

STATE OF CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 10, 2025
2:00 p.m.
Via Microsoft TEAMS

Commissioners Present

Nicholas Kapoor, Chairperson
Edward Mambruno, Secretary
Alex Harris
Andrew Norton
Joseph Suggs
Tamara Titre

Commissioners Absent

Lisa Giliberto
Edith Pestana

Staff Present

Tanya Hughes, Executive Director	Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Executive Director
Kimberly Jacobsen, Legal Managing Director	Shawn Burns, Regional Manager
Michelle Dumas Keuler, Legal Managing Director	Johnette Tolliver, State Program Manager
Spencer Hill, HRO Attorney	Stephanie O'Loughlin, HRO Attorney
Robin Fox, HRO Attorney	Courtney Shields, HRO Attorney
Darcy Strand, Legislative Liaison	Gary Madison, HRO Representative
Kellye Hudson, Executive Secretary	Darian Pitts, Executive Secretary
Laura Thurston Assistant Attorney General	

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Nicholas Kapoor convened the September 10, 2025, meeting at 2:04 PM.

II. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT & ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Chair Kapoor noted a quorum had been established with Commissioners Mambruno, Suggs, Titre, and himself present. He noted the absence of Commissioners Giliberto, Pestana, Norton, and Harris and added that Commissioner Harris would be joining shortly.

Commissioner Harris joined the meeting at 2:06 PM

Commissioner Norton joined the meeting at 2:07 PM

He continued by welcoming and wishing everyone a Happy Fall. He officially congratulated Executive Director Hughes on her nomination and confirmation for another four-year term. Director Hughes thanked everyone and noted her appreciation for the Commissioners' votes of confidence.

Chair Kapoor also reminded everyone that the meeting was being held in a public forum and will be posted as such.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Secretary Mambruno asked for a motion to approve the 2025-08-13 Commission Meeting Minutes as written.

To Approve the 2025-08-13 Commission Meeting Minutes:

Motion: J. Suggs

Seconded: T. Titre

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Harris, Mambruno Norton, Suggs, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 2 (Giliberto, Pestana))

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

IV. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS – VOTE REQUIRED

Presented by Deputy Director Cheryl Sharp

Office of the Attorney General

Staff representing the Office of the Attorney General were Attorney General William Tong, Deputy Attorney General Eileen Meskill, Deputy Chief of Staff/General Counsel Timothy Birch, and Human Resources Director/ Affirmative Action Officer Susan Cavanaugh.

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: 9 out of 23 possible goals were met or 39%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: 1 out of 1 possible goal was met or 100%
- Program Goal Achievement: No Program Goals were set.

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

To Approve the Affirmative Action Plan for The Office of the Attorney General and to retain its Annual Filing Status:

Motion: A. Norton

Second: A. Harris

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Harris, Mambruno Norton, Suggs, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 2 (Giliberto, Pestana))

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

Department of Children and Families

Staff representing the Department of Children and Families were Commissioner Susan Hamilton, Chief of Staff Karrol-Ann Brown, Director, Office of Diversity and Equity Monica Rams, Equal Employment Opportunity Manager Ngina McMillian, Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist 2 Jennifer Burke, Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist 1 Desiray Bell Arch, Temporary Worker Retiree Jeanette Perez, Temporary Worker Retiree Natalie Shipman.

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, 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: 129 out of 297 possible goals were met or 43%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: 23 out of 50 possible goals were met or 46%
- Program Goal Achievement: 1 out of 2 possible goals were met or 50%
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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 Department of Children and Families and to retain its Annual Filing Status:

Motion: E. Mambruno

Second: A. Harris

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Harris, Mambruno Norton, Suggs, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 2 (Giliberto, Pestana)

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

Office of the State Comptroller

Staff representing the Office of the State Comptroller Sean Scanlon, Deputy Commissioner Tara Downs, Director, Human Resources Sara Garrett, Director Strategic Planning and Organizational Culture Morgan Roane, Temporary Worker Retiree Felicia Emanuel.

