



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-2000

OFFICE OF FAIR HOUSING  
AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

FEB 20 2015

Tanya Hughes  
Executive Director  
Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities  
25 Sigourney Street  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Subject: Proposed Connecticut House Bill 6133**

Dear Ms. Hughes:

This letter discusses the potential impact of Connecticut House Bill No. 6133 (“the Bill”). The Fair Housing Assistance Division has reviewed the Bill and concludes that its enactment would jeopardize the continued certification of Connecticut’s fair housing law as substantially equivalent to the federal Fair Housing Act (“the Act”).

The Department certified Connecticut’s fair housing law as substantially equivalent to the Act in 1992. Such certification is authorized by the Act at Section 810(f) when the Department determines that a State or local law, both “on its face” and “in operation,” provides rights, procedures, remedies, and the availability of judicial review that are substantially equivalent to those provided in the Act.

HB 6133 proposes to amend § 46a-64b of the Connecticut fair housing law by creating a “first offender status”<sup>1</sup> for any person accused of a discriminatory housing practice and appears to limit the sanctions available for a first violation to training and education on the Connecticut Fair Housing law. The Act contains no such categorical limitation on liability for the discriminatory acts of “first offenders” and authorizes the imposition of appropriate relief and sanctions in all cases in which a respondent is found to have engaged in, or is about to engage in, a discriminatory housing practice. In addition to making victims of unlawful discrimination whole, providing for appropriate relief and sanctions, irrespective of prior offenses, serves an important deterrence function. Were HB 6133 to be enacted the Connecticut fair housing law as amended would deviate significantly from the Act in this important regard.

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<sup>1</sup> It is unknown to the Department whether “first offender status” is a term of art or carries any particular meaning or significance under Connecticut law.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 402-2126.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. A. Pelletier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joseph A. Pelletier, Esq.  
Director, Fair Housing Assistance Program

cc: Susan Forward, FHEO Region I Director  
Erin Kemple, Executive Director, Connecticut Fair Housing Center