



HB 0215

2003
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CHAMBER ACTION

The Committee on Judiciary recommends the following:

Committee Substitute

Remove the entire bill and insert:

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to the Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992; creating s. 760.021, F.S.; authorizing the Attorney General to commence a civil action to obtain damages or other relief for a civil rights violation under certain circumstances; providing for attorney's fees and costs; amending s. 16.57, F.S.; authorizing the Attorney General to investigate violations under ch. 760, F.S.; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 760.021, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

760.021 Enforcement.--If the Attorney General has reasonable cause to believe that:

(1) Any person or group of persons is engaged in a pattern or practice of discrimination as defined by the laws of this state; or



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29 (2) Any person or group of persons has been discriminated
30 against as defined by the laws of this state and such
31 discrimination raises an issue of general public importance,
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33 the Attorney General may commence a civil action in any
34 appropriate court for damages, injunctive relief, civil
35 penalties not to exceed \$10,000 per violation, and such other
36 relief as may be appropriate under the circumstances. Any
37 damages recovered under this section shall accrue to the injured
38 person or group of persons. The Attorney General is entitled to
39 an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs if the
40 Department of Legal Affairs prevails in an action brought under
41 this section.

42 Section 2. Section 16.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to
43 read:

44 16.57 Office of Civil Rights.--There is created in the
45 Department of Legal Affairs an Office of Civil Rights. The
46 office may investigate and initiate actions authorized by
47 chapter 760 ~~s. 760.51~~. In investigating violations of
48 constitutional and statutory rights under chapter 760 ~~s. 760.51~~,
49 the Attorney General may administer oaths and affirmations,
50 subpoena witnesses or matter, and collect evidence.

51 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.
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