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**WHO  
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## Who We Are & What We Do

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By its enabling statute, the Human Rights Commission is an enforcement agency. It does not represent either party in a complaint. The VHRC staff conduct impartial investigations of allegations of discrimination under the Vermont Fair Housing and Public Accommodations Act (VFHPA), 9 V.S.A. §4500 et seq., the Vermont Fair Employment Practices Act (FEPA) (for State government employees only) and the anti-harassment provisions of Title 16 (education), 16 V.S.A. §11 and §570 et seq. VHRC staff determine whether there are reasonable grounds to believe that unlawful discrimination occurred and make a recommendation to the Commissioners. During the course of the impartial investigation, VHRC staff seek to resolve complaints through conciliation and, if appropriate, formal mediation. If the Commissioners, after hearing, find reasonable grounds to believe that a person or entity discriminated against someone in a protected class, the executive director engages in post-determination conciliation efforts. If a settlement cannot be reached, the Commissioners can authorize the executive director to file suit in state court in furtherance of the public’s interest in a society free from discrimination.

The VHRC is also charged with increasing “public awareness of the importance of full civil and human rights for each inhabitant of this state;” examining “the existence of practices of discrimination which detract from the enjoyment of full civil and human rights;” and with recommending “measures designed to protect those rights.” 9 V.S.A. §4552. It is within these roles that the VHRC works to ensure “equal justice, equal opportunity, and equal dignity without discrimination.” In furtherance of these goals, VHRC staff speak with and provide training to individuals and groups about their rights and responsibilities under state and federal civil rights laws, work with individuals, agencies and groups to combat bias and bigotry, and supply information, legal analysis, and advice to the Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches.

There are five Human Rights Commissioners appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, for five-year terms. Commissioners may be re-appointed. The Commissioners meet regularly, usually monthly, to discuss and decide the merits of individual discrimination complaints, as well as to set the overall policy of the organization.

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## Contact Us

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## Staff Announcement

We are excited to announce that Ayn Lee Sing will join the VHRC as an Administrative Law Examiner on January 9, 2017.

Ayn completed her B.A. from Wellesley College—Massachusetts, her J.D. from the University of Miami School of Law in 2010 and her LL.M in International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law from Europa-Universität Viadrina—Frankfurt, Germany in 2016.

After a legal internship in L. David Shear Children’s Law Center and a judicial internship in U.S. District Court, Ayn practiced in the areas of family, constitutional, employment, housing, probate, and commercial and real property law in the Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Ayn will be the primary investigator of housing discrimination complaints. She will also conduct investigation in public accommodations and employment cases as well as training.



Ayn Lee Sing, ALE



## Farewell Ellen

Ellen Maxon, known to many as Vermont’s Fair Housing expert, is retiring from the Commission on January 6, 2017.

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