



State of Connecticut
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Central Office ~ 21 Grand Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Promoting Equality and Justice for all People

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE REGULATIONS AND PROTECTION SUBCOMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 9, 2010**

Good evening, Senator Harp, Representative Reynolds and members of the Regulations and Protection Subcommittee. I am Bob Brothers the Executive Director of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

As all of you know that CHRO's budget was substantially reduced for the present fiscal year. Despite a 30% reduction OPM has rescinded an additional 5% of the original appropriation before the transfer of personnel and Other Expense rescissions leaving us a total shortfall of some \$500,000 in our personal services account and Operating Expenses accounts. Purchase orders essential to the operation of the Commission have been put on hold by the SMART unit at DAS. We are running out of copy paper, toner, and we may soon be unable to pay for telephone service or postage.

The problem regarding OE gets worse in the Governor's proposed budget for 2010-2011 where there is an additional reduction of \$226,042 to the OE account. At this rate we will be forced to begin using birch bark by spring of 2011. Something probably prohibited by DEP.

As we expressed to the subcommittee last year we believe we could reduce our Other Expenses and create faster service for clients through the use of technology, something I have been actively pursuing for over a year. We have conducted very preliminary discussions with DOIT about getting more out of our existing IT system and what we would need to interface with existing on-line agencies such as HUD.

With your help we will be able to become a prime example of how the embracing of new technologies can make government more efficient and responsive to our citizens.

We would ask the subcommittee at minimum to restore our Operating Expenses budget for the current fiscal year to pre-rescission levels. In order to effect substantial long term cost reduction and create efficiencies we would request an appropriation of \$100,000 to bring our complaint and legal processes up to current technological standards.

Thank you.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.