

Testimony for Bill 1010:

Thank you members of the committee, Senator Slossberg, Rep. Morin, Rep. Lesser, and Rep. Hwang for giving me the opportunity to speak to Bill 1010, my name is Cordula.

The CCHRO is the oldest civil rights agency in the country. I support the position of Connecticut Association of Diversity and Equity Professionals and oppose the removal affirmative action plans being reviewed by CCHRO to DAS.

This proposed bill dilutes the antidiscrimination laws, affirmative action, and the required training for Equal Employment Opportunity professionals in the state of Connecticut. I have prepared state Affirmative Action Plans for DOT, DOC and DDS and federal affirmative action plans for USDOT. During difficult economic times there is more of a need for agencies like CCHRO. The effectiveness of an affirmative action plan is greater in the larger agencies such as DOT, DMHAS, DOC, DDS, DCF, DPH, and DSS. DAS only has experience in preparing affirmative action plans for agencies of less than 100.

CCHRO staff works closely with EEO Staff of state agencies to develop strategies in the area of recruitment and upper mobility. Removing affirmative action regulations do not give agencies guidance or direction on the criteria of how the plan is reviewed. CCHRO is independent and objective in the affirmative action review process. CCHRO staff has the expertise to achieve objectives of the antidiscrimination statutes. Limiting EEO staff to the investigation of internal complaints only eliminates the investigation of allegations of discrimination brought by clients, members of the public and job applicants. The statute currently holds that all allegations of discrimination against an agency be investigated by the EEO staff.

The majority of complaints are resolved at the agency level by the EEO Staff without going to CCHRO or EEOC and without settlement costs to this state. Numerous complaints filed with the CCHRO are dismissed or withdrawn after the conclusion of the EEO Staff findings. Removal of this function will only result in increased costs. I would like to make a recommendation that the elements of the affirmative action plan that remain unchanged from year to year not be required by CCHRO to be resubmitted on an annual basis rather than goals set to develop additional strategies to achieve affirmative action. Thank you.