

STATE OF FLORIDA
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

CONNIE LEONESSA,

EEOC No. 15D202000109

Petitioner,

FCHR No. 201920649

v.

DOAH Case No. 20-3059

HODGES UNIVERSITY,

FCHR Order No. 21-028

Respondent.

**FINAL ORDER DISMISSING PETITION FOR
RELIEF FROM AN UNLAWFUL EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE**

Preliminary Matters

Connie Leonessa filed a complaint of discrimination pursuant to the Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992, Sections 760.01 - 760.11, Florida Statutes (2019), alleging that Hodges University, engaged in discriminatory employment practices against her by removing her from enrollment in its master's degree program.

A No Cause determination was issued. Petitioner opted to file a Petition for Relief from an Unlawful Employment Practice. The case was transmitted to the Division of Administrative Hearings for the conduct of a formal proceeding. An evidentiary hearing was held on November 16-18, 2020. Administrative Law Judge John D. C. Newton, II presided over the hearing.

Judge Newton issued a Recommended Order, dated January 22, 2021, recommending that the Commission dismiss the Petition for Relief.

The Commission panel designated below considered the record of this matter and determined the action to be taken on the Recommended Order.

Findings of Fact

A transcript of the proceeding before the Administrative Law Judge was filed with the Commission. We find the Administrative Law Judge's findings of fact to be supported by competent substantial evidence.

We adopt the Administrative Law Judge's findings of fact.

Conclusions of Law

We find the Administrative Law Judge's application of the law to the facts to result in a correct disposition of the matter.

We adopt the Administrative Law Judge's conclusions of law.

Exceptions

Neither of the parties filed exceptions to the Administrative Law Judge's Recommended Order.

Dismissal

The Petition for Relief and Complaint of Discrimination are DISMISSED with prejudice.

The parties have the right to seek judicial review of this Order. The Commission and the appropriate District Court of Appeal must receive notice of appeal within 30 days of the date this Order is filed with the Clerk of the Commission. Explanation of the right of appeal is found in Section 120.68, Florida Statutes, and in the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure 9.110.

DONE AND ORDERED this 31 day of March, 2021.
FOR THE FLORIDA COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS:

Commissioner Mario Garza, Panel Chairperson;
Commissioner Libby Farmer; and
Commissioner Larry Hart

Filed this 31 day of March, 2021,
in Tallahassee, Florida.

Tammy Barton

Clerk
Commission on Human Relations
4075 Esplanade Way, Room 110
Tallahassee, FL 32399
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Copies furnished to:

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John D.C. Newton, II, Administrative Law Judge, DOAH

John Scotese, Legal Advisor for Commission Panel

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a copy of the foregoing has been mailed to the above listed addressees this 31 day of March, 2021.

By: *Tammy Barton*
Clerk of the Commission
Florida Commission on Human Relations