



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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**File #:** 19-2315A, **Version:** 1

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### **Subject:**

Proposed initiation of litigation in the case of Lisa Keys v. Keith Morton and Natalie Fici; HUD Case No. 04-19-7482-8; PC Case No. 19-056 - alleged housing discrimination.

### **Recommended Action:**

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

### **Strategic Plan:**

N/A

### **Summary:**

On June 20, 2019, Complainant Lisa Keys 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 race and color. Specifically, Respondents' constructive refusal to rent to Complainant after being asked to provide a photograph of Complainant's husband, who is black. Both Respondents are white. The rental transaction was not finalized after Complainant provided a photograph of her husband. Following that investigation, on October 9, 2019, PCOHR issued a finding of reasonable cause to believe that Lisa Keys was a victim of housing discrimination based on race and color, in violation of Chapter 70 of the Pinellas County Code and the FHAA, including, but not limited to, Sec. 804(a) or (f) and Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Attempts to conciliate the matter were unsuccessful.

In accordance with Sections 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 is the Final Investigative Report.

### **Fiscal Impact:**

N/A

### **Staff Member Responsible:**

Jewel White, County Attorney  
Diriki Geuka, Assistant County Attorney

### **Partners:**

Office of Human Rights

**Attachments:**

Final Investigative Report dated September 16, 2019.

Determination dated October 9, 2019.