



**State of Connecticut**  
**COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Central Office ~ 25 Sigourney Street, Hartford, CT 06106

*Promoting Equality and Justice for all People*

**Committee on Government Administration and Election**  
**HB 6086, An Act Expanding The Set-Aside Program To Include Municipalities And**  
**State Grant Programs**  
**February 25, 2015**

The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities **SUPPORTS** HB 6086, An Act Expanding the Set-Aside Program to Include Municipalities and State Grant Programs.

HB 6086 would attach nondiscrimination requirements to the many millions of state dollars that fund municipal projects, purchases and grant programs each year. This bill is needed to address inequalities in contracting opportunities, which would in turn provide a boost for small businesses and minority businesses in Connecticut.

While a few large municipalities like the City of New Haven have a very active and vigilant contract compliance program, efforts like those of New Haven are rare or virtually nonexistent elsewhere. The CHRO is regularly made aware of this by minority contractors who have repeatedly watched municipal contracts begin and end, but are shut out of these construction opportunities. These minority contractors over many years have asked why the CHRO is not enforcing the law on municipal construction projects that are funded by the state. Our answer is always the same: current state law does not apply to municipalities.

Since municipalities are not required to include the state's nondiscrimination language in the contracts funded with state dollars, there is no commitment by the municipal contractors to assure that the contract is performed without unlawful discrimination. There is no contractor commitment to employ small businesses and minority contractors or to ensure that subcontractors commit to nondiscrimination. Although the state dollars and financial assistance have aided a municipality, the state funds have had no impact on reducing discrimination and improving business opportunities for small businesses and minority businesses. As a condition of receiving state dollars, municipalities should adhere to the same requirements that apply to the state. State contracting requirements should follow state money.

The CHRO urges that this bill include similar amendments to the language of Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 4a-60, 4a-60a and 46a-68b, since the sections are interdependent.

HB 6086 presents an invaluable opportunity to make sure that municipal contractors take steps not to discriminate in the performance of state-funded contracts. From our experience in monitoring state contracts, the CHRO has seen that helping small contractors, minority business enterprises, and businesses owned by individuals with disabilities promotes economic opportunities across the state and reduces discrimination.