

## ● STATE HUMAN RIGHTS LAWS

*STATUTORY CITATION:* Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 46a-51 – 46a-125

*GENERAL SUMMARY:* The state human rights laws describe certain discriminatory employment practices which are declared unlawful, and establish administrative and judicial procedures for reporting and resolving complaints of discriminatory practices. The fair employment provisions apply to all employers in the state — including farm operators and other agricultural establishments — that employ 3 or more workers.

### *SPECIFIC TERMS AND CONDITIONS*

**PROHIBITED EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES** — Except in the case of a bona fide occupational qualification or need, it is unlawful for any employer with 3 or more employees to, among other acts, refuse to hire or employ an individual, to bar or discharge an individual from employment, or to discriminate against an individual in compensation or in terms or conditions of employment, because of the individual's race, color, religious creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, present or past history of mental disability, intellectual disability, learning disability, or physical disability. Among many other prohibited acts, employers are barred from terminating a woman's employment because of her pregnancy, or refusing to grant her a reasonable leave of absence for disability due to her pregnancy. Employment opportunities generally may not be restrictively advertised so as to discriminate against potential applicants on any of the above-mentioned grounds. Comparable acts of employment discrimination on these grounds by employment agencies and labor organizations are also forbidden.

**COMPLAINT PROCEDURE** — Anyone claiming to be aggrieved by an alleged discriminatory employment practice may file a written complaint with the enforcement agency. Any such complaint must be filed within 180 days after the alleged act of discrimination occurred. Complaints may be dismissed without investigation by the state agency, but if the agency investigates and finds reasonable cause to believe that a discriminatory practice has been or is being committed, steps must be taken to eliminate the practice through conference, conciliation and persuasion. A formal hearing will be held when such efforts fail, culminating in either (1) a cease-and-desist order and compensatory relief, such as back pay and compensatory damages, or (2) dismissal. A formal hearing will also be held on complaints processed through the agency's early legal intervention program.

### *SPECIAL NOTES OR ADVISORIES*

**RETALIATION** — It is illegal for a subject employer, or for an employment agency or labor organization, to discharge, discipline or discriminate in any manner against an employee because the employee has filed a complaint, participated in a proceeding, or exercised any other right afforded by these provisions.

### *ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT*

**PRIMARY ENFORCEMENT AGENCY** — *Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Hartford, Connecticut 06106 (860-541-3400)*. The Commission is responsible for receiving and responding to discriminatory practice complaints, and consequently may investigate, hold hearings, subpoena witnesses and documents, and issue compliance orders. Workers who have been adversely affected by a violation of these provisions may file an employment discrimination complaint by contacting the nearest regional office of the Commission.

**SECONDARY OR ASSOCIATED ENFORCEMENT AGENCY** — *None*.

**PRIVATE CIVIL ACTION** — A worker may obtain a release from the Commission and take legal action against the employer in state court directly if (1) a complaint has been filed with the Commission and is still pending 180 or more days after filing, (2) the worker and employer agree to the release, even if the complaint has been pending less than 180 days, or (3) the worker requests and the Commission completes an expedited case review. The civil action must be filed within 90 days after receipt of the release and generally brought within 2 years after the date the complaint was filed.