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MEMORANDUM

To: Justice System Appropriations Subcommittee
From: Beth A. Lenstra, Senior Fiscal Analyst
Subject: Civil Rights Commission and Department of Human Rights
Date: February 14, 2011

The Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR) is comprised of four divisions: Human Rights Administration, Community Advocacy and Services, Division of Community Action Agencies, and Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning. The Community Advocacy and Services is comprised of seven divisions that promote self-sufficiency of their respective constituency population by providing training, developing partnerships, and advocating on their behalf.

The DHR was reorganized last year by the General Assembly. The Divisions now include Administration, Community Advocacy and Services, Community Action Agencies (federal funds), and Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Division (CJJPD). The Community Advocacy and Services is comprised of advocacy and support of Asian and Pacific Islanders, Deaf Services, Persons With Disabilities, Latino Affairs, Status of Women, Status of African Americans, and Commission of the Status of Native Americans.

The Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) serves as Iowa's Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), and carries out research, policy analysis, program development and data analysis activities to assist policy makers, justice system agencies and others to identify issues of concern and to improve the operation and effectiveness of Iowa's justice system. Staff provide a justice system information clearinghouse service to system officials and the general public. This Division also administers federal and state grant programs to fund local and state projects to prevent juvenile crime, provide services to juvenile offenders and otherwise improve Iowa's juvenile justice system.

The Civil Rights Commission exists to protect the civil rights of all persons throughout Iowa. The Commission's primary functions are to enforce the Iowa Civil Rights Act and federal housing and employment laws, investigate and resolve discrimination complaints as a neutral fact finder, advocate for compliance with civil rights laws, and educate and train Iowans to recognize and prevent discrimination. The Commission holds quasi-judicial proceedings and has limited subpoena authority.

Combining the functions of the advocacy groups with the Civil Rights Commission may compromise the Commission's neutral fact finding abilities, and may jeopardize its contracts with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

On the other hand, certain administrative functions are currently being shared within state government. For example, the Civil Rights Commission has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Department of Public Health to provide certain accounting functions for approximately \$1,200 annually. The Commission has an informal working agreement with the

Department of Education to perform certain personnel functions at no cost. These agreements currently save between \$30,000 and \$60,000 annually.

The Department of Human rights' personnel functions are handled by the Department of Administrative Services.

Please let me know if I may be of further assistance.