

HUD CHARGES OWNERS AND MANAGERS OF ALABAMA MOBILE HOME PARK WITH DISCRIMINATING AGAINST AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is charging the owners and managers of Heritage Point Mobile Home Park in Montgomery, Alabama, with violating the Fair Housing Act for refusing to rent a lot in the park to an African American family and employing a policy of excluding African Americans. HUD charged Lawrence at Lakewood, LLC, and Lawrence Properties, Inc., which own and manage Heritage Point and other mobile home parks in Alabama and Georgia; Michael Lawrence, CEO of both companies; and William Bounds, district supervisor for four mobile home parks, including Heritage Point.

[The Fair Housing Act](#) makes it unlawful to discriminate in housing transactions based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or familial status.

“Refusing to rent a lot effectively denies a mobile home dweller a place to live,” said John Trasviña, HUD Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. “The Fair Housing Act protects families from discrimination based on race or national origin.”

HUD alleges that discrimination based on race, color and national origin occurred when the CEO told company employees that he did not want any more African Americans moving into his mobile home parks and employees refused to process an African American family’s application to rent a lot for the mobile home they had recently purchased. [According to the charge](#), Mr. Bounds told the family that their application was denied, falsely citing results from a credit check that was not made. The family was required to move their mobile home out of the park after their rental application was denied. The owners and managers also allegedly preferred to rent to Hispanic applicants and allowed certain Hispanic applicants to move into the park without submitting rental applications or undergoing background checks.

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 family. 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 and its partners in the Fair Housing Assistance Program investigate 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.