



Department of Justice

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SETTLEMENT REACHED IN FAIR HOUSING ACT LAWSUIT CONCERNING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Settlement Requires Klamath Falls Landlord's Estate to Pay \$30,000 in Damages

Portland, Ore. – A settlement has been reached between the parties in a federal Fair Housing Act case against a Klamath Falls landlord regarding property rentals to families with children under the age of 18. The settlement comes following Federal Magistrate Judge Mark D. Clarke's findings in January 2010 that the United States and Fair Housing Council of Oregon had presented enough evidence to show that the landlord had violated the Fair Housing Act. The parties, which include the United States and the Fair Housing Council of Oregon (FHCO), have requested that Magistrate Judge Clarke approve the terms of the settlement in a consent decree filed by the parties today. The consent decree requires the estate of the landlord to pay \$30,000 in monetary damages to the FHCO to compensate them for resources used in investigating the initial complaint and to conduct training to prevent future housing discrimination in Klamath Falls, as well as payment of FHCO's attorney fees in prosecuting the case. The settlement also requires the rental properties to be managed by a trained property management company. The U. S. Attorney's Office will monitor compliance with the agreement for three years.

"Equal access to housing is a basic necessity and a civil right guaranteed under federal law - so that families with kids can find an affordable place to live", stated U.S. Attorney Dwight Holton. "This settlement is a solid step to preventing discrimination against families."

The civil action, filed by the U. S. Attorney's Office in July 2008, alleged that Virginia Ruth Hadlock had violated Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (known as the Fair Housing Act), by denying families with children the ability to rent her properties and for making discriminatory statements about families with children. The Fair Housing Act protects persons from discrimination in the sale or rental of housing based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin. Familial status protection extends to parents or other persons who have custody over children living with them.

The FHCO intervened in the lawsuit because it had received the initial complaint from a concerned citizen about Hadlock's practices and subsequently investigated the complaint. After further investigation, which included a series of testing indicating that Hadlock was in violation of the law, the Fair Housing Council of Oregon filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD investigated the complaint and found probable

cause that Hadlock had violated the Fair Housing Act in her refusal to rent to prospective tenants with children and by making discriminatory statements. The matter was referred to the U.S. Attorney's Office, which commenced suit to enforce the Fair Housing Act.

Moloy Good, the Executive Director for the FHCO welcomes the settlement as progress in eliminating housing discrimination in Oregon. "We are greatly pleased that this settlement reaffirms the promise of the Fair Housing Act that families with children have the right to live in the housing of their choice. This resolution is a great step towards fulfilling our mission of eliminating illegal housing discrimination in Oregon."

The case was handled by Assistant U. S. Attorneys Adrian Brown and Ron Silver on behalf of the United States, and Portland attorney Dennis Steinman of the law firm Kell, Alterman, and Runstein, who represented the FHCO.

Information regarding the Fair Housing Act and other federal civil rights laws is located on the U.S. Attorney's website: <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/or/CivilRightsEnforcement.html>. The Fair Housing Council of Oregon maintains a hotline for complaints of housing discrimination at 503-223-8197 (Portland Metro Area) or 1-800-424-3247. Further information about the FHCO can be found on their website: www.FHCO.org

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