

STATE OF CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

DRAFT

Regular Commission Meeting Minutes Wednesday, December 10, 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
Michelle Dumas Keuler, Legal Managing Director
Johnette Tolliver, State Program Manager
Gary Madison, HRO Representative

Cheryl Sharp, Deputy Executive Director
Spencer Hill, HRO Attorney
Darcy Strand, Legislative Liaison
Darian Pitts, Executive Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Nicholas Kapoor convened the December 10, 2025, meeting at 2:03 PM.

II. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT & ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Chair Kapoor welcomed everyone and noted that a quorum had been established with seven out of eight Commissioners present. He further noted that Commissioner Suggs was absent.

In conclusion, he asked everyone except the Commissioners, to mute their microphones and remain off camera until recognized. He reminded everyone that the meeting is held in public forum, will be posted as such, and wished everyone a very safe, healthy, and warm holiday season.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Secretary Mambruno requested a motion to approve the November 12, 2025, Commission Meeting Minutes as written.

To Approve the November 12, 2025, Regular Commission Meeting Minutes:

Motion: L. Giliberto

Second: E. Pestana

Vote:

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

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

IV. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS – VOTE REQUIRED

Presented by Deputy Executive Director Cheryl Sharp

Department of Agriculture

Staff representing Department of Agriculture were Commissioner Bryan Hurlburt, Director of Operations Nathan Wilson, DAS Human Resources Associate McKenzie Gauthier, and DAS Human Resources Generalist Brittany Besaw.

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(a) the plan contains 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: 3 out of 18 possible goals were met or 17%
- There were no Promotional Goals set.
- Program Goal Achievement: 1 out of 1 possible goal was met 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 Department of Agriculture and to retain its Biennial Filing Status:

Motion: E. Mambruno

Second: L. Giliberto

Vote:

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

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

**Commissioner Giliberto recused herself from participating in the review and discussion of the Office of the Chief State's Attorney-Division of Criminal Justice AA Plan Summary.

Office of the Chief State's Attorney-Division of Criminal Justice

Staff representing the Office of the Chief State's Attorney were Deputy Chief State's Attorney John J. Russotto, and EEO Specialist Janice duFrend.

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(a), the plan contains 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: 5 out of 16 possible goals were met or 31.25%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: 16 out of 27 possible goals were met or 59.26%
- There were no Program Goals set.

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 Chief State's Attorney-Division of Criminal Justice and to retain its Annual Filing Status:

Motion: A. Norton

Second: E. Pestana

Vote:

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

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Recused: 1 (Giliberto)

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

Office of Early Childhood

Staff representing the Office of Early Childhood were Interim Commissioner Elena Trueworthy, Chief Operating Officer Samatha Reinstein, Human Resources Generalist 2 Nickson Renon-court, Human Resources Specialist-Equal Employment Opportunity, Jordan Kubik, Leadership Associate-Equal Employment Opportunity, Ghammam Mansoor.

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(a), the plan contains 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.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

- Hiring Goal Achievement: 7 out of 27 possible goals were met or 26%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: 1 out of 1 possible goal was met or 100%
- Program Goal Achievement: 1 out of 1 possible goal was met or 100%

The five-year approval history is as follows: 2023 Approved; 2021 Approved; 2019 Approved; 2017 Disapproved; 2016 Disapproved.

To Approve the Affirmative Action Plan for the Office of Early Childhood and to retain its Biennial Filing Status:

Motion: L. Giliberto
Second: A. Harris

Vote:

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

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

Department of Motor Vehicles

Staff representing Department of Motor Vehicles were Commissioner Anthony Guerrera, Human Resources Specialist- Equal Employment Opportunity Renee Lombard, and Human Resources Business Partner 1 Ryan Howe.

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(a), the plan contains 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: 11 out of 34 possible goals were met or 32%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: 7 out of 23 possible goals were met or 30%
- Program Goal Achievement: 1 out of 1 possible goal was met or 100%

The five-year approval history is as follows: 2024 Approved; 2023 Approved; 2022 Disapproved for failure to file; 2021 Approved; 2020 Approved.

To Approve the Affirmative Action Plan for Department of Motor Vehicles and to retain its Annual Filing Status:

Motion: L. Giliberto
Second: E. Mambruno

Vote:

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

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

UConn Health

Staff representing UConn Health were Chief Diversity Officer Jeffrey Hines, M.D., Vice President, Office of Human Resources, Lakesha Brown, Director of Civil Rights Compliance, Office

for Inclusion and Civil Rights Sarah Chipman, and EEO & Search Compliance Manager / Office for Inclusion and Civil Rights Hanna Prytko.

This plan was recommended for approval based on compliance with the following: 46a-68-102(a), the plan contains 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 the prior plan review.

The Goal Achievement is as follows:

- Hiring Goal Achievement: 129 out of 366 possible goals were met or 35%
- Promotional Goal Achievement: 67 out of 115 possible goals were met or 58%
- 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 UConn Health and to retain its Annual Filing Status:

Motion: A. Harris

Second: L. Giliberto

Vote:

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

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Election of Commission Secretary for 2026

Chair Kapoor announced the need to elect the Commission Secretary for calendar year 2026 and asked for nominations.

