

Questions for Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities Nominee

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May 8, 2017 | 2017-R-0101

Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities ([CGS § 46a-52](#))

- The commission consists of nine members. The governor appoints five, and the legislative leaders appoint four. (The Senate president pro tempore and minority leader and the House speaker and minority leader each appoint one.)
- The governor's appointees serve five-year terms; other members serve three-year terms.
- The commission oversees the state agency that enforces anti-discrimination laws in various areas, such as employment, housing, public accommodations, credit practices, and state services and programs.

Questions

1. What is CHRO's primary mission?
2. In 2015, the legislature enacted changes to CHRO's procedures for processing discrimination complaints, such as (1) allowing the respondent to elect pre-answer conciliation and (2) shortening certain time frames for CHRO's complaint processing ([PA 15-249](#) and [PA 15-5, June Special Session](#)). What impact have these changes had on CHRO and the involved parties? What other changes would you recommend?

3. The total number of discrimination complaints filed with CHRO has been increasing in recent years. According to CHRO's [annual reports](#), there were 2,616 discrimination complaints filed in FY 16, up 5.4% from FY 15 and 20.4% FY 14. What do you think accounts for this increase? What types of cases have seen the largest increase? Have any types of cases decreased or remained relatively unchanged? Please explain.
4. In 2016, the former Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee [studied](#) CHRO's discrimination complaint processing. Among other things, the committee found that regional disparities exist in process outcomes and workloads. What can the commission do to create greater uniformity across its administrative regions?
5. Legislation passed in 2015 subjects certain state-financed public works contracts awarded by municipalities to state set-aside requirements for small and minority contractors ([PA 15-5, June Special Session](#)), which CHRO enforces. What benefits and challenges has this legislation presented for municipalities and contractors?
6. In [SB 792](#) (2017), the governor proposed suspending municipal set-aside requirements until FY 20. Do you support this proposal? Why or why not?
7. CHRO participates in community forums and informational sessions to inform the public about the commission and provide information about discrimination. How effective are these forums and sessions? What more can the commission do to inform the public about their rights under the state's anti-discrimination laws?
8. What can a commissioner do to ensure the complaint investigation process is not only fair but is perceived as fair and unbiased by complainants and respondents alike?
9. Human rights referees conduct hearings to determine whether discrimination has occurred, and they may remedy any discrimination they find. How much control, influence, or authority should the commission have over referees?
10. Should Connecticut's anti-discrimination laws be expanded to cover additional classes of people? Should they be narrowed? Or do they currently have an appropriate coverage level? Please explain.
11. The Judiciary Committee favorably reported [SB 791](#) (2017), which generally allows state agencies to submit an affirmative action plan to CHRO that complies with federal requirements, rather than state requirements. How do federal affirmative action requirements differ from state requirements? What impact, if any, would the bill have on state agencies' affirmative action programs?

12. Proponents of [SB 791](#) testified that CHRO requires state agencies to use 2000 Census data, rather than more recent 2010 data, when calculating their hiring goals. Why does the commission require the use of 2000 Census data?

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