



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

Office of Public Hearings ~ 21 Grand Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Hartford, CT 06106

*Promoting Equality and Justice for all People*

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**March 23, 2009**

**Public Hearing before the Joint Committee on Government Administration  
and Elections**

**Raised Bill No. 1154: An Act Concerning Referral of Contested Cases and  
Settlements to the Chief Human Rights Referee**

Senator Slossberg, Representative Spallone and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on Senate Bill 1154, An Act Concerning Referral of Contested Cases and Settlements to the Chief Human Rights Referee.

This bill would permit agencies, those not employing full-time or permanent part-time employees to conduct their contested cases, to voluntarily refer those cases to the human rights referees for adjudication or mediation. It would also permit human rights referees to mediate affirmative action officer reports for the departments of Public Safety, Correction, and Children and Families.

The human rights referees support this bill for several reasons. First, while many agencies have state employees to hear their contested cases, some agencies contract with members of the public to serve as hearing officers. Such an agency may realize a fiscal savings by utilizing human rights referees rather than contracting its hearings to non-state employees.

Second, the voluntary nature of the program in this bill provides an agency that does not have hearing officers who are state employees with the discretion to decide which of its cases to refer to the Chief Human Rights Referee.

Third, through years of conducting contested case hearings and mediations, the human rights referees are experienced in mediation and the due

process requirements of the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act. As the human rights referees have an average of 28 years of experience in the practice of law, both in state service and the private sector, the referees also have extensive substantive knowledge in numerous fields of law.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony.