



News from:

COMPTROLLER KEVIN LEMBO

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COMPTROLLER LEMBO: CHRO REAFFIRMS THAT DISCRIMINATION HAS NO PLACE IN CONNECTICUT'S CHARITABLE CAMPAIGN

Comptroller Kevin Lembo today praised a declaratory ruling by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) that upholds his recommendation to bar the American Family Association (AFA) from the State Employee Charitable Campaign for violating Connecticut's anti-discrimination law.

"This decision unequivocally reaffirms that there is no place for discrimination in our state's charitable campaign," Lembo said. "I am proud to live in a state that wholly rejects discrimination – whether based on an individual's race, color, religion, age, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, national origin, ancestry or disability."

Earlier this year, Lembo advised the Connecticut State Employees Charitable Campaign Committee – and the committee unanimously agreed – to remove AFA from a statewide charitable campaign after the organization made public statements that appeared to encourage discrimination against the LGBTQ communities, as well as Muslims serving in the U.S. military.

"The American Family Association has the constitutional right to make discriminatory statements – however, it does not have a constitutional right to participate in the Connecticut State Employees' Campaign for Charitable Giving, particularly if it violates state and federal anti-discrimination laws and regulations," Lembo said. "We have a responsibility to donors to ensure that participating organizations abide by the rules and regulations of the CSEC, particularly those that ensure inclusiveness and protection against discrimination."

The CHRO, in its declaratory ruling, agreed with Lembo's recommendation. The decision confirmed that the AFA's exclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity from its non-discrimination policy violates state anti-discrimination laws. The ruling also affirms that the organization does not qualify as a "religious organization" within the meaning of state statutes and that inclusion of the AFA in the employee campaign is a violation of state law.

"American Family Association set a terrible example by attempting to hide behind religious exemptions in their campaign to discriminate against other American families," Lembo said.

Lembo serves as administrator of the CSEC, an initiative that facilitates state employees to donate to charitable organizations. State employees donate over a million dollars every year through the CSEC, benefiting hundreds of charities that provide services to the homeless, children, senior citizens, as well as funding to cure diseases and protect the environment.

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