



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Billy J. Williams
District of Oregon

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FLORENCE LANDLORD ACCUSED OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

EUGENE, Ore.—The U.S. Attorney’s Office announced today that it has filed a lawsuit in federal court alleging that the owner of residential rental housing in Florence, Oregon, made discriminatory statements, preventing a foster parent from applying to rent a home, in violation of the federal Fair Housing Act.

“Under the Fair Housing Act, owners and managers of rental housing must ensure their properties are open to families with children,” said Billy J. Williams, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon. “Our office will vigorously enforce this important civil rights protection to provide relief for families victimized and deter future discrimination.”

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court in Eugene, alleges that Kathie Carmer, 74, of Florence, engaged in unlawful familial status discrimination in connection with a single family home in Florence that she had advertised for rent on Craigslist. The civil complaint alleges that a prospective tenant called Carmer in November 2018 to inquire about the rental and disclosed that she was looking for a residence suitable for herself and her four foster children. Carmer then allegedly made discouraging and discriminatory comments to the prospective tenant about her intent to leave the children with a babysitter while she is working, a carpeted house not being suitable for children, and the tenant not being a good fit for the rental. Carmer did not provide the prospective tenant an opportunity to continue with a rental application.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) investigated this case after receiving a complaint from the prospective tenant. The department concluded that there is reasonable cause to believe that Defendant violated the Fair Housing Act.

The filed complaint asserts three allegations against Carmer of discrimination against families with children, based upon the findings of HUD’s investigation: (1) refusing to rent or to negotiate for the rental of the advertised property because of familial status; (2) discriminating in the terms, conditions, or privileges of the rental of a dwelling because of familial status; and (3) making discouraging and other discriminatory statements to a potential renter with children.

The lawsuit seeks monetary damages, a civil penalty, and a court order barring future discrimination and harassment. While the complaint contains allegations of unlawful conduct, the allegations must be proven in federal court.

The United States is being represented in this matter by Adrian Brown, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability and familial status. Individuals who believe they may have been victims of familial status discrimination or other types of housing discrimination at rental dwellings owned or managed by Carmer, or who have other information that may be relevant to this case, are asked to contact the United States Attorney's Office at 503-727-1000 and request to speak to the Civil Rights Coordinator.

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