

**Commission on Human Rights
and Opportunities**

Memo

To: Labor and Public Employees Committee
From: Robert J. Brothers, Jr., Executive Director
Date: March 2, 2010
Re: **HB 5284, AN ACT CONCERNING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND
DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES**

The Commission **SUPPORTS** **HB 5284, AN ACT CONCERNING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES.**

CHRO supports HB 5284 and agrees with Speaker of the House Chris Donovan's recent Task Force on Domestic Violence report that victims of domestic violence should be afforded extra protection from discrimination. This bill protects victims of domestic violence from discrimination at the work place by adding those individuals as a class of people protected by our human rights statute. This bill helps to preserve the victim's income during an uncertain time so that the victim can attempt to move on with their lives independently.

The Commission recommends that the bill be amended by deleting "actual or perceived status of domestic violence and inserting "victim of family violence as defined by Conn. Gen. Stat. §46b-38a(1) and (2)". This would eliminate the ambiguity regarding what "perceived" means and make the bill more enforceable,

We would also urge that similar protection be added to our fair housing statutes. Many victims of domestic violence are forced to stay with or return to their abusive partners for lack of available shelter or affordable housing by adding the "victims of family violence as defined by Conn. Gen. Stat. §46b-38a(1) and (2)" to our housing discrimination statutes at Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 46a-64c(a) (1), (2), (3), and (4).

I must note that every increase to CHRO's jurisdiction stresses an agency that has already had large personnel reductions and budget cuts.