

State Backs Rights Commission

The State of Alaska has agreed to comply with an order issued by the Alaska Human Rights Commission to settle an age discrimination case, the Commission's Anchorage Headquarter's reported today.

Robert Willard, the agency's Executive Director announced that the Department of Health and Social Services, MacLaughlin Youth Center (MYC) will pay Bessie G. Stevens of Anchorage the amount of \$9,325.48 — in back pay which is the amount she would have received had MacLaughlin not denied her a job.

The settlement represents one year of back pay as stipulated in the Commission's order.

"This undoubtedly is a land-

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Rights . . .

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mark case," Willard said in a release issued. "It very vividly demonstrates that the Commission does indeed possess the power and authority to remedy a discrimination complaint brought to the attention of the Commission."

Willard said the Stevens case took a period of two years to complete and that he was pleased that the issues given rise to the complaint have been resolved.

"I do not feel that the Department is to be regarded as a discriminator in the true sense of the word," the Director said, "as the policy memorandum utilized at the time has since been revised."

This is the first case to be settled by a Commission order since the agency was created in 1963. Other cases involving back pay have been settled informally (out of court) between the Commission and the charged party.

The Stevens case though advanced to a formal public hearing — where the seven-member Board of Commissioners set as a quasi-judicial body with full statutory authority to subpoena witnesses or records, hear the case, render a decision and order a remedy if the complaint is upheld.

Willard said the Commission will exercise its authority in other cases now pending or otherwise.

The Commission exercises complete jurisdiction over all business enterprise, employer or employer group and all departments and agencies of State and local governments.