

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 13, 2025
2:00 PM
Via Microsoft TEAMS

Commissioners Present

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

Staff Present

Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Director
Michelle Dumas Keuler, Legal Managing Director
Jonathan Sykes, HRO Attorney
Timothy Lewendon, HRO Attorney
Ethan Cain, HRO Attorney
Gary Madison, HRO Representative
Kellye Hudson, Executive Secretary

Kimberly Jacobsen, Legal Managing Director
Johnette Tolliver, State Program Manager
Spencer Hill, HRO Attorney
Stephanie O'Loughlin, HRO Attorney
Darcy Strand, Legislative Liaison
Darian Pitts, Executive Secretary
Laura Thurston, Assistant Attorney General

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Nicolas Kapoor convened the August 13, 2025, meeting at 2:04 PM.

II. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Chair Kapoor noted a quorum had been established with eight out of eight Commissioners present. He informed that CTN was present and would be recording the meeting. He also reminded the group that the meeting was being held in public forum and would be posted as such.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Secretary Mambruno asked for a motion to approve the 2025-07-09 Commission Meeting Minutes as written.

To Approve the 2025-07-09 Commission Meeting Minute:

Motion: E. Pestana
Seconded: J. Suggs

Vote:

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

No: 0

Abstain: 1 (Harris)

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

IV. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS-VOTE REQUIRED

Presented by Legal Managing Director Michelle Dumas Keuler

Connecticut Technical Education and Career System

Staff representing the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System were Executive Director Alice M. Pritchard, Ph.D, Director of EEO and Affirmative Action Levy Gillespie, Director Legal Affairs and Labor Relations Michael Barrera, Human Resources Director Heidi Gray, and EEO and Affirmative Action Specialist Wanda Scott.

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 has substantially addressed deficiencies noted by the Commission in prior plan reviews and therefore, is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

- Hiring Goal Achievement: 45 out of 126 possible goals were met or 36%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: 5 out of 8 possible goals were met or 63%
- Program Goal Achievement: No Program Goals were set

The approval history is as follows: 2024 Approved; 2023 Approved (First Filing).

To Approve the Affirmative Action Plan for the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System and to Retain its Annual Filing Status:

Motion: L. Giliberto

Second: A. Harris

Vote:

Yes: 7 (Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana, Suggs, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

Connecticut Department of Transportation

Staff representing the Connecticut Department of Transportation were Deputy Director Laoise King, EEO Director Eric Smith, EEO Specialist 2 Nisa Davey, and EEO Specialist 2 Estiana Green.

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 has substantially addressed deficiencies noted by the Commission in prior plan reviews and therefore, is in compliance with the (b)(4) standard.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

- Hiring Goal Achievement: 111 out of 268 possible goals were met or 41%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: 58 out of 98 possible goals were met or 59%
- Program Goal Achievement: 2 out of 2 possible goals were met or 100%

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

To Approve the Affirmative Action Plan for the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System and to Retain its Annual Filing Status:

Motion: L. Giliberto
Second: E. Pestana

Vote:

Yes: 7 (Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana, Suggs, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

V. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION

1. Fire Protection Team – Presented by HRO Attorney Jonathan Sykes

Chair Kapoor requested that the record notes that the Commissioners were in receipt of the letter from the Executive Director dated July 28, 2025, recommending approval of the exemption.

Attorney Jonathan Sykes informed the Commission that the Fire Protection Team requested exemption for all contract compliance obligations pursuant to its contract with the City of Middletown for the installation of fire protection equipment. The Fire Protection Team requested an exemption on the basis that it will have employed fewer than twenty-five people to work on the project. Attorney Sykes recommended that the Commissioners grant the Fire Protection Team's request-based on the fact that the contractor provided sufficient documentation to show that it met the requirements of Regs. Conn. State Agencies § 46a-68j-29(a)(4).

To Grant the Exemption Request for the Fire Protection Team of the City of Middletown on the RM Keating Historic Business Park Project as Outlined in the July 28, 2025, letter from the Executive Director:

Motion: E. Pestana

Second: T. Titre

Vote:

Yes: 7 (Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana, Suggs, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

VI. REQUEST TO REOPEN

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

1. Christopher Duran v. Trinity Health New England

CHRO Case No. 2530501

Presented by HRO Attorney Stephanie O'Loughlin

To Grant the Request to Reopen CHRO Case No. 2530501 Christopher Duran v. Trinity Health New England.

Motion: A. Harris

Second: J. Suggs

Vote:

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

No: 1 (Mambruno)

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Reappointment of CHRO Executive Director

To Reappoint Tanya A. Hughes to the Position of Executive Director of The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities for a term of four years that will begin September 16, 2025, and continue through September 15, 2029.

Motion: E. Pestana

Second: A. Harris, L. Giliberto, T. Titre

Vote:

Yes: 7 (Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana, Suggs, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

This requires a two-thirds vote on Commissioners present and voting; staff and guests invited to attend must be noted.

