

Testimony to the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee  
Edward Mambruno, Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities  
March 10, 2009

Good Morning Senator Looney, Representative Janowski and distinguished members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today regarding my reappointment by Governor M. Jodi Rell to the State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). It is an honor to be appointed by Governor Rell to serve on this Commission. Dating as far back as 1943, CHRO is the oldest civil rights agency in the nation.

My name is Edward Mambruno, I have been a member of this Commission since 2002 and in 2005 was elected Secretary. I was born and raised in Waterbury, Connecticut. I am a graduate of the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. I was awarded a graduate fellowship to attend the University of Connecticut and graduated with a Masters Degree in Public Affairs.

Presently, I am the Ombudsman for the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS). The Office of the Ombudsman works on behalf of consumers and their families to address complaints or problems accessing services within DDS. One of my priorities as Ombudsman for DDS is to visit and evaluate all of DDS's consumers presently residing in skilled nursing facilities. My role is strictly as an advocate, however I am working very closely with and when necessary, make recommendations to DDS's Central Office's Utilization nurse and the regional OBRA nurses. I am also collaborating with the Department of Social Services Long Term Care Ombudsman's Office regarding issues and recommendations to improve care, communication and interagency collaboration.

During my tenure in state service, I have contributed to the development and passage of bills protecting, empowering and improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities. Some of the most rewarding legislation I have been involved with is the Personal Care Assistance Waiver, the Acquired Brain Injury Waiver and the development of a symptomatic and pre-symptomatic clinic for Huntington's disease.

It was due to my strong belief that individuals with disabilities could be hired to perform skilled jobs that were assumed to be out of reach for this under-served, under-employed group, that led to my appointment to the President's Committee for Mental Retardation, while on this National committee I served as Chairman of the Employment subcommittee for two terms. While on this committee, I have had the opportunity to learn from some of the most progressive and knowledgeable minds in the field of intellectual disabilities.

Currently, I am Chairman of the Governor's Coalition for Youth with Disabilities (GCYD). This Coalition awards scholarships for higher education to high school seniors with disabilities. The Coalition is made up of volunteers from the public and private sector. To date, GCYD has awarded more than 150 high school seniors with disabilities scholarships to further their education. I am proud to say that in total the scholarships are valued at over \$600,000. I am grateful that we have a strong relationship with the State and Community College Systems that each year award scholarships to these deserving students.

My past and current experiences bring a unique perspective to this challenging role as a Commissioner for the CHRO. I have always served as an advocate for citizens of the State of Connecticut and trust that my participation on this Commission will allow me to further the mission of the CHRO, "to promote the elimination of discrimination through civil and human rights...to establish equal opportunity and justice for persons within the state through advocacy and education." In these times, we must execute diversity because it is essential to reflect our marketplace and have a competitive strategy to successfully implement it.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today. I would be happy to answer any questions that you have for me at this time.