



## Office of Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan **CIVIL RIGHTS BUREAU**

The mission of the Civil Rights Bureau is to protect the civil rights of Illinois citizens, including all rights existing under constitutional, statutory, administrative, or common law. The bureau investigates complaints of a pattern or practice of discrimination in **employment, housing, public accommodations**, and by **financial institutions** (including credit cards). While we do not seek relief for individuals, we do seek to stop the discriminatory pattern or practice and may seek fines against an offender.

The Attorney General's Civil Rights Bureau protects Illinois citizens from discrimination through the enforcement of civil rights laws. The bureau also advocates for legislation to strengthen laws and participates in community outreach programs.

### **The Civil Rights Bureau:**

- **Reviews and responds to constituent complaints** received by the Attorney General involving civil rights issues;
- **Conducts investigations of possible civil rights violations** based upon patterns or practices of discrimination that have a significant impact in Illinois;
- **Files lawsuits** when an investigation deems that such action is warranted;
- **Monitors and proposes legislation and administrative rules** that involve civil rights issues with a view toward making recommendations to strengthen the laws.

**Classes protected** from discrimination include: Race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, order of protection status (beginning January 1, 2010), and unfavorable discharge from military and military status.

A **pattern or practice of discrimination** occurs when discrimination is the standard policy or operating procedure, rather than an unusual incident. To establish a pattern or practice of discriminating, the discrimination must be more than an isolated incident.

Unlawful discrimination in **employment** also includes discrimination based on "English only" policies, sexual harassment, and discrimination based on arrest records.

Unlawful discrimination in **housing** also includes discrimination based on a person's familial status. "Familial status" means a household with children under 18 who live with a parent or guardian. This also includes households with persons who are pregnant or in the process of securing custody of an individual under 18.

**Filing a complaint:** You may file a complaint by calling the Civil Rights Bureau at (312) 814-3400 or filling out a complaint form located on the Illinois Attorney General's website at <http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/rights/civilrights.html> and submitting the complaint to the Civil Rights Bureau at 100 W. Randolph Street, Chicago, Illinois 60601 or faxing it to (312) 814-3212.