CHRO TIMES

Eliminating discrimination through Enforcement, Education & Advocacy

Senator Len Suzio provided the opening address at the 2011 **Anti-bullying Leadership Conference,** organized by CHRO.

The **2011 Anti-Bullying Leadership Conference** focused on fighting discrimination, protecting the rights of children in schools and reducing discriminatory bullying on August 10, 2011. Connecticut parents students, teachers, administrators and school board members met at the state capitol to discuss the consequences of discriminatory bullying in Connecticut schools. **Dr. Bill Howe and Dr. JoAnn Frieberg** school climate and bullying consultants to the Department of Education spoke to the standing room only crowd about the role the state Department of education plays in creating positive school culture and eliminating bullying. **Lisa Tregoning**, Program Manager with the Governor's Partnership prevention discussed the work the Agency does in assisting schools with developing a positive and respectful school climate.

Representative Gail LaVielle, who represents Norwalk and Wilton and serves on the Education Committee, spoke to the receptive audience about the reality of bullying in Connecticut schools and about the work that the Education Committee has done to improve school climate. CHRO Attorneys Kimberly Jacobsen, Cheryl Sharp, Alix Simonetti and Michelle Dumas Keuler talked about the history of the Agency, the complaint process and coverage of discriminatory bullying. Interns Jonathan Pike and DJ Arnold were chief organizers of the event.

Parents shared heartfelt stories about the devastating effects of bullying on their children. It was clear from the Conference that words hurt and that students have to say something if they see or hear discriminatory bullying.

The 2011 Anti-Bullying Leadership Conference was co-sponsored by the CHRO, the **AAAC**, **DCF**, the **APAAC**, the **LPRAC**, the **NCCJ** and **OPA**.

LEGAL UPDATE

The Connecticut Supreme Court released its decision in the case entitled Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities v. Housing Authority of the Town of Litchfield, et al., on Thursday, August 11, 2011 (the official release date is August 23, 2011).

The basis of the appeal was the interpretation of a CHRO statute that allows for the relator complainant to intervene as a party when his/her housing case is elected to proceed in Superior Court. The Court determined that it had "improvidently granted certification" and it dismissed the appeal of the Litchfield Housing Authority. The Court primarily based its decision on the passage of a public act that unequivocally allows for the intervention of a relator, as of right, in his/her Superior Court matter. The Court found this change in the statute very persuasive and therefore dismissed the appeal. Congratulations to **CHRO Attorney Michelle Dumas Keuler** and thank you to the General Assembly for the passage of the public act.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- The Greater New England Minority Supplier Development Council is hosting an annual **Supplier Diversity Trade Expo** designed for minority businesses, area corporations, government agencies and constituent groups. This event will be held on **October 3 - October 5** at the MGM Grand at Foxwoods.
- **Public Act 11-237 Civil Rights Law Conference (Hartford)**—CHRO Attorneys and Complainants and Respondents bar will discuss the Public Act and the changes to the processing of civil rights cases at the CHRO on **October 20, 2011** from **10:00-12:00** at the Legislative Office Building, Room TBA. Take a glance at the **CHRO's expedited complaint process**.

BREAST FEEDING GUIDANCE

On Labor Day the CHRO, the Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition (CBC), the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department of Labor (DOL) will issue a joint guidance document to assist businesses, employers, employees and parents in understanding and interpreting Connecticut Breastfeeding laws. The breast feeding memo will eventually be given to every new mother in the state.

THE ADA CELEBRATION

On July 26, 2011 CHRO Attorneys **Robin Fox, Michelle Dumas Keuler, Cheryl Sharp and Alix Simonetti,** Executive Director **Robert Brothers** and Commissioner **Andrew Norton** participated in and attended the Celebration, which was aimed at protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities. The CHRO provided information about the Agency's filing process.

ALERT

Office of Public Hearing

All cases that have been certified to Public Hearing after a finding of reasonable cause are temporarily suspended and all scheduled proceedings are postponed until Human Rights Referees are appointed to the Office of Public Hearings by the Governor's Office.