

40 Years of Excellence



FLORIDA COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS
ANNUAL REPORT 2008 - 2009



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Leadership	3
Statutory Authority and Budget	4
State and Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws	4
2008-2009 Accomplishments: A Snapshot	4
Commission Celebrates 40 Years with a Call for Action	5
'Discrimination Through the Eyes of Our Youth' PSA Contest	5
Employment Law Conference	6
Discrimination Complaints	7
Fair Housing Month	9
Legislative Resolutions	10
40th Anniversary Kick-Off Press Conference	11
Elder Summit	11

VISION:

To become the chief resource on human relations for the state of Florida.

MISSION:

To prevent unlawful discrimination by ensuring people in Florida are treated fairly and are given access to opportunities in employment, housing and certain public accommodations and to promote mutual respect among groups through education and partnerships.

OUR CORE VALUES:

- Every individual is to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Service provided is impartial and high-quality.
- Innovation and creativity are encouraged and rewarded.
- Communication is open and honest.
- Teamwork determines our success.



MESSAGE FROM THE LEADERSHIP



During this past year, we commemorated our 40th anniversary by launching a public awareness campaign to shine a light on the discrimination issues of today.

During the past few years, our nation and our state have faced hard times that some of us will not soon forget. Jobs have been lost, homes foreclosed upon, life-savings depleted, businesses bankrupt and dreams shattered. Policy makers and employers alike have had to make gut-wrenching decisions to lay off employees, eliminate programs and services and cut budgets.

It is often said that it is not what happens to us that matters; it is how we react. In the face of adversity, opportunity often knocks. It is our decision whether or not we seize on the opportunity to grow, to come together, to help one another and to rise above. No, it is not easy; but it is possible.

It has been an eye-opening experience to read news stories of people opening up their homes and sharing jobs, child-care or rides just to help a friend or neighbor through another week. It shows that humanity does still live and breathe in our country and that hope is alive. By the same token, the stress of these times comes through as discrimination complaints rise, community unrest ensues and bullying plagues our young people.

The Commission has been impacted in more ways than one. We have experienced our own steep budget cuts in the last few years and continue to do more with less to meet the growing demands. In addition, discrimination complaints are on the rise nationally and human relations offices around the state have been closed. We are proud to be here to help pick up the pieces and assist businesses, communities and individuals in any way we can. As always, we thank the Florida Legislature for affording us the continued opportunity to serve the people of this great state!

We are so pleased to report that through the storm, our legal, employment and housing investigative and administrative staff members have worked diligently to meet statutory requirements and have provided top-notch customer service. During this past year, we commemorated our 40th anniversary by launching a public awareness campaign to shine a light on the discrimination issues of today. As part of this campaign, we engaged students in a public service announcement contest and publicized winning PSAs as a way to educate the public. Never have we been more proud to see the teamwork and hard work of our Commissioners and staff; particularly in the face of adversity.

From FY 2006 through FY 2008, Florida government and businesses saved approximately \$38.5 million by utilizing the Commission's mediation unit and avoiding more costly litigation. This is an invaluable contribution to our state. We also work to ensure that the civil rights of each and every person in our state are protected.

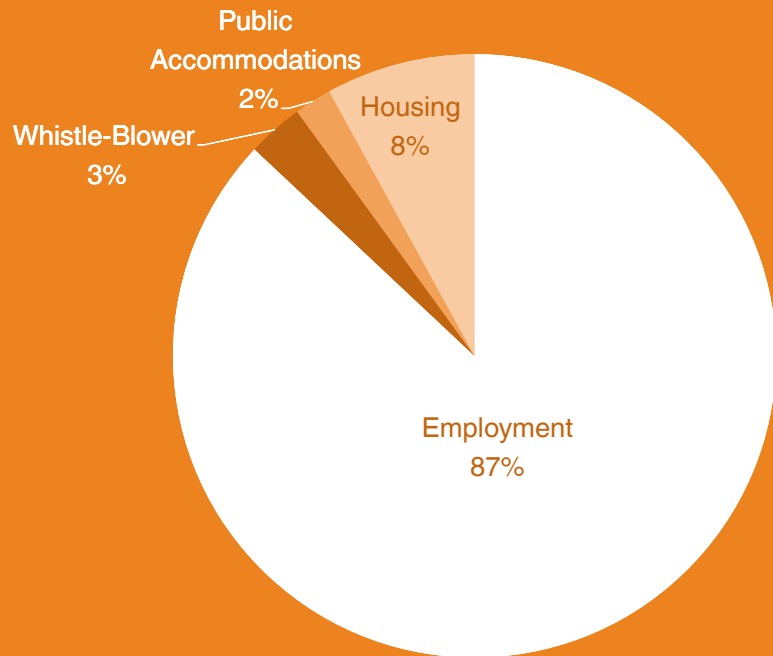
We look forward to continuing to serve the people of Florida and working to stop costly discrimination from making a tough situation even worse. We thank you for the opportunity to make a difference and work towards creating a discrimination-free and prosperous Florida!

