

DETROIT CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

PROPOSAL/ISSUE REVIEW SUMMARY

ISSUE NUMBER: GDS 7

ISSUE CATEGORY: Government Department & Services

SOURCE: Mayor, January 2010 *“Report on the Impact of the Detroit City Charter on City Service Administration”*

RELATED CHARTER SECTIONS: Article 7, Chapter 10 (Human Rights)

RELEVANT ORDINANCE SECTION:

RELEVANT LAW(S):

ISSUE/PROPOSAL STATEMENT: Eliminate Human Rights Department

RATIONALE: “The Human Rights Department is established to investigate complaints of unlawful discrimination, to secure rights of citizens for city services without discrimination, and to promote “mutual understanding” of discrimination in the community. Unlike most department chapters, Chapter 10 prescribes that the city “shall make an annual appropriation for the effective operation of the department.”

“This provision when created in 1974, built on nearly thirty years of efforts relating to racial discrimination in Detroit: the interracial commission created in the aftermath of the 1943 riot in Detroit focused mostly on housing and employment discrimination through the 1950s, and became the Commission on Community Relations; the civil unrest in 1967 which led to a number of public-private organizations recognizing how intractable was racial inequity.

“The 1974 Charter Commentary states that the “vital, difficult function of enforcing equal rights warrants the kind of independence that can only be exercised by a charter-created department...it is not the intent ...to supplant or to reduce ... the obligation of the State of Michigan for the protection of civil rights or the resources which it commits in Detroit.” Today, after vast demographic change in metropolitan Detroit, some problems of discrimination are no longer, while others may be outside of the reach of municipal entities.” - *Mayor’s Report on the Impact of the Detroit City Charter on City Service Administration*, p. 3-4.

ANALYSIS:

DISPOSITION/COMMISSION ACTION:

NOTES: