

Questions for Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities Nominee

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Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) ([CGS § 46a-52](#))

- The commission consists of nine members. The governor appoints five and the legislative leaders appoint four. (The Senate president pro tempore and minority leader and the House speaker and minority leader each appoint one.)
- The governor's appointees serve five-year terms; other members serve three-year terms.
- The commission oversees the state agency that enforces anti-discrimination laws in various areas, such as employment, housing, public accommodations, credit practices, and state services and programs.

Questions

1. What is CHRO's primary mission?
2. In 2019, the legislature passed legislation addressing several aspects of sexual harassment in the workplace, such as extending the time for filing a complaint with CHRO from 180 days to 300 days after the alleged discrimination ([PA 19-16](#), as amended by [PA 19-93](#)). What impact do you foresee these laws having? Do you have recommendations for other legislative changes on this issue?
3. The 2019 legislation expanded requirements for employers to provide employee training about sexual harassment laws. What feedback have you received from employers about the new requirements, including your office's [online training materials](#)?

4. Under another new law, for contractors required to submit affirmative action plans to CHRO for approval, the plans are deemed approved if the executive director or her designee fails to reach a decision within 120 days of their submission ([PA 19-94](#)). How often are plan approvals still outstanding after 120 days? Do you think the 120-day deadline is appropriate?
5. According to CHRO's [annual reports](#), the number of discrimination complaints filed with the commission has been higher (average of slightly over 2,500/year) in the last five fiscal years than in the previous five years (slightly over 2,000/year). What do you think accounts for this increase?
6. CHRO participates in community forums, provides select trainings, and provides various materials on its website to inform the public about the commission and provide information about anti-discrimination laws. Are there other ways the commission can inform the public about their rights under these laws?
7. What can a commissioner do to ensure the complaint investigation process is not only fair but is perceived as fair and unbiased by complainants and respondents alike?
8. Human rights referees conduct hearings to determine whether discrimination has occurred, and they may remedy any discrimination they find. How much control, influence, or authority should the commission have over referees?
9. In 2017, the legislature passed a law ([PA 17-118](#)) that expanded the employment protections provided to pregnant women under the state's anti-discrimination laws. Does CHRO receive many complaints alleging such discrimination? What impact has this legislation had?
10. Over the years, the legislature has added to the list of protected classes under the state's anti-discrimination laws. Most recently, the legislature added veteran status to the protected classes under various laws in 2017 ([PA 17-127](#)). What do you think about further expanding or narrowing the classes of people protected under such laws? Do you have any suggestions?

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