Derick Daniel,
Executive
Director

Dr. Donna
Elam,
Chairperson

FCHR TOTAL WORKING INVENTORY

Type of Open Cases Under Investigation as of June 30, 2009



Statutory Authority and Budget

The Florida Commission on Human Relations was statutorily created in 1969 to enforce the Florida Civil Rights Act and to work towards elimination of discrimination. The Commission is responsible for investigating and resolving discrimination complaints in the areas of employment, housing, certain public accommodations and state-employee whistle-blower retaliation. It is against Florida law to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status or familial status.

The Commission received 71.5% of its budget from general revenue dollars appropriated by the Florida Legislature. The remainder of its budget is derived from trust funds through contracts with the U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The trust funds are also derived from registration fees for the 55+ communities (housing for older persons) and payments for public records requests.

2008-2009

Accomplishments: A Snapshot

- 88% of the discrimination cases were resolved within 180 days of filing (legislative performance standard: 75%).
- The total number of inquiries received and investigations conducted by the Commission was 15,185 (legislative performance standard: 10,000).
- The Commission closed more cases than received (1,742 cases closed; 1,639 received).
- Average age of discrimination cases: 145 days
- Top 5 Counties (Employment/Public Accommodations/Whistle-Blower complaints): Leon, Escambia, Bay, Broward, Dade
- Top 5 Counties (Housing complaints): Dade, Brevard, Orange, Polk, Escambia
- Top 5 Bases: Retaliation 23%, Disability 21%, Race 18%, Sex 18%, Age 11%

State and Federal Anti-Discrimination Laws

- Chapter 760, Part I, s. 509.092 – Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992 (employment & public accommodations)
- Chapter 760, Part II – Florida Fair Housing Act
- Section 760.60 – Discrimination in private clubs
- Sections 112.3187-31895 - Whistle-blower Act (retaliation against state employees)

Commission Celebrates 40 Years with a Call for Action

In 2009, the Commission commemorated its 40th anniversary with the launch of a public awareness campaign and a call for action. The Commission was created in 1969 pursuant to the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made racial segregation in schools, public places and employment illegal. In the following years, the mission of the agency has been amended by the Florida Legislature through the Florida Human Rights Act of 1977, the Fair Housing Act in 1983 (as amended in 1989) and the Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992. In addition, the Whistle-Blower Act of 1999 was enacted, which protects public employees who report improper use of government office, gross mismanagement of funds or any other abuse or neglect within a state agency. With this added legislation, the Commission expanded its services and has become known today as the state's leading resource on civil rights and human relations.

While much progress has been made in the civil rights arena, the Commission knows first-hand that the realities of discrimination still plague our communities, schools and workplaces. The 40th anniversary public awareness campaign aimed to shine a light on discrimination issues and as well as ensure a solid understanding of the rights and responsibilities of public and private entities, the housing industry, individuals and communities.



Governor Crist speaking at FCHR 40th Anniversary Press Conference

The campaign garnered national and statewide publicity as well as secured various community partnerships.

For a complete list of 40th anniversary media coverage, please visit: http://fchr.state.fl.us/fchr/about_us/in_the_news__1



High School PSA contest winners were featured on the WTSP Studio 10 TV Show in St. Petersburg.



'DISCRIMINATION THROUGH THE EYES OF OUR YOUTH' PSA CONTEST

The 40th anniversary activities also included a Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest called 'Discrimination Through the Eyes of Our Youth' geared to high school students. The Commission received 40 PSA contest entries from various schools throughout the state and secured media partners in all districts who took part in the judging of the PSAs. As part of the reward, media partners have continually publicized the winning entries on various websites, newspapers and television stations. The goal of the contest was to artistically engage young people in the discussion about discrimination, prejudice and bullying and to reach out to the public by using the PSAs as educational tool.

