

## HUD CHARGES MINNESOTA MOBILE HOME PARK OWNERS AND MANAGER WITH DISCRIMINATING AGAINST MEXICAN AMERICAN COUPLE

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced today that it is charging the owners and manager of Rainbow Terrace Mobile Home Park in Albert Lea, Minnesota, with violating the Fair Housing Act by making discriminatory statements about the national origin of a Mexican American couple that was trying to lease a park lot. HUD's charge alleges that the park's manager stated that she did "not want any more Mexicans" living at the mobile home park because they were "too much trouble" or similar words to that effect. The manager also allegedly told the wife that her husband was "no good" and referred to him with an ethnic slur for people who are Mexican or Mexican-American.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing transactions based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability.

"Discrimination has no home in America. Mobile home residents do not have to accept derogatory statements based on their national origin when trying to rent," stated John Trasviña, HUD Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. "HUD is committed to combating all violations of the Fair Housing Act."

HUD's **charge alleges** that while the wife and her sister were meeting with the manager of Rainbow Terrace about renting a lot, the manager observed the husband sitting in a nearby pickup truck and asked the wife if he was her husband. When the wife said yes, the manager asked if he was Mexican or from Mexico. When the wife confirmed that her husband is Mexican, the manager allegedly said that she had had "enough of [them] here" and did "not want any more." The manager then allegedly asked the wife if she had a Social Security card and if she was born in the United States, saying that she did "not want any more Mexicans [living at Rainbow Terrace]" because they were "too much trouble." She also referred to Mexicans with an ethnically disparaging slang word.

HUD's investigation found evidence showing that other Mexican American residents of the park had been subjected to similar ethnic slurs by the manager. Several residents told HUD that the manager had used the ethnically derogatory term in referring to persons of Mexican origin.

A United States Administrative Law Judge will hear HUD's charge unless any party 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 complainants. In addition, the judge may impose fines to vindicate the public interest, order injunctive and other equitable relief to deter further discrimination, and require payment of attorney fees. If the matter is decided in federal court, the judge may also award punitive damages to the aggrieved persons.

HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, with its partners in the Fair Housing Assistance Program, investigates approximately 10,000 housing discrimination complaints annually. People who believe they have experienced or witnessed unlawful housing discrimination should contact HUD at [1-800-669-9777](tel:1-800-669-9777) (voice), or [1-800-927-9275](tel:1-800-927-9275) (TTY). More information about fair housing rights is available at HUD's website, [www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing).