

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES
OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Commission on Human Rights and
Opportunities, *ex rel.* : CHRO No. 0830063
Robert Reuter, : EEOC. No. n/a
Complainant

v.

Southern CT State University,
Respondent : August 13, 2010

ORDER OF DISMISSAL

Pursuant to § 46a-54-88a (d) (3) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the undersigned presiding human rights referee on his own motion, dismisses the pending amended complaint as a result of the complainant failing to attend a lawfully noticed conference without good cause. More specifically, during a status conference the complainant left without providing a reason, requesting to be excused or notifying the undersigned of an emergency, and abruptly left the status conference that was lawfully noticed for August 11, 2010. Implicit in the Regulation's requirement that parties attend a duly noticed conference is the requirement that they remain in attendance until the conference concludes or they are excused. Parties cannot, without consequences, decide for themselves what conferences they will attend, how long they will remain and how disruptive they can be.

Background

On August 11, 2010, a noticed status conference was convened at 2:00 p.m. In attendance were Attorney Margaret Nurse-Goodison, counsel for the commission; Assistant Attorney General Holly Bray, counsel for respondent; and the complainant, Robert S. Reuter; pro se. The stated purpose of the conference was to deal with production matters detailed in the commission's pending motion to compel. Almost from the commencement of the conference, the complainant chose to interrupt the proceedings with references to "Alice in Wonderland" and derogatory comments relating to the respondents. On multiple occasions the undersigned informed the complainant that his interruptions were inappropriate and that he would be given an opportunity to speak at the appropriate time. After having been cautioned, the complainant again interrupted the proceeding to interject issues that were not being discussed. After having been cautioned again the complainant stated he was prepared to take his matter to a civil court and that (contrary to his amended complaint) he really was not physically disabled. At this point, I again admonished the complainant that his interruptions were inappropriate and could be disadvantageous to his pending case. Believing that the complainant was not appreciating the seriousness of both the situation and his remarks, I suggested that commission counsel speak privately with the complainant.

After having taken a 5 – 10 minute break, the status conference resumed. Prior to resuming the discussion on respondent's objections to the commission's

requests for production, I reminded the complainant that he would be given an opportunity to speak but that further interruptions would not be tolerated. Furthermore, if his comment that he was ready to take his matter to a civil court was meant as a threat, it was not appreciated. The undersigned further advised the complainant that he was not being encouraged or discouraged in going to a different forum, as that was his choice, but while his case was pending at the Office of Public Hearings (OPH) the parties would be afforded a fair and impartial hearing.

Almost immediately after the undersigned's comment, the complainant again made reference to the proceeding or the respondent's actions as being out of "Alice and Wonderland" and that he's been getting "screwed" by the state since the beginning, upon which he picked up his belongings and left the conference room and building.

At that point the attorneys were questioned as to whether either objected to my comments to the complainant regarding his interruptions and the need for him to maintain some decorum. No objection was offered, and more specifically commission counsel stated that the comments made to the complainant were appropriate.

The parties were then informed that the undersigned would take a five minute break and that consideration would be given as to the appropriateness of

sanctioning the complainant for his failing to attend and complete the scheduled conference.

During the break the secretary of the OPH was informed by the lieutenant of security for the building, that a man recognized as Mr. Reuter upon leaving the building referred to security staff members as “Nazis piece of shit” and “spics”. It was further brought to the undersigned’s attention that this was not the first time the complainant had altercations with the security staff, but the third time.

As a consequence of the comments and conduct exhibited by the complainant, a report is to be forwarded by the lieutenant to the Connecticut Department of Public Works along with the lieutenant’s request to bar the complainant from the building.

Upon resuming the status conference, the information relating to the complainant’s leaving the building and his conduct and comments were disclosed to counsel.

The complainant’s conduct and attitude during the status conference, if exhibited by an attorney, would call for some form of sanction. The complainant being pro se however, latitude must be given. The complainant however, purposefully chose to leave the proceeding, offering no good cause and failing to request permission to absent himself. The complainant’s conduct was disrespectful to

the attorneys and this tribunal, all of whom had taken the time to prepare for and attend the conference. The complainant's abrupt departure and his disruptive commentary warrants this tribunal to impose the sanction of dismissal as such the complaint is hereby DISMISSED.

The complainant as of this date has attempted to communicate ex parte with the undersigned via email. While the email has not been read the complainant is hereby ordered to cease any attempts to communicate ex parte with the undersigned referee.

It is so ordered this 13th day of August 2010.

Thomas C. Austin, Jr.
Presiding Human Rights Referee

cc.

Robert Reuter
Craig W. Patenaude
Margaret Nurse-Goodison, Esq.
Holly Jean Bray, Esq.