To watch the winning PSAs, please visit:
http://fchr.state.fl.us/outreach/40th_anniversary_psa_contest

EMPLOYMENT LAW CONFERENCE



ELC Keynote Speaker - Marsha Coleman-Adebayo, civil rights activist and the catalyst for the passage of the N.O.F.E.A.R. Act



ELC participants in a workshop about anti-discrimination policies and laws

In an effort to continue the legacy of providing education and training to Florida businesses and organizations, the Commission hosted its 3rd Annual Employment Law Conference (ELC) in Orlando, FL. Over 100 participants attended the ELC, which featured workshops on amended state and federal anti-discrimination laws as well as many other topics impacting the productivity of businesses and quality of work life for Floridians. The most popular topic was the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This workshop taught business owners, managers and human resource professionals about the recent amendments made to the ADA and how these changes will affect their internal policies and procedures.

The Commission also offered a "Training of Trainers" (TOT) workshop, which is designed to train professionals to independently implement effective diversity training programs within their organizations and communities. The ELC featured a dynamic keynote speaker, Marsha Coleman-Adebayo, a civil rights activist and champion of the N.O. F.E.A.R. Act. Ms. Coleman-Adebayo shared her touching story of trials, retaliation and triumphs as well as how she crafted the N.O. F.E.A.R Act, passed by Congress. The ELC serves as an excellent source of information to make sure that Florida businesses have the tools needed to prevent workplace discrimination and to ensure high quality workplaces for Floridians.

