

First, I would like to thank Governor LePage for establishing this Review Panel and his efforts to investigate the allegations of bias by MHRC. Second, I am honored to represent the National Federation of Independent Business Owners.

As the representative of the business community, I believe that their belief is that bias does exist because they feel that the burden of proof is on them when accused of discrimination and that they are being held hostage by a system that expects an unfair amount of paperwork to be submitted and a monetary settlement for possibly an unintentional mistake of verbiage or a trumped up allegation. The feeling is that the process isn't fair for all. The business communitie's sole purpose is to provide jobs for the communities where they operate. We are expected to educate the working population about the discrimination laws and to monitor their behaviors. It will take generations of education and outreach to change beliefs and ideologies. Where else are these laws being taught? Are they taught in schools or churches? I know that generations ago these laws were not ever mentioned anywhere. So, many businesses are expected to pick up the slack of educating their employees and the general public. I believe the perception of bias is because of the lack of the business owners being aware of the process and procedures of the MHRC. MHRC is an antiquated system and needs to be brought into the 21st century by being computerized and becoming more user friendly , streamlined and have consultants help MHRC become more efficient and therefor become fairer for both parties involved. I believe there is a perception of bias in the business community which I feel is exasperated by the lack of education of the rules, processes and procedures of MHRC. Education is essential at all levels for the business community, employees and the general public.

Thank you Governor LePage for gathering together an exemplary panel to execute the task of following your Executive Order.

All of us on your panel put in alot of our personal time and efforts with our suggestions to make improvements and I hope that you will take them under advisement so that our time and efforts will not be in vain.

Sincerely, Colleen Bailey, S.M.K. Donuts Inc. DBA/Dunkin Donuts
123 Madison Rd. Norridgewock, Me. 04957 207-653-4073