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, 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: 8 out of 13 possible goals were met or 62%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: 4 out of 4 possible goals were met or 100%
- 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 Approved; 2021 Approved 2020 Approved.

To Approve the Affirmative Action Plan for the Office of the State Comptroller and to retain its Annual Filing Status:

Motion: E. Mambruno

Second: A. Norton

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Harris, Mambruno Norton, Suggs, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 2 (Giliberto, Pestana))

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

Staff representing the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner were Deputy Chief Medical Examiner Maura DeJoseph, and Director, Human Resources Jaime Sanz.

This plan was recommended for disapproval based on non-compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(b)(1) the workforce, considered as a whole and by occupational category, is **not** in parity with the relevant labor market area; or 46a-68-102 (b)(2) the agency has **not** met all or substantially met all of its hiring, promotion and program goals; 46a-68-102(b)(3) the agency has **not** demonstrated every good faith effort to achieve goals.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

- Hiring Goal Achievement: 2 out of 14 possible goals were met or 14.3%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: There were no promotional goals set
- Program Goal Achievement: 1 out of 3 possible goals were met or 33.3%

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

To Disapprove the Affirmative Action Plan for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, rescind their Biennial Filing Status, and change it to an Annual Filing Status:

Motion: A. Harris

Second: J. Suggs

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Harris, Mambruno Norton, Suggs, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0
Absent: 2 (Giliberto, Pestana)
Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)
The motion carried.

V. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION

1. Renewal of the Exemption for UConn Health-Certain Grant-Based, Collaborative and Consulting Agreements-Presented by HRO Attorney Spencer Hill

Chair Kapoor requested that the record notes the Commissioners were in receipt of the letter from the Executive Director dated August 27, 2025, recommending approval of the exemption.

Attorney Hill informed the Commission that this request is being made on the grounds that it may be necessary in the future. This is not a new request. Approving yearly will speed up the contracting process when necessary. The recommendation is to grant the exemption again on an annual basis and ensure the same four conditions, as outlined in the letter, will still apply. They must still abide by all the non-discrimination provisions.

To Grant the Exemption Request for UConn Health and ensure the four conditions as outlined in the August 27, 2025, letter from the Executive Director will still apply:

Motion: J. Suggs
Second: E. Mambruno

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Harris, Mambruno Norton, Suggs, Titre)
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 2 (Giliberto, Pestana)
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. Questions and answers from commissioners followed these remarks.

1. Michael Asante v. New Haven Police Department
CHRO Case No. 2430722
Presented by HRO Attorney Courtney Shields

To Grant the Request to Reopen CHRO Case No. 2430722 Michael Asante v. New Haven Police Department

Motion: A. Norton
Second: T. Titre

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Harris, Mambruno Norton, Suggs, Titre)
No: 0

Abstain: 0
Absent: 2 (Giliberto, Pestana))
Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)
The motion carried.

2. Feifei Xia v. Stamford Youth Hockey Association
CHRO Case No. 2520259
Presented by HRO Attorney Robin S. Kinstler Fox

To Deny the Request to Reopen CHRO Case No. 2520259 Feifei Xia v. Stamford Youth Hockey Association.

Motion: A. Norton
Second: E. Mambruno

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Harris, Mambruno Norton, Suggs, Titre)
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 2 (Giliberto, Pestana))
Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)
The motion carried.

3. Stella Onochie v. Achievement First Hartford Academy, Inc.
CHRO Case No. 2510276
Presented by HRO Attorney Stephanie O'Loughlin

To Grant the Request to Reopen CHRO Case No. 2510276 Stella Onochie v. Achievement First Hartford Academy.

Motion: A. Harris
Second: J. Suggs

Vote:

Yes: 5 (Harris, Mambruno Norton, Suggs, Titre)
No: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 2 (Giliberto, Pestana))
Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)
The motion carried.

Commissioner Suggs Left the meeting at 3:02 PM

VII. DIVISION REPORTS

Executive Director's Report

Director Hughes informed that she and her staff had been diligently meeting with various departments across the state including the Department of Labor, EEO, HR, OLR, OAG, and BITS. She further informed that the agency's technical adjustment request was submitted reflecting the reclassifications, promotions, and retirements.