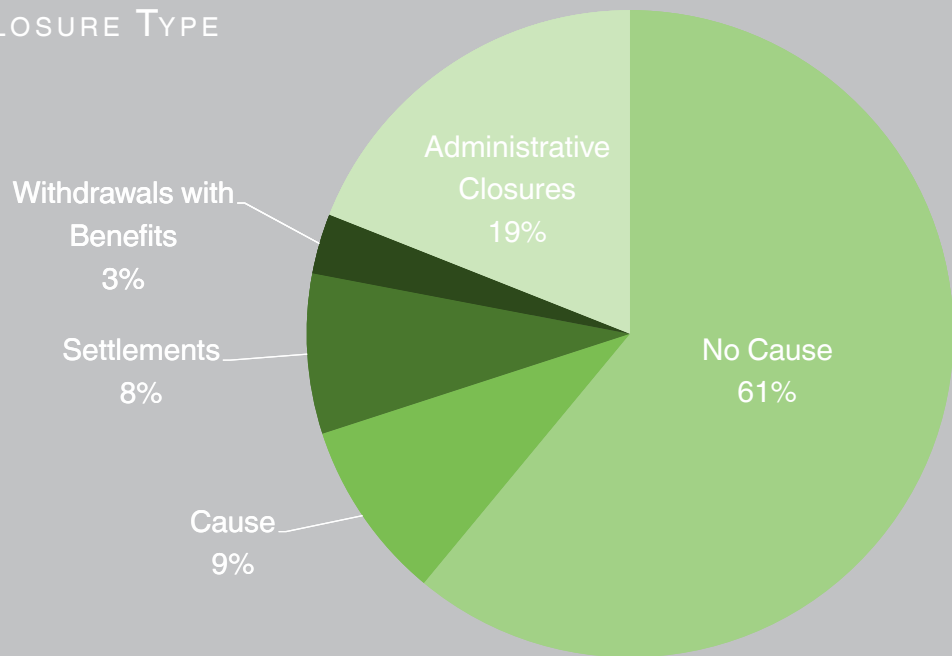


Participants listen to the keynote presentation during lunch

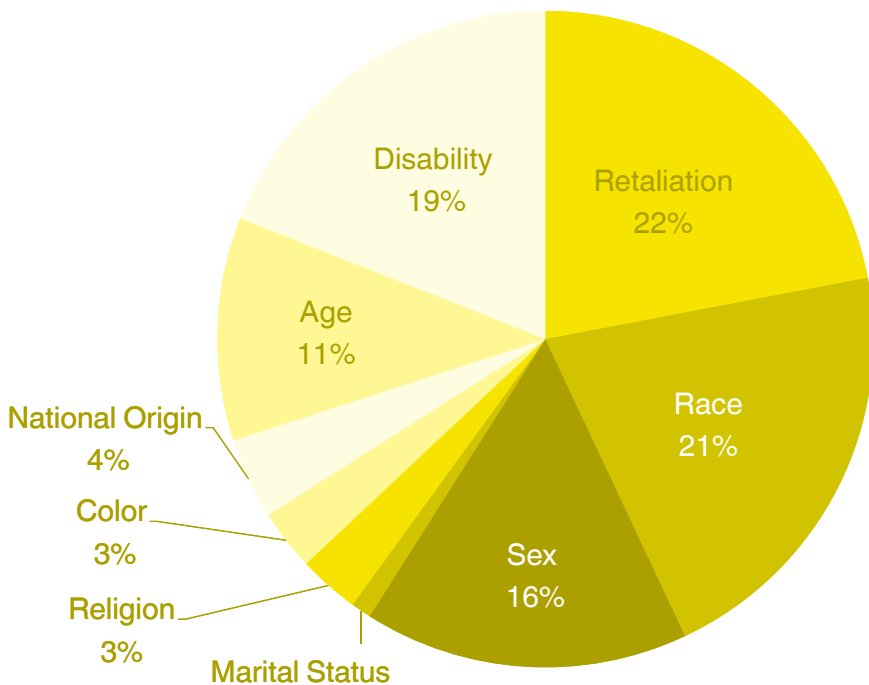


DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS

EMPLOYMENT, PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS & WHISTLE-BLOWER
CASES CLOSED BY CLOSURE TYPE
FY 2008 - 2009

