

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
COMMISSION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

_____)	
MCAD and KOFI ASIMPI)	DOCKET NO. 98-BEM-2570
Complainant)	
)	
v.)	
)	
RELIEF RESOURCES, INC.)	
Respondent)	
_____)	

DECISION OF THE FULL COMMISSION

This matter comes before us on appeal of the Complainant following a decision of Hearing Officer Helene Horn Figman in favor of Respondent. The Hearing Officer concluded that Respondent Relief Resources, Inc. did not engage in unlawful retaliation in violation of M.G.L. c.151B, s.4(4). The Complainant appealed to the Full Commission from that decision.

The responsibilities of the Full Commission are outlined by statute, the Commission’s Rules of Procedure (804 CMR 1.00 et. seq.), and relevant case law. It is the duty of the Full Commission to review the record of proceedings before the Hearing Officer. M.G.L. c. 151B, Sec. 5. The Hearing Officer’s findings of fact must be supported by substantial evidence, which is defined as “...such evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a finding...” Katz v. MCAD, 365 Mass. 357, 365 (1974); M.G.L. c. 30A.

It is the Hearing Officer's responsibility to evaluate the credibility of witnesses and/or to weigh the evidence when deciding disputed questions of fact. The Full Commission defers to these determinations. See e.g., School Committee of Chicopee v. MCAD, 361 Mass. 352 (1972); Bowen v. Colonnade Hotel, 4 MDLR 1007, 1011 (1982). The Full Commission's role is to determine whether the decision under appeal was rendered in accordance with the law, or whether the decision was arbitrary or capricious, an abuse of discretion, or was otherwise not in accordance with the law. See 804 CMR 1.16(f).

Complainant's request for review rests on his assertion that certain findings of fact were based on insufficient evidence. We have carefully reviewed the Petition for Review and the full record in this matter and conclude that there is substantial evidence to support the Hearing Officer's findings of fact and conclusion that Respondent did not engage in unlawful retaliation.

Having weighed all the objections to the decision in accordance with the standard of review articulated herein, we find no material errors of law and conclude that there is substantial evidence in the record to support the findings made by the Hearing Officer. We therefore deny Complainant's appeal and affirm the Hearing Officer's decision in its entirety.

ORDER

The Complainant's appeal to the Full Commission is hereby dismissed and the Order of the Hearing Officer is affirmed in its entirety.

This Order represents the final action of the Commission for purposes of M.G.L. c. 30A. Any party aggrieved by this final determination may contest the Commission's decision by filing a complaint seeking judicial review pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A in the Superior Court within thirty (30) days of receipt of this decision.

SO ORDERED this 12th day of June, 2003.

Cynthia A. Tucker
Commissioner

Walter J. Sullivan, Jr.
Commissioner