

Memorandum



Date: June 30, 2009

Agenda Item No. 12B1

To: Honorable Chairman Dennis C. Moss
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: George M. Burgess
County Manager

Subject: County Manager's Report Regarding Ordinance Amending Articles I, II, III, IV and V of Chapter 11A, Code of Miami-Dade County Related to Discrimination in Housing, Public Accommodations, Employment, Family Leave and Domestic Leave

In accordance with Section 2-11.37 of the Miami-Dade County Code, the following information is provided regarding the proposed amendments to Articles I, II, III, IV and V of Chapter 11A, creating the Commission on Civil Rights and including source of income as a protected class against discrimination.

1. ***Whether the establishment of the board will create sufficient betterment to the community to justify the Board of County Commissioner's delegation of a portion of its authority.***

The Equal Opportunity Board as it is currently known is a quasi-judicial board created to address issues of discrimination in Miami-Dade County. Its mission is to promote equal opportunity in employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and financing practices, family leave and domestic leave through the enforcement of Articles I, II, III, IV and V of Chapter 11A, Code of Miami-Dade County. The proposed name change from the Equal Opportunity Board to the Commission on Civil Rights will identify Miami-Dade County with its counterparts at the local and State level. Currently the EOB is the only agency out of ninety-six (96) State and local civil rights enforcement agencies to be identified as a board. Attached is a current list of the names of county and municipal agencies throughout the country that have similar responsibilities as the Equal Opportunity Board. The Commission on Civil Rights will continue with the same mission and responsibilities as the Equal Opportunity Board.

2. ***Whether another board or agency, either public or private, which is already in existence, could serve the same purpose.***

The amendments to the Ordinance merely change the name of the existing Equal Opportunity Board and include the category of "source of income" as a protected class against discrimination. The Equal Opportunity Board provides direct services to the community through the receipt, initiation, mediation, investigation and adjudication of discrimination cases, and through public education and technical assistance activities for local employers and housing providers. There is no private board or agency that could serve the same purpose.

3. ***The costs, both direct and indirect, of establishing and maintaining the Board.***

The Equal Opportunity Board's budget is a combination of County General Fund, federal funds and Community Block Grant funding, which supports the Board's staff. The members of the Board are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and serve without compensation.

The re-naming of the Equal Opportunity Board to the Commission on Civil Rights creates no fiscal impact.

4. *Whether the board is necessary to enable the County to obtain State of federal grants or other financing.*

The Board was created to address discrimination complaints by Miami-Dade County residents. The existence of the Equal Opportunity Board allows Miami-Dade County to apply for and receive federal contracts and grants to address discrimination issues in the community.

5. *Whether the board should have bonding authority.*

The Commission on Civil Rights will not have bonding authority.

6. *Whether the board should have final authority to enter into contracts and spend County funds, or whether its contracts and expenditures must be ratified by the Board of County Commissioners.*

The Ordinance as it is currently written does not grant the Equal Opportunity Board the authority to approve contracts and agreements and the Commission on Civil Rights will also not have such authority. Board contracts and expenditures must be ratified by the Board of County Commissioners.

7. *Whether the creation of a new board is the best method of achieving the desired benefit.*

As the proposed amendments to the Ordinance serve to change the name of the existing Board, there is no new board being created. The Equal Opportunity Board has been providing direct services for the past forty years. The Commission on Civil Rights will continue to provide the same services to the residents of Miami-Dade County.


Irene Taylor-Woolen
Special Assistant for Social Services

COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL AGENCIES

Augusta-Richmond County Human Relations Commission (**Georgia**)
New Hanover Human Relations Commission (**North Carolina**)
City of Springfield Office of Community Relations (**Illinois**)
City of Madison Department of Civil Rights (**Wisconsin**)
Mason City Human Rights Commission (**Iowa**)
Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights (**Minnesota**)
Sioux Falls Human Relations Commission (**South Dakota**)
City of St. Paul Department of Human Rights (**Minnesota**)
City of Austin Equal Employment/Fair Housing Office (**Texas**)
Corpus Christi Office of Human Relations Commission (**Texas**)
City of Fort Worth Community Relations Department (**Texas**)
East Chicago Human Rights Commission (**Indiana**)

Evansville-Vanderburgh County Human Relations Commission (**Indiana**)
Fort Wayne Metropolitan Human Relations Commission (**Indiana**)
Gary Human Relations Commission (**Indiana**)
Lexington-Fayette Urban Human Rights Commission (**Kentucky**)
Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission (**Kentucky**)
South Bend Human Rights Commission (**Indiana**)
Broward County Civil Rights Division (**Florida**)
Jacksonville Human Rights Commission (**Florida**)
Lee County Office of Equal Opportunity (**Florida**)
Miami-Dade County Equal Opportunity Board (Florida)
City of Orlando Office of Human Relations (**Florida**)
Palm Beach County Office of Equal Opportunity (**Florida**)
Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (**Florida**)
City of St. Petersburg Community Affairs Dept. (**Florida**)
City of Tampa Office of Human Rights (**Florida**)
New York City Commission on Human Rights (**New York**)
Baltimore Community Relations Commission (**Maryland**)
Howard County Office of Human Rights (**Maryland**)
Montgomery County, MD Office of Human Rights (**Maryland**)
Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (**Pennsylvania**)
Pittsburg Commission on Human Relations (**Pennsylvania**)
Prince George's County Human relations Commission (**Maryland**)
City of Reading Human Relations Commission (**Pennsylvania**)
Anchorage Equal Rights Commission (**Alaska**)
Seattle Office for Civil Rights (**Washington**)
City of Tacoma Human Rights Dept. (**Washington**)

Kansas City Missouri Human Relations Dept. (**Missouri**)
Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (**Nebraska**)
Omaha Human Rights and Relations Dept. (**Nebraska**)
St. Louis Civil Rights Enforcement Agency (**Missouri**)
Alexandra Office of Human Rights (**Virginia**)
Arlington County Human Rights Commission (**Virginia**)
DC Office of Human Rights (**DC**)
Fairfax County Human Rights Commission (**Virginia**)
Prince William County Human Rights Commission (**Virginia**)