

STATE OF CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Regular Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

2:00 p.m.

Via Microsoft TEAMS

Commissioners Present

Nicholas Kapoor, Chairperson
Edward Mambruno, Secretary
Lisa Giliberto
Alex Harris
Andrew Norton
Edith Pestana
Tamara Titre

Commissioners Absent

Joseph Suggs

Staff Present

Tanya Hughes, Executive Director	Kimberly Jacobsen, Legal Managing Director
Kimberly Jacobsen, Legal Managing Director	Spencer Hill, HRO Attorney
Michelle Dumas Keuler, Legal Managing Director	Darcy Strand, Legislative Liaison
Johnette Tolliver, State Program Manager	Shawn Burns, Regional Manager
Robin Trepanier, HRO Attorney	Spencer Hill, HRO Attorney
Ana Mitchell, Outreach Coordinator	Darian Pitts, Executive Secretary
Kellye Hudson, Executive Secretary	

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Nicholas Kapoor convened the June 11, 2025, meeting at 2:04 PM.

II. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT & ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Chair Kapoor noted a quorum had been established with six out of eight Commissioners present, reminding all that the meeting is being recorded as a public forum, and will be posted as required.

He also acknowledged CHRO staff for an incredible "Kids Speak" event. He specifically acknowledged Commissioners Giliberto, Pestana, and Harris for participating as Judges and noted the event as one of his favorites.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

In the absence of Secretary Mambruno, Chair Kapoor called for a motion to approve the 2025-05-14 Commission Meeting Minutes as written.

To Approve the 2025-05-14 Commission Meeting Minutes:

Motion: E. Pestana

Seconded: A. Harris

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Giliberto, Harris, Norton, Pestana, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)
The motion carried.

IV. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS – VOTE REQUIRED

Presented by Managing Legal Director Michelle Dumas Keuler.

Commissioner Mambruno joined the meeting at 2:11 PM.

Charter Oak State College

Staff representing the Charter Oak State College were President Edward D. Klonoski and Human Resources Director Serina Julien

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(a) the plan does contain all elements required by Sections 46a-68-78 through 46a-94, inclusive and 46a-68-102(b)(3) the agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve goals and despite these efforts has been unable to do so, and 46a-68-102(b)(4) the agency had no deficiencies in the prior plan review and therefore, is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

- Hiring Goal Achievement: 4 out of 8 or 50%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: There were no promotional goals established
- Program Goal Achievement: 2 out of 2 or 100%

The five-year approval history is as follows: 2023 Approved; 2021 Approved; 2019 Approved; 2018 Approved; 2017 Approved.

To Approve the Affirmative Action Plan for Charter Oak State College and to retain its Biennial Filing Status:

Motion: L. Giliberto

Second: A. Norton

Vote:

Yes: 6 (Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

University of Connecticut

Staff representing the University of Connecticut were Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Anne D'Alleva, Vice President, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, UConn & UConn Health Dr. Jeffrey Hines, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, UConn & UConn Health Lakesha Brown, Interim Associate Vice President, Office of Institutional Equity and Affirmative Action Officer Sarah Chipman, and EEO & Search Compliance Manager, Office of Institutional Equity Hanna Prytko

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(a) the plan does contain all elements required by Sections 46a-68-78 through

46a-94, inclusive, and 46a-68-102(b)(3), the agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve goals and despite these efforts has been unable to do, 46a-68-102(b)(4), the agency had no deficiencies in the prior plan review and therefore, is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

- Hiring Goal Achievement: 134 77 of 369 or 36%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: 6 out of 107 or 72%
- Program Goal Achievement: 2 out of 2 or 100%

The five-year approval history is as follows: 2024 Approved; 2023 Approved; 2022 Approved; 2021 Approved; 2020 Approved.

To Approve the Affirmative Action Plan for the University of Connecticut and to retain its Annual Filing Status:

Motion: L. Giliberto

Second: E. Pestana

Vote:

Yes: 6 (Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Pestana, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

Connecticut State Library

Staff representing the Connecticut State Library were State Librarian Deborah Schander, Human Resources Associate-Equal Employment Opportunity Jessica Henowitz, and Human Resources Generalist 2 Maria Toro Vinces

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(a) the plan does contain all elements required by Sections 46a-68-78 through 46a-94, inclusive, and 46a-68-102(b)(2), the agency has not met or substantially met all of its hiring goals and did not set any promotion program goals. 46a-68-102 (b)(3) the agency has demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve goals and despite these efforts has been unable to do, and 46a-68-102(b)(4), the agency had no deficiencies in the prior plan review and therefore, is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

- Hiring Goal Achievement: 2 out of 7 or 29%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: There were no promotional goals set
- Program Goal Achievement: 1 out of 1 or 100%

The five-year approval history is as follows: 2023 Approved; 2021 Approved; 2019 Approved; 2017 Approved; 2015 Approved.

To Approve the Affirmative Action Plan for the Connecticut State Library and to retain its Biennial Filing Status:

Motion: A. Norton
Second: A. Harris

Vote:

Yes: 6 (Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Pestana, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

V. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION

1. Renewal of the Municipal Paving Exemption
Presented by HRO Attorney Spencer Hill

Attorney Spencer Hill informed the CHRO is required by Connecticut General Statutes 46a-56(3) to ensure compliance with the State's Contract Compliance Set Aside Programs. In 2015, the requirements of this program were extended to state-funded public works projects administered by municipalities. Due to the frequency and nature of contracts for street paving, a limited exemption for these contracts was put in place by the Commission that must be periodically renewed. They must be affirmatively renewed by the Commission to continue.

The current exemption requires contracts utilizing the exemption to be completed "on or before June 30, 2025." At this time, Commission staff recommend the municipal street paving exemption be renewed for a period of one year in accordance with the current exemption requirements.