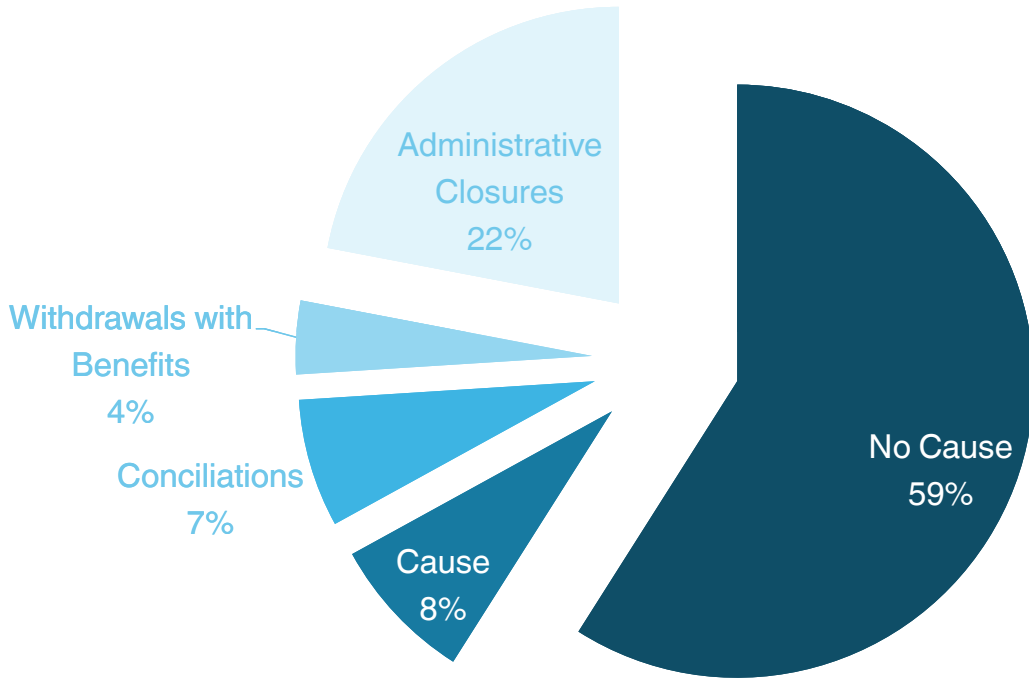


EMPLOYMENT, PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS & WHISTLE-BLOWER
CASES BY FILED BASIS
FY 2008 - 2009

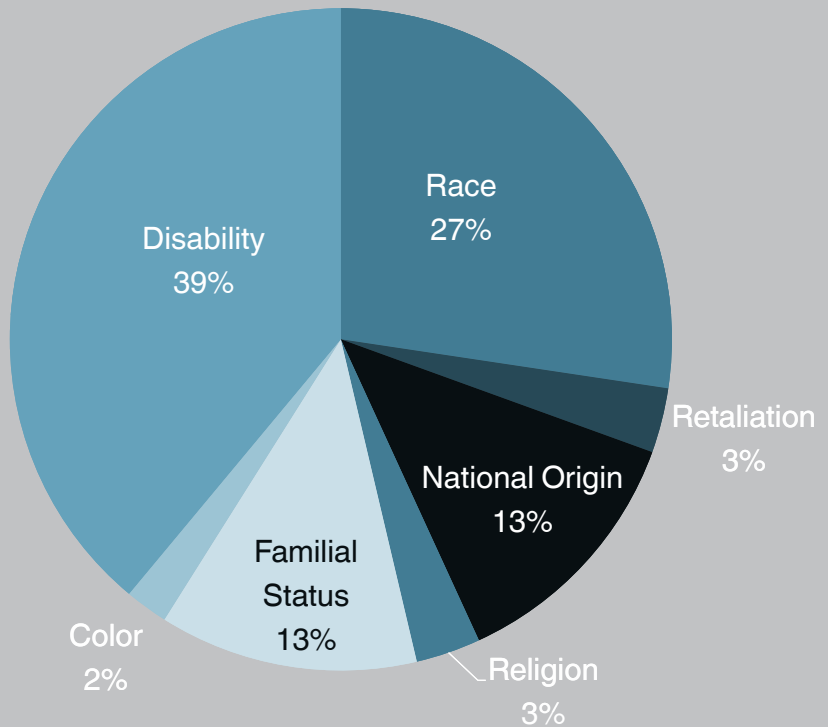


MEDIATION UNIT:
FY 08-09 TOTAL SETTLEMENT
DOLLARS: \$1,458,197
OF THE 195 CASES MEDIATED, 95
WERE SUCCESSFUL.

HOUSING CASES CLOSED BY CLOSURE TYPE FY 2008 - 2009



HOUSING CASES CLOSED BY FILED BASIS FY 2008 - 2009



FAIR HOUSING MONTH ACTIVITIES



Commission Executive Director, Derick Daniel, with Fair Housing poster contest winner, Mariah Freezel from Gilchrist Elementary School



The winning Fair Housing Month contest poster.



Commission staff member, Cornelius Brownlee, reads to elementary school children during Fair Housing Month

Fair Housing Month

2009 marked the 41st anniversary of the passage of the Federal Fair Housing Act on April 11, 1968, which was just a week after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This groundbreaking legislation made it unlawful to discriminate against any person of a protected class during any stage of obtaining, renting, purchasing or enjoying a home.

Each April, the Commission recognizes and celebrates this historic event by providing fair housing outreach and education to the community and area schools. This year, the Commission's activities included fair housing trainings at the Division of Blind Services and the Tallahassee Housing Authority. Each agency was trained on the fair housing laws and the best business practices on how to protect themselves against fair housing violations.

The Commission's housing staff also traveled to W.T. Moore, Sealey, Kate Sullivan and Gilchrist elementary schools in Tallahassee to teach fourth grade students about diversity and fair housing. The students read stories, learned about disabilities and even participated in disability role play, which allowed them to see first-hand what life is like for people living with disabilities. The students also participated in the Commission's Fair Housing Month poster contest, which reflected the theme, "My Family's Face." The posters were judged on their substance, color, content and clarity. An awards ceremony was held at each school to announce the winners. The students were given a variety of prizes that included a certificate, a year family membership to the Mary Brogan Museum, two tickets to the IMAX planetarium and a \$25 savings bond.

To view Fair Housing Month activities and winning posters, please visit: http://fchr.state.fl.us/about_us/40th_anniversary/fair_housing_month

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTIONS PASSED IN HONOR OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Florida Senate Resolution

By Senators Joyner and Sobel

A resolution recognizing the 40th Anniversary of the creation of the Florida Commission on Human Relations and commending the Commission on its many significant accomplishments during the past 40 years.

