



We're All In It Together

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Steep Budget Cuts to Civil Rights Hurts Businesses and Individuals

***Florida cannot afford the unintended consequences of
gutting the state's only anti-discrimination agency***

Tallahassee – The Florida Commission on Human Relations (Commission) learned this week that a 43% cut to the agency's funding has been proposed by a House of Representatives' appropriations subcommittee. This is an even more severe cut than the Governor's 40% recommended reduction to the Commission.

"We are deeply troubled to hear of the proposed, steep cuts to the Commission. We understand the economic challenges facing our state; however, these cuts are so severe that we would not be able to function," said Dr. Donna Elam, Commission Chairperson. "Not only does the Commission protect the rights of all people in Florida, per our state Constitution, but it saves businesses millions of dollars in avoided litigation costs due to its mediation services."

Since 2006, the Commission's mediation services have helped businesses avoid paying out more than \$51 million in litigation costs by keeping these cases out of an already overburdened court system. The Commission also partners with community groups to educate the public on pressing human and civil rights issues and is a member of the Florida Statewide Taskforce on Human Trafficking. Florida ranks 3rd in the nation in the number of documented hate groups and remains a top destination for human trafficking.

"Floridians cannot afford this deep cut which would essentially gut the only, independent civil rights entity in our state. Sadly, workplace and housing discrimination is alive and well as are hate crimes, which rob individuals of their sense of safety and community," said Gilbert Singer, Commission Vice-Chair. "As we work to create new jobs and attract homebuyers and entrepreneurs to our state, we must make Florida a desirable place to live and work. The Commission brings great value in stopping costly and detrimental discrimination and must be adequately funded!"

The Florida Commission on Human Relations, established in 1969, is the state agency charged with administering the Florida Civil Rights Act and Fair Housing Act. Fair treatment, equal access and mutual respect are the benchmarks of the Commission's commitment. Through education and partnerships, the Commission works to prevent discrimination and costly litigation through teaching best business practices and fostering understanding amongst Floridians.

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