Prior to the vote Chair Kapoor asked that the record reflect the Commission is in receipt of Attorney Hill's memo through the office of the Executive Director, dated June 3rd, 2025.

To Approve the Renewal of the Municipal Paving Exemption:

Motion: A. Harris
Second: E. Pestana

Vote:

Yes: 6 (Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Pestana, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

****Commissioner Mambruno left the meeting at 2:55 PM****

VI. REQUEST TO REOPEN

In the case below, Commission Counsel, Respondent or their representative, and Complainant or their representative were provided five minutes to provide opening remarks. Questions and answers from commissioners followed these remarks.

1. Tekiya Cutino v. Yale University

CHRO Case No. 2530360

Presented by HRO Attorney Robin Trepanier

To Deny the Request to Reopen CHRO Case No. 2530360 Tekiya Cutino v. Yale University:

Motion: L. Giliberto

Second: A. Norton

Discussion: None

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Giliberto, Harris, Norton, Pestana, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

VII. DIVISION REPORTS

Executive Director's Report

Director Hughes took a moment to thank the commissioners for their contributions to the agency and support of the Kid's Court Competition and noted there was a record 4 Commissioners serving as judges. She also acknowledged the participants, their brilliance, the fact that they hailed from across the state, and that participation in the competition continues to grow.

She then asked Managing Legal Director, Kimberly Jacobsen to introduce the new roster of Interns. Attorney Jacobsen informed that there were both college and high school students interning at the CHRO this year. She listed the names, colleges and high schools of this year's crop of interns. She noted that the high school interns had not started as they were not out of school yet and would come on board next week. She then asked the college interns to turn on their cameras so everyone could see them.

Director Hughes continued and informed the Interns will work until the end of summer and will present their annual summer symposium. Invitations will be sent to members of the commission.

She reported that the agency continues meeting with all the partners throughout the state to include the Department of Labor, the Office of the Governor, EEO, HR, Office of the Attorney General, and BITS. Staff performance evaluations have been completed; the department audit is near conclusion, and Disparity Study Implementation activities are ongoing to include devising a new process, forms, software, and drafting regulations. Specialized training and talking points will be provided to the Commissioners so that they are fully informed if they are approached by the public about the study. The

agency's affirmative action plan has been submitted and should be presented in the Commission's July meeting agenda.

She further reported that the agency's financial situation has improved, and we are no longer showing a deficit. Currently there are 9 vacant positions to fill, with five being fully funded. Work continues on the agency's year-end activities as well as completion of all budgetary commitments with the Department of Labor. The agency is also approaching the HUD PARS (Performance Assessment Review) review and will be able to meet the EEOC target contract numbers. She also noted that she and Deputy Director Sharp were honored by the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, and that the Agency Wide Training will take place on June 30, to be held at the Artist Collective.

Outreach Report

Managing Legal Director Michelle Dumas Keuler reporting for Deputy Director Sharp highlighted some of the outreach events. She reiterated the recognition given to Director Hughes and Deputy Director Sharp by the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus. She went on to report on the conferences that staff have attended in both Massachusetts and Connecticut on Fair Housing and unemployment discrimination. The DE&I committee continues to meet with the agency's stakeholders throughout the state, and the Kid's Court Academy hosts a great variety of speakers and participants.

Staff have attended and provided CHRO materials and information at several pride events. Work continues on the Civil Rights Museum, and attendance at Juneteenth events have been occurring in advance of the national holiday on June 19. She announced the Connecticut Bar Association's Legal Conference taking place on Friday where Managing Legal Director Kimberly Jacobsen would be a panelist.

She also informed that the agency would host another Food and Film event on June 25 and invited the Commissioners to join. In conclusion she noted there were a lot more outreach activities and entreated the group to read the written report.

Legislative Update

Legislative and Administrative Advisor, Darcy Strand reported the end of Legislative Session and that the Disparity Study was included in the Budget implementation Bill. She added that this step was important for the well-being of the Contract Compliance Program. She acknowledged Attorney Spencer Hill for his work on the Bill.

She also reported that the agency was able to get awarded \$5 million for the Civil Rights Museum in the bonding bill. The next step is to get the bill on the Bond Commission agenda. The application was put in for the summer Bond Commission meetings. If it doesn't get through during the summer sessions reapplication will take place in September. She further reported that the agency faired well in the new state budget. No funding was taken away in either the deficiency bill or the budget.

She concluded by thanking everyone on the Legislative Committee for their work and dedication throughout the legislative session. She plans to create a summary of all the pending bills, and once completed, pass along to the commissioners.

Chair Kapoor added that two new protected classes had passed during this last legislative session: victims of sexual assault and victims of trafficking.

Legal Update

Managing Legal Director Kimberly Jacobsen informed us that there were no cases to report on at this time.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENT OF TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, July 9, 2025, at 2:00 PM. This meeting will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to calling for a motion to adjourn Chair Kapoor reminded everyone to please RSVP for the June 30 agency wide meeting, to look out for the invitation to the Intern Summer Symposium and announced that he would be visiting the four regional offices starting on June 26. He entreated the Commissioners to join him if available.

Executive Director Hughes reminded Chair Kapoor that there is still a vacancy on the Commission and reminded the other commissioners to reach out to their appointing authority if they were coming up at the end of their terms.

To Adjourn:

Motion: E. Pestana

Second: L. Giliberto

Discussion: None

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Giliberto, Harris, Norton, Pestana, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried

The meeting adjourned 3:36 PM.

The Minutes of the Regular Commission Meeting dated June 11, 2025 were approved on July 9, 2025.

Prepared by:

Tanya A. Hughes, Executive Director