

Good afternoon, Senator Looney and Representative Janowski, members of the Executive Nominating Committee. I am honored to have been nominated by Governor Rell for a third term as a Human Rights Referee and for the opportunity to appear before this Committee pursuant to the confirmation process.

Since being first appointed in November 2004 I have now served as a Human Rights Referee for approximately five and a half years. While this has been my first experience with state public service, I had engaged in providing legal services to Connecticut municipalities for over two decades (1983 through 2004). In the process I learned the special benefits and responsibilities that flow from public service, including the ability to function professionally in the very open arena public service requires. In my time as a Human Rights Referee I have had the opportunity to issue rulings and final decisions in cases involving housing discrimination, employment discrimination and whistleblower retaliation. Several of my rulings and final decisions have involved complex analysis of the effect of prior employment decisions (teacher termination proceedings, arbitration decisions and superior court decisions) on our ability to hear such matters anew from a discrimination perspective, with one such decision resulting in the reinstatement of a municipal police officer despite a previously superior court sanctioned job termination.

On March 26, 2010, I began my new duties as chief human rights referee, as a result of having been appointed by CHRO's new executive director, Robert Brothers. My first initiative as chief was to assemble the referees for the purpose of adopting a mission statement for our legal entity, Connecticut's Office of Public Hearings. While a little thing, it proved surprisingly effective at getting us to reach a consensus as to who we are, what we do and what we can perhaps do better. The statement is brief so I would like to take the opportunity to read it.

Statement attached

In closing I would respectfully ask for the committee's favorable recommendation regarding my nomination, thank you all for your kind attention and welcome any questions you might have of me.

J. Allen Kerr, Jr.  
April 13, 2010