She added that the agency is on target to meet the implementation schedule of the disparity study and offered kudos to Attorney Spencer Hill and Attorney Darcey Jones Strand for their leadership.

She further reported that Attorney Jonathan Sykes, who leads the agency's technical team, is working on automation efforts to implement AI Co-pilot licensing. There have also been some updates to the EEOC and HUD contracts. The agency, she continued, is waiting for finalization of the contracts in order to submit for the vouchers.

Outreach Report

Deputy Executive Cheryl Sharp took a moment to congratulate Executive Director Hughes on her reappointment. She also congratulated Attorney Robin Fox on her upcoming retirement and noted the retirement of CHRO Investigator, Ann Galer, effective October 1.

She went on to report that the agency continues to be busy, is still involved, and utilizes social media at every opportunity via posts from the DEI committee and Outreach representative Anthony Pragano.

She reported that the CHRO would be hosting its first ever Youth Law Summit to be held at UConn Law School with hundreds of students registered to participate. She announced a need for volunteers from the legal field to help facilitate the Summit. Attorneys, judges, social justice activists, investigators, and all other interested parties are encouraged to volunteer.

The Summer Internship Program was recently concluded. Their final project was the symposium on immigration. She gave kudos to the interns for a job well done. The fall student intern program has started with four new executive interns coming on board. She added that one of the "star students," who had been participating in Kids Court Academy and later as an intern, was off to Harvard University.

She added that the CHRO is heavily involved with many organizations and boards throughout the state and provides information about the services offered by the agency.

In conclusion, Director Sharp reported on the agency's recruitment efforts and the need to work with the Department of Labor movement is underway to refill vacant positions. She also informed that the agency-wide meeting was scheduled for December 4th and would again be held at the Artist Collective.

Legislative Update

Legislative Liaison Darcy Strand reported that there is an internal agency group that is working on making sure all is ready for the October 1 effective date of the recommendations of the disparity study Bill. The group is working to automate and revise the forms used by the CHRO Contract Compliance Unit, establish new procedures and guidelines and reach out to stakeholders to make them aware of the new laws and forms.

She further reported that a new database for the Affirmative Action Plans is underway and will lead to streamlining of the Plan process.

Legal Update

Managing Legal Director Kimberly Jacobsen reported on two cases where final decisions were issued as the appeal period has concluded. The first case is an administrative appeal dealing with employment discrimination that was investigated and was ultimately dismissed for no reasonable cause. According to Connecticut General Statute 4-183 the complainant had 45 days to appeal the decision. Unfortunately, the complainant waited more than 45 days to appeal and missed the window of opportunity. The Superior Court dismissed the case because of the late filing.

The second case was at its final stage within the Office of Public Hearing. It was a housing discrimination case found to have reasonable cause. Prosecution had been deferred to the complainant's attorney, but the attorney withdrew from the case. The complainant could have gotten another attorney or the CHRO would have put on the case. However, the complainant failed to show up at both the status conference hearing and the public hearing. As a result of the complainant failing to appear at the two conferences/hearings the case was dismissed.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENT OF TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next Commission Meeting will be on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, at 2:00 PM. This meeting will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to asking for the motion to adjourn Chair Kapoor informed that Commissioner Harris had been dropped from the meeting and was unable to get back in. He also offered his congratulations and heartfelt thanks to both Attorney Robin Fox and Investigator Ann Galer on their well-deserved retirements after 30 + years of service to the CHRO and the public it serves. He then asked for a motion to adjourn.

To Adjourn:

Motion: A. Norton

Second: T. Titre

Vote:

Yes: 3 (Mambruno, Norton, Titre)

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 4 (Giliberto, Harris, Pestana, Suggs)

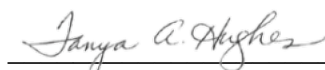
Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 PM.

The Minutes of the Regular Commission Meeting dated October 8, 2025, were approved on November 12, 2025.

Prepared by:



Tanya A. Hughes
Executive Director