Commissioner Pestana nominated Commissioner Edward Mambruno. Commissioner Titre seconded. Chair Kapoor asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, Chair Kapoor officially closed nominations and called for the vote:

To Reelect Commissioner Edward Mambruno to the Office of Commission Secretary for Calendar Year 2026:

Motion: E. Pestana

Second: T. Titre

Vote:

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

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried.

Newly elected Commissioner Mambruno expressed his thanks and honor to serve as Secretary for 2026.

VI. DIVISION REPORTS

Executive Director's Report

Director Hughes offered her congratulations to Commissioner Mambruno on his reappointment and nuptials. She continued that the agency has been experiencing a very busy month as it continues to meet with various partner agencies, such as the Department of Labor, Office of the Attorney General, and BITS. She also thanked the partner agencies for helping the CHRO to execute its mission.

She added that the regions are experiencing high intake levels, especially in the Capital Region, there have been increased filings with the Contract Compliance Unit, and OPH is currently experiencing manageable levels. She added there is a pending referee vacancy as one of the referees is preparing to retire. She took a moment to thank Managing Legal Director Kimberly Jacobsen and her team for their work on the Memorandums of Understandings between the CHRO and other state service provider agencies.

She thanked Deputy Executive Director Sharp, Program Manager Johnette Tolliver, and Executive Secretary to Deputy Executive Director Sharp, Kellye Hudson for their efforts with recruitment, and noted the vacant positions had been posted. The next steps will include candidate interviews.

She informed that HRO Attorney Spencer Hill and Legislative Liaison Darcy Strand continue working on Disparity Study implementation, a quote had been received for implementation of an online Affirmative Action electronic program, and work continues with updates to the agency's website. She announced that the agency had received the contract from EEOC and submitted a voucher request for over \$1.2 million. She was unable to provide any further updates to the status of the HUD contract but continues to pursue fulfillment and /or execution of prior contractual arrangements.

In conclusion she acknowledged and thanked CHRO staff for continuing to respond to the needs of the public, and thanked Commissioners Giliberto, Harris, and Pestana for their participation in the agency-wide meeting held on Thursday, December 4, 2025, at the Artists' Collective in Hartford. Finally, she noted Chair Kapoor would visit the Eastern Region next week and possibly meet with Senator Osten during the visit.

Outreach Report

Deputy Executive Director Cheryl Sharp took a moment to wish everyone a Happy Human Rights Day in celebration of the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. CHRO participated in a celebration and press conference in Washington, DC at the National Press Club. She and her team also attended a press conference at Hartford City Hall with the Mayor and other dignitaries. She added that CHRO is partnering with Joe Young and his "Can Do" Project to produce a public service announcement about immigration and the contribution of immigrants.

She informed of other projects CHRO would be participating in to include the Black History 365 Education Foundation Project, currently found in 500 school districts across the country. She further announced that she was interviewed by Fox 61 on the project.

She remarked about the influx of students interested in interning with the agency and how competitive it has become. She added that the Community Engagement Team presented during the December 4th agency wide meeting and showcased materials that can be used by CHRO staff when conducting outreach events.

Attorney Sharp announced that the 4th Annual MLK, Jr Children's March will take place on Monday, January 19, 2026, and will include civil rights leaders and dignitaries. KEMET, a time traveling character created by Joe Young who travels back in time and teaches history will also make an appearance in the March. KCA students will also be there to present the Constitution in a kid friendly way.

Finally, she acknowledged Kids Court Academy participants and the new feature that recognizes the scholastic achievement of honor and high honor students. She further highlighted the KCA participants that have started their own social justice programs.

Legislative Update

Legislative Liaison Darcy Strand reported that in February the Legislative Session is set to begin. The CHRO's Legislative Committee has drafted the proposals for the year and is reviewing the concepts from the 2025 Legislative session that did not pass along with some new proposals to form the 2026 legislative package. She also promised to keep the Commissioners updated on upcoming Bond Commission meetings as it applies to funding for the Civil Rights Museum.

Brief discussion ensued about various ways the Commissioners could support the agency. Deputy Executive Director Sharp encouraged the group to reach out to their State Representatives, Senators, Governor's Office, and any other connections to for their help and support.

Darcy concluded with an update on the implementations of the new Contract Compliance Regulations that she was working on with Attorneys Spencer Hill and Jonathan Sykes, indicating that the goal is to fix the discrepancies and submit a report by the end of the year.

Legal Update

Managing Legal Director Michelle Dumas Keuler took a moment to wish everyone a happy holiday season. She then reported on a case concerning a complainant not satisfied with the No Reasonable Cause finding as it applied to their case. She informed that the complainant has the right to appeal the finding to the superior court for an appellate review at the trial court level of processing during the investigation. She advised there were briefs filed, legal arguments made, and an appeal was brought against the CHRO and the Respondent. The CHRO prevailed in the appeal with the court finding that the processing of the matter by CHRO was appropriate and the agency was correct in issuing a finding of No Reasonable Cause. However, the Complainant appealed to the appellate court and the case was settled with the primary respondent and withdrawn.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENT OF TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Chair Kapoor announced the next Commission Meeting will be on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 2:00 PM. This meeting will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kapoor asked for a motion to adjourn

To Adjourn:

Motion: E. Pestana

Second: A. Harris

Vote:

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

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Did not vote: 1 (Kapoor)

The motion carried

The meeting adjourned at 3:32 PM.