

March 17, 2023

TO: Hon. Catherine Borgia, Chair  
Hon. Nancy Barr, Vice Chair  
Hon. Christopher Johnson, Majority Leader  
Hon. Margaret Cunzio, Minority Leader

FROM: George Latimer   
Westchester County Executive

RE: Message Requesting Immediate Consideration: **LOCAL LAW –  
County’s Human Rights Law and Fair Housing Law.**

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This will confirm my request that the Board of Legislators allow submission of the referenced communication to be submitted to the Board of Legislators March 20, 2023 Agenda.

Transmitted herewith for your consideration and approval is an amending Local Law which would harmonize the County’s Human Rights Law and Fair Housing Law.

Therefore, since this communication is of the utmost importance, it is respectfully submitted that the County Board of Legislators accepts this submission for March 20, 2023 “blue sheet” calendar.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.



George Latimer  
County Executive

March 17, 2023

Westchester County Board of Legislators  
800 Michaelian Office Building  
148 Martine Avenue, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
White Plains, New York 10601

Dear Honorable Members of the Board:

I respectfully request that your Honorable Board adopt the attached Local Law amending Chapter 700 of the Laws of Westchester County to harmonize the County's Human Rights Law and Fair Housing Law with New York State and Federal law.

The Westchester County Human Rights Law and Westchester County Fair Housing Law are intended to address and prevent discrimination, bigotry, prejudice, and intolerance in Westchester County because of a person's actual or perceived membership in a protected class. It is unlawful to discriminate under these Laws.

Recent amendments and additions to the State and Federal equivalents of these Laws have strengthened them and added additional protections. For example, the New York State Human Rights Law now provides discrimination protections for veterans and current military service members; extends workplace protections to interns, contractors, and vendors; applies to all employers, regardless of the number of employees; protects against discrimination on the basis of a person's natural hair; prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of source of income; protects against associational discrimination; and requires housing providers to bear the cost of reasonable accommodations. The proposed amendments would bring the County's Human Rights Law and Fair Housing Law in line with these State and Federal changes.


In addition, recent amendments to State and Federal law have clarified and strengthened enforcement procedures. For example, the New York State Human Rights Law now provides a private right of action for victims of discrimination and allows its equivalent of the Human Rights Commission's Executive Director to file complaints in any situation where an aggrieved person can file. The proposed amendments mirror these changes, and also remove several unnecessary procedures and administrative requirements, such as the requirement for a verified complaint with notarized signatures. The proposed amendments also authorize civil monetary penalties for violations of the

County's Fair Housing Law, mirroring the penalty provisions in the County's Human Rights Law.

Certain definitions and language in the County's Human Rights Law and Fair Housing Law required clarification. The proposed amendments accordingly clarify the definitions of "disability," "pregnancy-related conditions," "religion," and "familial status," and also correct several typos and discrepancies.

In light of the aforementioned, I respectfully urge that your Honorable Board adopt the attached Local Law amending Chapter 700 of the Laws of Westchester County to harmonize the County's Human Rights Law and Fair Housing Law with New York State and Federal law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "George Latimer".

GEORGE LATIMER  
County Executive

GL/nn  
Enclosure

TO: BOARD OF LEGISLATORS  
COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER

Your Committee recommends the adoption of “A LOCAL LAW amending Chapter 700 of the Laws of Westchester County to harmonize the County’s Human Rights Law and Fair Housing Law with New York State and Federal law.”

Your Committee is advised that the Westchester County Human Rights Law and Westchester County Fair Housing Law are intended to address and prevent discrimination, bigotry, prejudice, and intolerance in Westchester County because of a person’s actual or perceived membership in a protected class. It is unlawful to discriminate under these Laws.

Your Committee is further advised that recent amendments and additions to the State and Federal equivalents of these Laws have strengthened them and added additional protections. For example, the New York State Human Rights Law now provides discrimination protections for veterans and current military service members; extends workplace protections to interns, contractors, and vendors; applies to all employers, regardless of the number of employees; protects against discrimination on the basis of a person’s natural hair; prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of source of income; protects against associational discrimination; and requires housing providers to bear the cost of reasonable accommodations. The proposed amendments would bring the

County's Human Rights Law and Fair Housing Law in line with these State and Federal changes.

Your Committee is informed that recent amendments to State and Federal law have clarified and strengthened enforcement procedures. For example, the New York State Human Rights Law now provides a private right of action for victims of discrimination and allows its equivalent of the Human Rights Commission's Executive Director to file complaints in any situation where an aggrieved person can file. The proposed amendments mirror these changes, and also remove several unnecessary procedures and administrative requirements, such as the requirement for a verified complaint with notarized signatures. The proposed amendments also authorize civil monetary penalties for violations of the County's Fair Housing Law, mirroring the penalty provisions in the County's Human Rights Law.

Your Committee is further informed that certain definitions and language in the County's Human Rights Law require clarification. The proposed amendments accordingly clarify the definitions of "disability," "pregnancy-related conditions," "religion," and "familial status," and also correct several typos and discrepancies.

Finally, your Committee is informed that the proposed legislation does not meet the definition of an action under New York State Environmental Quality Review Act and its implementing regulations 6 NYCRR Part 617. Please refer to the memorandum from

the Department of Planning dated January 12, 2023, which is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Legislators. Your Committee concurs in this conclusion.

Your Committee recommends adoption of this Local Law.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_, 2023  
White Plains, New York

COMMITTEE ON

# FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SUBJECT: Human Rights/Fair Housing Law

NO FISCAL IMPACT PROJECTED

## OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT

To Be Completed by Submitting Department and Reviewed by Budget

### SECTION A - FUND

GENERAL FUND

AIRPORT FUND

SPECIAL DISTRICTS FUND

### SECTION B - EXPENSES AND REVENUES

Total Current Year Expense \$                   -

Total Current Year Revenue \$                   -

Source of Funds (check one):  Current Appropriations  Transfer of Existing Appropriations

Additional Appropriations  Other (explain)

Identify Accounts: \_\_\_\_\_

Potential Related Operating Budget Expenses: Annual Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Potential Related Operating Budget Revenues: Annual Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Savings to County and/or Impact on Department Operations:

Current Year: \_\_\_\_\_

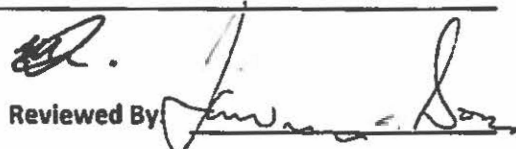
Next Four Years: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by: Michael Dunn

Title: Budget Analyst

Department: Budget

Date: March 14, 2023

  
Reviewed By

Budget Director

Date: 3/14/23

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_ – 2023**

RESOLVED, that this Board hold a public hearing pursuant to Section 209.141(4) of the Laws of Westchester County on Local Law Intro. No. \_\_\_\_ - 2023, entitled “A LOCAL LAW amending Chapter 700 of the Laws of Westchester County to harmonize the County’s Human Rights Law and Fair Housing Law with New York State and Federal law.” The public hearing will be held at \_\_.m. on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023 in the Chambers of the Board of Legislators, 8th Floor, Michaelian Office Building, White Plains, New York. The Clerk of the Board shall cause notice of the time and date of such hearing to be published at least once in one or more newspapers published in the County of Westchester and selected by the Clerk of the Board for that purpose in the manner and time required by law.