1. Ric L. Silver v. Housing Authority of the Town of Groton, et al – Proposed Housing Election
CHRO Case No. 2450133
Presented by HRO Attorney Ethan Cain and HRO Attorney Timothy Lewendon.

To enter Executive Session and invite into Executive Session the following Individuals: Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp, Managing Attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler, Managing Attorney Kimberly Jacobsen, Attorney Ethan Cain, Attorney Timothy Lewendon, and Assistant Attorney General Laura Thurston.

Motion: E. Pestana
Second: L. Giliberto

Vote:

Yes: 7 (Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana, Suggs, Titre)
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The Executive Session began at 2:57 PM.

Commissioners Kapoor, Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana, Suggs, and Titre returned after Executive Session at 3:21 PM.

Chair Kapoor reconvened the Commission Meeting to public session

IX. VOTE ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS

1. Ric L. Silver v. Housing Authority of the Town of Groton, et al – Proposed Housing Election
CHRO Case No. 2450133
Presented by HRO Attorney Ethan Cain and HRO Attorney Timothy Lewendon

To file the case Ric L. Silver v. Housing Authority of the Town of Groton, et al in New London Judicial District Superior Court and seek injunctive relief, punitive damages, and a civil penalty.

Motion: A. Harris
Second: T. Titre

Vote:

Yes: 7 (Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana, Suggs, Titre)

No: 0
Abstain: 0
Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

X. DIVISION REPORTS

Executive Director's Report & Deputy Director's Report

Chair Kapoor informed that Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp would report for Executive Director Hughes. Deputy Director Sharp took a moment to congratulate Director Hughes on her reappointment. She continued and noted that there are 87 employees and 95 appropriated positions. She is in the process of writing new and updating position refill classifications as needed. There have been some issues with the agency's budget reflecting some of the salary increases that will come about as the result of the reclassifications. She added that the CHRO had not appropriated all of the funds that was needed to accommodate the increases. As a result, CHRO will be seeking a technical adjustment to the budget and will be working with OPM to get the additional funds. She acknowledged the fact that everyone is pitching in to help with processing the complaints, specifically, the secretaries working overtime to compensate for the clerical vacancy in the Capital Region.

She further reported that annual evaluations are due by September 30, that two grievances were filed and were both denied, and the overwhelming amount of cases that were coming into one of the regional offices, specifically, the Waterbury office. This influx of cases is causing the amount of time to secure an intake appointment to increase. As a result, work is taking place to revamp the intake process. The goal is to have the process in place by October 1.

She went on to acknowledge the great outreach effort as part of the reason for the increase in cases. She also cited the Internship Program and use of the interns to help with facilitation of intake. There are also plans being formulated to hire a full-time intake person.

She informed that the Disparity Study Implementation activities, led by Attorney Spencer Hill, is coming together as preparations are being made to present the study to interest groups, staff, and the general public. There are also CHRO Automation Efforts taking place, a Whistleblower complaint filed with OPH, a pending hearing on a FOIA complaint, and a Budget meeting to discuss the position refills scheduled. Work continues with EEOC and HUD. There have been changes to the contract with EEOC. CHRO will continue to monitor the submissions for federal credit. HUD sent out a request nationally to have their logo removed from all media and documents. CHRO is in the process of complying. She concluded the Executive Director's Report by noting the continuation of the Managers Monthly Meeting, Clerical staff monthly meetings, Investigator Trainings, Commission Chair visitations to regional offices, the success of the Interns' Summer Symposium, the continuation of the Lunch/Learn Series, the DE&I Educational posts, and the Community Outreach posts.

Deputy Director Sharp continued with her report and noted the Food and a Film series continues with the next event scheduled for September 17. She went on to note the most recent Bond Committee Meeting, however, the Civil Rights Museum was not on the agenda, but the hope is that it will be on the September agenda. She added that there is federal probe that's taking place regarding the funding that has been given in

Hartford and may be the reason the Museum was not on the agenda. She then reported that the percentage of “aged” cases being carried by the agency is very low and acknowledged that they represent, in each of the regions, less than 1%.

She concluded by acknowledging all the agency’s outreach efforts occurring throughout the state as the reason for the uptick in cases coming through.

Legislative Update

Legislative Liaison Darcy Strand noted that there was no Legislative Session going on right now. Preparations are being made to gear up for next year’s session. Items that will be worked on for the next session are the Complaint Process, Affirmative Action, and the Contract Compliance Regulations.

Legal Update

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

XI. ANNOUNCEMENT OF DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next Commission Meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 2:00 PM. It will be held via Microsoft Teams and in-person at the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

To Adjourn:

Motion: L. Giliberto
Second: A. Norton

Vote:

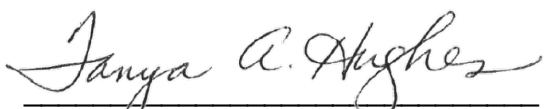
Yes: 7 (Giliberto, Harris, Mambruno, Norton, Pestana, Suggs, Titre)
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM.

The Minutes of the Regular Commission Meeting Dated August 13, 2025, were approved on September 10, 2025.

PREPARED BY:



Tanya A. Hughes, Executive Director