



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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**File #:** 20-1191A, **Version:** 1

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**Subject:**

Proposed initiation of litigation in the case of Emma Ortiz v. Casa Del Sol-Alhambra Condo Assoc., Inc. and Ameri-Tech Property Management, Inc.; HUD Case No. 04-19-8060-8; PC Case No. 19-062 - alleged housing discrimination.

**Recommended Action:**

Approval and authorization for the County Attorney to initiate litigation on behalf of Emma Ortiz through outside counsel retained for these legal services.

**Strategic Plan:**

N/A

**Summary:**

On August 1, 2019, Complainant Emma Ortiz filed a charge of housing discrimination with the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (PCOHR) alleging Complainant was subjected to unlawful housing discrimination on the basis of National Origin and Retaliation through discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities and other discriminatory acts under the Fair Housing Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 3601, et seq.). Specifically, Respondents had Complainant's vehicle towed while she was on vacation and applied ever-increasing fees to her account once she filed consumer and housing discrimination claims related to their action. Following the investigation, on April 20, 2020, PCOHR issued a finding of reasonable cause to believe that Emma Ortiz was a victim of housing discrimination based on Retaliation only, in violation of Article II, Division 3 of Chapter 70 of the Pinellas County Code and the Fair Housing Act, as amended. PCOHR found no cause of discrimination based on National Origin. Attempts to conciliate the matter were unsuccessful.

In accordance with Section 70-146 and 70-147 of the Pinellas County Code, the County Attorney's Office is required to file a civil action on behalf of an aggrieved party seeking appropriate relief, and if a timely election is not made to have the charge decided in a civil action.

**Background Information:**

The Determination issued by the PCOHR setting forth the facts and applicable law that led to the reasonable cause determination is attached, as well as the Final Investigative Report.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Unknown.

**Staff Member Responsible:**

Jewel White, County Attorney  
Diriki T. Geuka, Assistant County Attorney

**Partners:**

Office of Human Rights

**Attachments:**

Determination dated April 20, 2020.

Final Investigative Report dated April 18, 2020.