
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 1442

AN ACT CONCERNING LEGAL PROCEEDINGS CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES.

SUMMARY

This bill makes several changes affecting the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) and related laws.

First, the bill prohibits discrimination on the basis of someone's status as a domestic violence victim in certain actions related to selling or renting housing. This authorizes someone aggrieved by the alleged discriminatory practice to file a complaint with CHRO, which enforces these antidiscrimination provisions.

The bill also:

1. limits when the parties or CHRO may request early legal intervention after the mandatory mediation conference by requiring it be before there is an issued draft investigative report;
2. limits when parties may reopen a previously closed matter to those matters closed before the start of a contested case; and
3. eliminates the two-year statute of limitations after filing a complaint with CHRO to bring an action in Superior Court for an alleged violation, instead applying the 90-day window after receiving a release of jurisdiction to bring the action (§§ 6-9).

Lastly, it specifies that for purposes of discriminatory employment practice claims based on an employer's agent's actions, an "employer's agent" is someone who the employer authorizes to (1) undertake or recommend tangible employment decisions affecting the employee or (2) direct the employee's daily work activities. This applies to claims in existing law based on a refusal to hire, a bar or discharge from

employment, or discrimination against an individual in pay or employment terms due to the individual's status in one of the protected classes (§§ 1 & 2).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 3 — HOUSING DISCRIMINATION DUE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM STATUS

The bill makes it a form of housing discrimination, and a class D misdemeanor, which is punishable by up to 30 days imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250, or both, to take any of the following actions because of a person's status as a victim of domestic violence:

1. discriminate in the terms, conditions, or privileges of a dwelling's sale or rental, or when providing services or facilities in connection with the sale or rental;
2. make, print, or publish any notice, statement, or advertisement for the sale or rental of a dwelling that shows, or indicates an intent to make, a preference, limitation, or discrimination, or cause this to be done;
3. falsely represent to someone that an available dwelling is not available for inspection, sale, or rental;
4. restrict or attempt to restrict the choices of a buyer or renter to a certain area while other suitable areas are available;
5. for profit, induce or attempt to induce someone to sell or rent a dwelling by representing that victims of domestic violence are moving, or may move, into the neighborhood;
6. when engaging in residential real estate-related transactions, discriminate in (a) making a transaction available or (b) the transaction's terms or conditions;
7. deny someone access to, or membership or participation in, any multiple-listing service; real estate brokers' organization; or other service, organization, or facility relating to the business of

selling or renting dwellings, or discriminate in the terms or conditions of such access, membership, or participation; or

8. coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with someone in the exercise or enjoyment of, or on account of the person having exercised, enjoyed, or aided or encouraged someone else in the exercise or enjoyment of, these rights.

It is already discriminatory to refuse to sell or rent after a person makes a bona fide offer, refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of a dwelling, or otherwise deny or make unavailable a dwelling to someone based on their status as a domestic violence victim. The law's and the bill's prohibitions on housing discrimination do not apply to the rental of owner-occupied single- or two-family homes.

Also, existing law allows property appraisers to consider factors other than race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, marital status, age, lawful source of income, familial status, learning disability, or physical or mental disability in their appraisals. The act adds domestic violence victim status to this list of factors.

§ 4 — EARLY LEGAL INTERVENTION

By law, either party or CHRO may request early legal intervention for complaints that are not resolved after the mandatory mediation conference. Currently, they may do so at any time after the conference. The bill limits when the request may be made by requiring it before the issuance of a draft investigative report about the complaint.

Early legal intervention involves a determination of whether a complaint should be sent directly to public hearing, given a release of jurisdiction so that the matter can be pursued in court, or processed for investigation in the typical manner.

§ 5 — REOPENING MATTERS

By law, a party to a matter (claimant or respondent) can ask CHRO to reopen a case. However, the application to do this must be filed within two years of CHRO's final decision in the matter and the

claimant must not have requested a release of jurisdiction or filed a court action.

The bill specifies that the case also cannot be reopened for a party if a contested case proceeding began in the matter, meaning that the presiding referee issued a final decision and it is appealable. Rather, in this circumstance, the parties must appeal the decision and take it up in Superior Court.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 30 Nay 11 (04/07/2025)