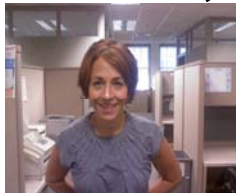


2010 NATIONAL FAIR HOUSING POLICY CONFERENCE



Executive Director Robert Brothers and CHRO Attorneys Kimberly Jacobsen, Robert Zamlowski and Robin Fox attended the HUD funded National Fair Housing Policy Conference in New Orleans, LA from July 19-23, 2010. The theme of the first biannual HUD Conference under the Obama Administration was "Time to Act". It provided both training and inspiration to the Commission's mission to further Fair Housing and eliminate discrimination. Assistant Secretary of HUD, John Trasviña, IAOHRA President Leon Russell, Assistant Attorney General of the DOJ Civil Rights Division Thomas E. Perez, Ashland Professor of Law Robert G. Schwemm and many others, set forth the new enforcement and fair housing agenda for HUD and the Department of Justice. This ambitious agenda includes pursuing cases alleging disparate impact and continuing violation, as well as other discriminatory lending practices such as refusals to provide mortgage financing to pregnant women. "It was both motivating and inspirational to participate in the Fair Housing Conference along with over 1,000 dedicated fair housing advocates," remarked CHRO Attorney Robin Fox.

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER



Edith Pestana has served as a Commissioner with the CHRO for over seven years. She is the Administrator of the Environmental Justice Program at the State Department of Environmental Protection and has been with DEP for sixteen years. Prior to working at DEP, she was an Epidemiologist with the Department of Public Health—where she conducted research to determine the causation of disease. In jest, Commissioner Pestana describes herself as a "scientific weenie". In fact, she is a scientist with a background in epidemiology who is committed to environmental justice, and a dynamic person—as is exhibited by her responses to a few of the interviewer's questions:

- Q:** What makes you interested in Civil Rights?
A: Environmental Justice! "When I was a Consultant, I witnessed Black and Hispanic communities being deliberately exposed to environmental toxins, which would eventually create health and safety concerns for those communities."
Q: What is your vision for the Commission?

A: "I would like for the CHRO to work on emerging civil rights issues, such as the increase the number of hate groups and racial and ethnic profiling." "I would like for a team of individuals to work on legislative issues, in order for CHRO to gain a more positive presence in the legislature." "I want the public and the legislature to recognize the efforts of the dedicated CHRO staff to eliminate discrimination through education, advocacy and enforcement." Commissioner Pestana shares her dedication to Environmental Justice with Connecticut but her contributions and research don't stop with Connecticut—she is on the national scene, and is a member of the National Environmental Justice Council. She is truly a remarkable advocate for Environmental Justice and Civil Rights.

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE

This month, the Contract Compliance Unit teamed up with the Legal Department to revise the Affirmative Action Plan and the Set-Aside Plan. These plans are completed by state contractors to ensure equal opportunity is provided to CT Small, Disadvantaged, Women, and Minority owned business enterprises. Contract Compliance Unit Supervisor, Alvin K. Bingham said, "The revised plans will provide CHRO's reviewers with more concrete evidence of a state contractor's good faith efforts to solicit and employ Connecticut State small and minority business enterprises on state funded construction and rehabilitation projects." The newly revised plans are effective August 15, 2010 and will be available for download at www.ct.gov/chro. The newly revised Set-Aside Plan will continue to be forwarded via regular mail to state contractors that qualify.

IN THE COMMUNITY

CHRO Attorneys, Alix Simonetti and Cheryl A. Sharp participated in the City of New Britain's Abilities Conference on July 19, 2010 and provided literature about the Commission's enforcement activities in employment and housing to the attendees.

LEGAL UPDATE



The CHRO is helping to prepare the next generation of Civil Rights and Public Interest Law Attorneys. The CHRO has administered a law school internship program for over fifteen years. The goal of the program is to involve participating law school students in the process of preparing discrimination cases for litigation before human rights referees—who function as administrative law judges, and in Connecticut trial courts. Students are paired with experienced litigation attorneys and given assignments that range from responding to individual legal questions that arise during the course of complaint investigation or in judicial proceedings to questioning witnesses at fact-finding. Externship duties will typically include legal research and writing, drafting pleadings and interrogatories, interviewing witnesses prior to trial and settlement negotiations. Students admitted under Connecticut's student practice rule may have an opportunity to question witnesses at public hearings. This summer, Melvin J. Kelley IV and Derek Borhardt from Columbia Law School, Valerie Letendre from UCONN School of Law, and Jessica Marcellino from Western New England Law School participated in the program, administered by Principal Attorney Charles Krich and CHRO Attorney Kimberly Jacobsen.



Legal is working with the Urban League of Greater Hartford to develop conscientious leaders who understand the value of civil and human rights. Two high school students, Corey Sutherland and Patricia Davis are interning with legal.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

<i>Employment Settlements during investigation</i>	
July	\$190,000
<i>Housing Settlements during investigation</i>	
July	\$11,800
<i>Legal Department Settlements-contested cases</i>	
FY '09-'10	\$1,100,000
<i>Public Hearing</i>	

On July 1, 2010, OPH had sixty-four (64) pending contested cases. Three of those cases have been closed—leaving sixty-one pending contested cases—fourteen whistleblower retaliation complaints and forty-three discrimination complaints awaiting a public hearing or damages hearing, and two whistleblower retaliation cases and two discrimination cases pending decision.

DID YOU KNOW?

CHRO's Central Office has been located in Hartford since 1943 and on August 4, 2010, at a special meeting, the majority of the Commissioners voted to keep the central office location in the City of Hartford.