions are key partners for ADL in our work monitoring and advocating on behalf of legislation relating to hate crimes, immigration, and discrimination, as well as in the implementation of our anti-bias and diversity educational programming. Partners like the Commissions are essential to ADL's pursuit of justice and fair treatment for all in Connecticut, and to the well-being of African-American, Latino, female, Asian Pacific American and other individuals throughout the state.

We urge you to reject the portions of HB 6365 that eliminate the African-American Affairs Commission, Commission on Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, and Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission and to maintain their important presence as separate entities in Connecticut's state government.