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**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY  
COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST**

In re: Animal Services Department /

Case No: 11-11

**PUBLIC REPORT AND ORDER DISMISSING COMPLAINT**

Cassandra Avila, a former employee of the Animal Services Department, filed the above-captioned complaint against various employees of the Animal Services Department. The complaint alleged the respondents retaliated against her for complaints regarding euthanasia of animals at department facilities.

On October 22, 2010, Avila sent a memorandum to the Animal Services' Operations Manager regarding euthanasia of animals at the department's shelters. Subsequently, various members of the department began a campaign of harassment and intimidation including verbal abuse, isolation and false disciplinary reports. In December 2010, Avila was injured on the job and placed on light duty. In January, 2011, Avila was terminated for poor performance.

On April 28, 2011, after reviewing the complaint and being otherwise advised in the premises, the Ethics Commission found the complaint legally insufficient because Avila failed to file a written complaint with one of the persons or agencies listed in the ordinance. Section 2-56.28.16 provides that " this division protects employees who disclose information on their own initiative in a written and signed complaint; who are requested to participate in an investigation, hearing or other inquiry conducted by the County , any state agency or federal government entity having the authority to investigate, police, manage or otherwise remedy the violation or act; who refuse to participate in any adverse action prohibited by this division; or who are otherwise protected by the State Whistleblower's Act." <sup>1</sup> Since Avila forwarded her complaint to her department and did not copy or provide a written complaint to any of the appropriate entities, she is not covered by the whistleblower ordinance. Therefore it is:

**ORDERED AND ADJUDGED THAT** the Complaint is

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<sup>1</sup> Section 112.3187 (6) , Florida Statutes (2010) provides that for disclosures involving a local government entity, the information must be disclosed to a chief executive officer (the County Manager) or other appropriate local official. Under the county's ordinance, those entities are the County Mayor, the Ethics Commission and the Office of Inspector General.

**DISMISSED** because Avila did not notify the appropriate authorities.

**DONE AND ORDERED** by the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust in public session on April 28, 2011.

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION  
ON ETHICS AND PUBLIC TRUST**

By: \_\_\_\_\_



Dawn Addy  
Chairperson

cc: Dr. Sara Pizano, Animal Services Department  
Cassandra Avila