

Memo

To: Labor and Public Employees Committee

From: Tanya A. Hughes, Executive Director

Date: February 26, 2015

Re: **SB 542, AN ACT CONCERNING A LIAISON FOR MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES, WOMEN'S BUSINESS ENTERPRISES AND DIVERSITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES**

The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) **Supports** SB 542.

Too often, women-owned, minority-owned and diversity businesses are unable to compete for state contracts because they do not know how to negotiate the process or lack the tools to do so. SB 542 addresses this injustice by establishing a liaison position within the Dept. of Economic and Community Development to assist these businesses in negotiating the state contracting system.

Increasing participation and helping women-owned, minority-owned and diversity businesses to secure state contracts will increase job opportunities for other under-represented members of our society who may be employed by these businesses.

If budgetary concerns prevent adding a new staff position, the CHRO urges that these services be provided within existing resources.

Enacting SB 542 will bring state contracting opportunities within reach of women-owned, minority-owned and diversity businesses. This will further solidify the state's commitment to doing away with discrimination altogether.