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## JUSTICE NEWS

### Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Justice Department Settles Disability Discrimination Case Against Property Management Company for \$1.25 Million

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department today announced a \$1.25 million agreement with Warren Properties Inc., Warren Village (Mobile) Limited Partnership and Frank R. Warren to settle allegations that the defendants violated the Fair Housing Act by refusing to grant a tenant’s requests for a reasonable accommodation. This settlement is the largest ever obtained by the department in an individual housing discrimination case.

The lawsuit, filed on April 29, 2009, in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama, alleges that the defendants failed to permit a tenant with a mobility impairment to move to a ground-floor apartment near the front of the building in a 196-unit apartment complex in Mobile, Ala., owned by Warren Village (Mobile) Limited Partnership. The suit also alleges that the tenant suffered severe injuries as a result of falling down the stairs.

Under the consent decree, the defendants must pay \$1,195,000 to compensate the tenant, along with an additional \$55,000 in fees and costs to the government. The defendants must hire a reasonable accommodation facilitator to handle requests for reasonable accommodations from more than 11,000 housing units in 85 properties managed by Warren Properties Inc. in 15 states. The defendants must also attend fair housing training, implement a non-discrimination policy, and comply with notice, monitoring and reporting requirements.

“Property owners and managers have no excuse for violating our nation’s fair housing laws by refusing to accommodate people with disabilities,” said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division. “Equal access to housing in the United States is a fundamental right, and this nation will not tolerate discrimination in housing.”

Kenyen R. Brown, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama, stated, “This is the second major settlement of a housing discrimination case engineered by our office in the last year. We will continue to make civil rights and housing litigation a major priority of this office.”

“Persons with disabilities have a right to the reasonable accommodations they need to function and live as others do,” said John Trasviña, Department of Housing and Urban Development(HUD) Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. “Denying them that right violates the Fair Housing Act and HUD and the Department of Justice are committed to ensuring that property owners meet their responsibility to comply with the law.”

The lawsuit arose as a result of a complaint filed by the tenant with HUD. After an investigation of the complaint, HUD issued a charge of discrimination and the complainant elected to have the case heard in federal court. This case was litigated primarily by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Gary Moore and Deidre Colson, and Paralegal Specialist Regina Dickerson in the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Mobile with assistance from Elizabeth Singer, Director of the U.S. Attorneys’ Fair Housing Program in the Civil Rights Division’s Housing and Civil Enforcement Section in Washington, D.C.

Fighting illegal housing discrimination is a top priority of the Justice Department. The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin and disability.

More information about the Civil Rights Division and the laws it enforces is available at [www.justice.gov/crt/](http://www.justice.gov/crt/). Persons who believe they have experienced or witnessed unlawful housing discrimination may call the Housing Discrimination Tip Line at 1-800-896-7743, e-mail the Justice Department at [fairhousing@usdoj.gov](mailto:fairhousing@usdoj.gov) or contact HUD at 1-800-669-9777. More information about the Fair Housing Act can also be found at [www.justice.gov/crt/housing](http://www.justice.gov/crt/housing) or [www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing).

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Civil Rights Division