WHEREAS, the passage of the federal Civil Rights Acts of 1904 and 1908 constituted a significant advancement in our nation's history in the effort to end racial segregation, discrimination, and unfair treatment in employment, housing, and access to public places, and

WHEREAS, under the primary sponsorship of Representative Joe Lang Kershaw of Dade County, the first African-American to be elected to the Florida House of Representatives since 1891, numerous Florida legislators sponsored legislation in 1909 to bring similar anti-discrimination protections to Floridians by creating the Florida Commission on Human Relations to enforce anti-discrimination laws in this state, and

WHEREAS, in passing this legislation, the Florida Legislature affirmed its intent to ensure that Florida would strive to end discrimination so that all persons in this state, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or marital status, would be treated fairly and equally in all aspects of life, and

WHEREAS, through subsequent legislation enacted by the Florida Legislature in the form of the Florida Fair Housing Act of 1983 and the Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992, the basis of discrimination and the responsibilities and jurisdiction of the Commission were expanded to ensure more widespread protection against discrimination for all individuals in Florida, and

WHEREAS, the demographical landscape in Florida has dramatically changed since 1970, and Florida is currently one of the most diverse and multicultural states in the nation, and

WHEREAS, because of the ever-increasing population and diversity in this state, it is more critical than ever that the State of Florida continue its efforts to ensure that anti-discrimination laws remain in effect and that cultural acceptance and appreciation of its diverse population continue to remain a priority, and

WHEREAS, the Florida Commission on Human Relations actively promotes freedom from discrimination under state and federal laws to ensure fair treatment of and equal access for all individuals in Florida in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations, and continually strives to eliminate discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, and familial or marital status, and



40TH ANNIVERSARY

FAIR HOUSING

During the 2009 legislative session, the Florida House of Representatives and Florida Senate adopted the 40th Anniversary resolution and Florida Fair Housing resolution. The resolutions issued the call for action in eliminating unjust discriminatory practices in Florida and reiterating the message of the 40th anniversary public awareness campaign. To view these resolutions, please visit: http://fchr.state.fl.us/about_us/40th_anniversary/2009_40th_anniversary_and_fair_housing_month_resolutions



Commission Chairperson Dr. Donna Elam speaks to reporters about discrimination in Florida



Senator Arthenia Joyner speaks out on the importance of making civil rights a priority in Florida



Chief General Counsel, Larry Kranert, presents state and federal anti-discrimination laws impacting elderly people in Florida

40th Anniversary Kick-Off Press Conference

This celebratory year was kicked off in January with a press conference held at the State Capitol. Governor Charlie Crist addressed the rotunda filled with Florida legislators, Commissioners, public officials, community leaders, concerned citizens and Commission staff. The press conference was used as a call for action asking all Floridians to become aware of the discrimination issues currently facing Florida and to become an agent of change within their own communities. The outpouring of support at the press event portrayed the true commitment of Florida's leaders and community members in working together to stop discrimination in Florida. The event garnered national and statewide media coverage.

2009 Elder Summit

In celebration of Older Americans Month and during the Commission's 40th Anniversary, the Commission partnered with the Department of Elder Affairs, AARP and the Governor's Commission on Disabilities to host the 2009 Elder Summit. There were over 100 attendees, including local leaders and community members, who came together to discuss the changing needs of older Americans including ageism and discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations.

DID YOU KNOW: FLORIDA HATE CRIMES IN 2008



A hate crime is a criminal act against a person or property in which the perpetrator chooses the victim because of the victim's real or perceived race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or gender.



Florida ranked 3rd in the U.S. (56 groups) behind California (84 groups) and Texas (66 groups) for the number of documented hate groups. (Southern Poverty Law Center)



Florida ranked 1st for attacks on homeless people for the 4th year in a row. (National Coalition for the Homeless)



Hate crimes motivated by the victim's race represented 47.3 percent of all reported hate crimes, followed by religion at 20.9 percent; sexual orientation at 19.2 percent; ethnicity/national origin at 12.1 percent; and mental disability at 0.5 percent. (Office of the Attorney General of Florida)

THE COMMISSIONERS



Dr. Donna Elam, Chairperson
Orlando



Gilbert Singer, Vice Chair
Tampa



Gayle Cannon
Lake City



Watson Haynes II
St. Petersburg



Onelia Fajardo
Miami



Billy Whitefox Stall
Panama City



Elena Flom
Cocoa Beach



Dr. Patty Ball Thomas
Tallahassee



Mario Valle
Naples



Anice Prosser
Tallahassee



Lizzette Gamero
West Palm Beach



FLORIDA COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

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FOR THOSE WITH COMMUNICATION IMPAIRMENTS:

THE FLORIDA RELAY SERVICE VOICE (STATEWIDE): 711 TDD ASCII: 800.955.1339 TDD BAUDOT: 800.955.8771

WEBSITE: [HTTP://FCHR.STATE.FL.US](http://FCHR.STATE.FL.US)

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