

# State laws against discrimination

*(Editor's Note: The State laws against discrimination are discussed in this article by the Human Rights Director, Niel Thomas. Second of a series.)*

Laws against discrimination in Alaska are about the strongest to be found anywhere.

These laws say that the following factors may not be considered in hiring, public accommodations, credit and government services:

The first factor is race. Whites may not discriminate against Natives. (Under the same laws, Natives are not permitted to discriminate against Whites.) If the races of the people involved are different, discrimination may be happening. An Aleut couldn't

refuse to rent a house to an Indian, for instance.

The second factor is sex. Whether a person is man or woman cannot be considered—only ability. Under the law, our traditional notions of “women’s work” in a “man’s world” are changing. The law says everyone has an equal right to show his or her qualifications. We are not to tell men that only women are allowed to work a cannery line, or to tell women they can’t ask for a loan in their own name.

The Human Rights Commission receives more complaints about race and sex discrimination than any other types.

Anyone may file a complaint

or even write or phone for informal advice given in confidence. The Commission has offices supported by State funding in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau and Barrow. Next: Some other types of discrimination.