



Department of Justice

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Justice Department Settles Race Discrimination Case with Owners and Manager of Philadelphia Rental Properties

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department today announced an agreement with the owners and manager of Philadelphia Rental Properties, to settle allegations of discrimination against an African American woman who had sought to rent a home. Under the settlement, which must still be approved by the U.S. District Court in Philadelphia, the defendants must pay \$40,000 to the victim, undergo training, adopt and post a nondiscrimination policy and provide reports to the government.

"It is offensive that anyone would condition housing on the color of one's skin," said Wan J. Kim, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "The Justice Department is committed to seeking out and prosecuting anyone who engages in illegal housing discrimination."

The lawsuit alleged that Daniel Waisbord, acting as the property manager for Helene Waisbord and Ava Waisbord, discouraged an African American woman from renting one property, telling her that the neighbors would not like it and that she would be unwelcome there. The government further alleged that Daniel Waisbord attempted to steer her to a property in a different neighborhood, and that he eventually rented the first property to a white woman at a rental price that was lower than the one he quoted to the African American woman. The woman subsequently filed a fair housing complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). After investigating the matter, HUD issued a charge of discrimination, and the matter was referred to the Justice Department, which filed the lawsuit earlier this year.

Fighting illegal housing discrimination is a top priority of the Justice Department. In February, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales announced Operation Home Sweet Home, a concentrated initiative to expose and eliminate housing discrimination in America. This initiative was inspired by the plight of displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina who were suddenly forced to find new places to live. Operation Home Sweet Home, however, is not limited to the areas hit by Hurricane Katrina, but targets housing discrimination all over the country.

For more information about Operation Home Sweet Home, please visit our Web site, www.usdoj.gov/fairhousing. Individuals who believe that they may have been victims of housing discrimination can call our Housing Discrimination Tip Line (1-800-896-7743), email us at fairhousing@usdoj.gov, or contact the Department of Housing and Urban Development at 1-800-669-9777.

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin and disability. Since January 1, 2001, the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division has filed 197 cases to enforce the Fair Housing Act, including 58 based on race discrimination. For more information about the Civil Rights Division and the laws it enforces, go to www.usdoj.gov/crt.

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