



HUD Charges Bucks County Property Owners and Management Company with Discriminating Against Single Mom

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Swarthmore, PA – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) announced that it is charging several Bristol property owners and their management company with discriminating against families with children. This charge of discrimination is initiated by HUD on behalf of a single mother and her child, and the Fair Housing Council of Suburban Philadelphia (“FHCSPP”). HUD alleges that Quality Realty Associates (“QRA”), Vincent Quattrocchi, Louis Quattrocchi and Cecelia Quattrocchi violated the Fair Housing Act because they do not permit children to live in their apartments.

In March 2009, a single mother contacted QRA to inquire about a “for rent” sign she had seen posted at a property in Bristol, PA. She spoke with Vincent Quattrocchi, and was given detailed information about the available apartment. When she was asked how many people would be living with her, she told Mr. Quattrocchi that the apartment would be occupied by her and her seven-year-old daughter. She was then informed by Mr. Quattrocchi that he would prefer to rent to someone without children.

After unsuccessfully trying to find housing, the single mother and her child moved into the American Red Cross shelter in Levittown. She was separated from her daughter soon after, as she sent her daughter to stay with relatives while she remained at the shelter while she searched for more permanent housing. In the process of searching for housing, she called QRA and spoke with Mr. Quattrocchi once again, and was again told that there was an available apartment, but children were not allowed.

The single mother, upon being denied for the second time, contacted FHCSPP. FHCSPP conducted an investigation, and confirmed that QRA did indeed have a policy of not renting to families with children. On March 3, 2010, the single mother and FHCSPP filed housing discrimination complaints with HUD. According to HUD’s charge, Louis Quattrocchi advised HUD that in the thirty to forty years that he has managed properties, he has never rented to families with children.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of familial status, or the presence of children under the age of 18 in the household. In addition, expectant mothers and any adult who is in

the process of gaining legal custody of a child are covered under the familial status provision of the Fair Housing Act. Familial status has been protected under the Fair Housing Act since 1988.

“HUD stands with a working mother and child, when they are illegally denied housing,” said John Trasviña, HUD Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. “The Fair Housing Act protects families with children so they can live in housing of their choice.”

FHCSP is a private, non-profit organization working to educate and advocate for equal access to quality, affordable housing for everyone in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Founded in 1956, FHCSP is the oldest fair housing council in the nation and has been serving Bucks County for 22 years. FHCSP released a study in 2009 entitled *Housing Discrimination Trends in the Philadelphia Region*, which reported that African Americans, people with disabilities and families with children can expect to experience housing discrimination 32% of the time in Bucks County while attempting to find rental housing.

“Families with children continue to be victims of housing discrimination in Bucks County,” said James Berry, Executive Director of FHCSP. “Denying a single mother residence in the housing of their choice because she has a child is not only deplorable, it is illegal and a bad business practice.”

The HUD charge will be heard by a United States Administrative Law Judge unless any party to the charge elects to have the case heard in federal district court. If an Administrative Law Judge finds after a hearing that discrimination has occurred, he may award damages to the family for its losses and order injunctive relief and other equitable relief to deter further discrimination. In addition, the judge may impose fines in order to vindicate the public interest, including a civil penalty of up to \$16,000, and award attorney fees. If the matter is decided in federal court, the judge may also award punitive damages to aggrieved persons. The HUD charge can be found here:

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/enforcement/10-HUD-v.-Vicent-Quattrocchi.pdf>

The Fair Housing Act protects people from discrimination in housing related transactions based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability and familial status. Anyone suspecting that they were denied housing for discriminatory reasons, or any housing providers who want information on how they can operate their business in a nondiscriminatory manner should contact FHCSP at 610-604-4411 or visit www.fhcsp.com.