

**Donna M. Wilkerson Brilliant**  
**Opening Statement for Confirmation – April 13, 2010**

Good afternoon Senator Looney, Representative Janowski and distinguished members of the committee. My name is Donna M. Wilkerson Brilliant of Cromwell and I am honored to be nominated by Governor Rell for re-appointment as Human Rights Referee for the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities and it is an honor to appear before you today for confirmation.

I received a Juris Doctorate degree from Western New England College, School of Law and a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from Central Connecticut State University. I have been a member of the Connecticut Bar for over fifteen years. Soon after graduating from law school, I began a solo practice concentrating in juvenile, family and real estate law for approximately five years. In March 1999, I had the great honor of being appointed as one of the first full-time Human Rights Referees and I was re-appointed in March 2000, January 2005 and April 2007.

As a human rights referee, I preside over discrimination and whistleblower retaliation cases, which involves ruling on procedural and dispositive motions, and conducting pre-trial conferences and public hearings or trials. I also conduct settlement conferences. I have written final decisions that have been affirmed by the Superior and Supreme Courts. I served as Chief Human Rights Referee for two years from October 2005 through October 2007. As Chief, I managed the Office of Public Hearings in addition to adjudicating discrimination and whistleblower retaliation cases. I have completed courses and attended numerous conferences on all aspects of adjudication and mediation sponsored by the Connecticut Bar Association, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and National Association of Administrative Law Judges.

I frequently participate as a panelist for seminars on Employment Law Discrimination and Administrative Law and have provided training to the Commission's West Central regional

office. I am a fellow with the Connecticut Bar Foundation James W. Cooper Fellows Program, a member of Manchester Community College, Paralegal Program Advisory Committee, a member of the National Association of Administrative Law Judges, a regional council member of Lawyers for Children America, a member of George Crawford Black Bar Association, a member of Hartford County Bar Association and a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. I have received many acknowledgements of appreciation by bar associations for pro bono services provided through Trial Lawyers Care, Inc., an organization created to represent the victims of the September 11, 2001 tragedy. Also, I have been recognized as a Connecticut Law Tribune's Women in the Law High Achievers. I participate in various mentorship programs for the youth such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters as well as in various legal and community organizations. Thank you for your time and attention. I welcome any questions you may have.