



# FAIR HOUSING NEWS

A newsletter about fair housing, community development, & neighborhood quality of life

## GREETINGS!!!

**Welcome To This Edition Of *Fair Housing News*,  
Produced By The GBCHRB As A Public Service!**

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## RECENT U. S. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT FAIR HOUSING ACTIONS

In light of the recent significant surge of enforcement activity by the Civil Rights Division of the U. S. Department of Justice, we begin this *Fair Housing News* with an extended review of just some of the recent DOJ activities. Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Thomas E. Perez gave an informative summary during his July 20, 2010, speech at the National Fair Housing Policy Conference in New Orleans: [Read the Attorney General's speech.](#)

**Justice Department Files Lawsuit Alleging Disability-based Housing Discrimination at Louisville, Kentucky, Apartment Complex.** The Department's lawsuit against the owners, developers, architects and civil engineers of Park Place Apartments, a 276-unit complex in Louisville, Ky., for failing to provide accessible features required by the Fair Housing Act. The lawsuit alleges the individuals "discriminated against persons with disabilities when they designed and constructed Park Place with, among other things, interior doors that are too narrow for persons who use wheelchairs; kitchens and bathrooms that limit or prevent individuals who use wheelchairs from maneuvering about them; thermostat controls that are mounted above the maximum reach height of persons who use wheelchairs; and routes from the public access parking areas to apartment units and to site amenities that are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs." [Read the August 10, 2010, DOJ Press Release.](#)

**Jury Awards \$115,000 to Victims of Housing Discrimination & Sexual Harassment.** A federal jury in Detroit gave a \$115,000 verdict against an Ypsilanti, Mich., man for sexually harassing female tenants in his capacity as a property manager, the Justice Department announced today. The jury also found the property owner and his



company liable for the illegal harassment. The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Detroit, alleged that Glenn Johnson subjected female tenants to discrimination on the basis of sex, including severe, pervasive and unwelcome sexual harassment, in violation of the federal Fair Housing Act. The complaint also alleged that Ronnie Peterson and First Pitch Properties LLC, the owners of the properties, are liable for Johnson's discriminatory conduct. [Read the August 6, 2010 DOJ Press Release.](#)

**Justice Department Files Fair Housing Lawsuit Against Dalton Township, Michigan.**

The Justice Department's lawsuit against Dalton Township, Mich., alleges violations of the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan, charges that the township discriminated against persons with disabilities based on its treatment of a group home for persons recovering from drug and alcohol addiction and its failure to grant a reasonable accommodation or modification to the owner of the group home. This lawsuit arose as a result of a complaint filed with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by Joel Kruszynski Sr., who, through Cedar Creek Investments Inc., and Serenity Shores Apartments LLC, owns and operates a group home known as "Serenity Shores." The suit seeks a court order prohibiting future discrimination by the township and requiring the township to make a reasonable accommodation to permit the continued operation of Serenity Shores as a sober home for eight individuals and a resident manager. It also seeks payment of monetary damages to compensate victims and a civil penalty. [Read the July 28, 2010 DOJ Press Release.](#)



***Other Recent DOJ Complaints:***

**Preferential Statements** - On July 19, 2010, the Division filed a [complaint](#) in *United States v. Riba* (D. N.H.), a Fair Housing Act case referred by HUD. The complaint alleges that the defendant, Lothar Riba, made statements with respect to the rental of a dwelling that indicated a preference, limitation, or discrimination based on race, color, and national origin. The complaint also alleges acts of interference, coercion or intimidation in violation of § 3617.

**Steering** - The Division filed a [complaint](#) on July 16, 2010, in *United States v. Summerhill Place, LLC* (W.D. Wash.) for violations of the Fair Housing Act. This is a HUD-referred case against a 268-unit apartment complex near Seattle, Washington. It is alleged that the owner, management company and on-site manager violated the Fair Housing Act by discouraging potential residents who were African American, Hispanic, and families with children, steering minority applicants and families with children away from certain buildings within the complex, discriminating against minority applicants and families with children in the terms and conditions of rental, making discriminatory statements against minority tenants and families with children, and falsely representing that apartments were not available to minority applicants and families with children.

**Testing** - On July 7, 2010, the court entered a [consent order](#) in *United States v. Acme Investments, Inc.* (E.D.

Mich.), a Fair Housing Act pattern or practice case alleging that the property manager of an apartment complex racially discriminated in the rental and inspection of apartments. The [case](#) was developed through testing conducted by the Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan. Under the settlement, the defendants will pay \$35,000 in damages to three victims whom the United States contends were discriminated against because of their race; a \$7,500 civil penalty; and \$40,000 to the Fair Housing



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Center of Southeastern Michigan to compensate the non-profit for its efforts in testing and investigating the apartment complex.



**Refusal to Rent** - The United States Attorney's Office filed a June 24, 2010 [complaint](#) in *United States v. Loki Properties* (D. Minn.), a Fair Housing Act case referred by HUD, that the owner and manager of a four unit apartment building in Red Wing, Minnesota violated the Fair Housing Act by refusing to rent an apartment to complainant John Peet, who was trying to use a Section 8 voucher, because of the combination of his race (African-American) and his gender (male).

**Pattern/Practice** - On June 23, 2010, the Court entered a [consent order](#) in *United States v. Morgan* (S.D. Ga.), a Fair Housing Act case alleging that Defendants engaged in a pattern or practice of discrimination on the base of race or color and sex. The consent order requires the Defendants to pay a total of \$680,000 in monetary damages and civil penalties. The consent decree also includes broad injunctive relief, including an independent manager provision, training and reporting requirements and a four-year term.

**Discriminatory Lending Fees** - On March 22, 2010, the court entered a [consent decree](#) in *United States v. AIG Federal Savings Bank and Wilmington Finance, Inc.* (D. Del.). The [complaint](#) filed on March 4, 2010, alleged that African-American borrowers were charged higher fees on wholesale mortgage loans and the lenders discriminated on the basis of race by failing to monitor broker fee pricing decisions by wholesale mortgage brokers, in violation of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act. The consent order, which provides up to \$6.1 million in damages and at least \$1 million in consumer financial education.



## MARYLAND NEWS

**The "Day of Dignity" for the Homeless Will Be Held on September 4, 2010 at Massjod Ul Haqq.** The Baltimore Muslim Community is hosting the event at 514 Islamic Way, Baltimore 21217, with clothing distribution, job resources, contacts for job training, hygiene products, toys, and a hot meal, along with health screening (diabetes, blood pressure, HIV/AIDS testing). Islamic Relief is coordinating the event, one of 25 across the country in 2010. Islamic Relief USA, a nonprofit relief and development organization, began Day of Dignity eight years ago as a single event during the holy month of Ramadan. The idea was that since Ramadan is a season characterized by love, compassion and charity, American Muslims could use the day as an opportunity to act on their faith by helping those in need. In 2010, the campaign's goal is to serve about 20,000 people with the help of 2,000 volunteers in over 22 cities in the USA. For more info: go to <http://www.dayofdignity.com/> or [mailto:kieta\\_iriarte@hotmail.com](mailto:kieta_iriarte@hotmail.com).

**Fair Housing Legal Round-Up - Source of Income Discrimination Legislation Defeated in Maryland House of Delegates.** For several years running, the bill to include source of income as a protected class under Maryland's Fair Housing Law has been defeated. Senate Bill 243, sponsored by Senator Lisa Gladden, would have: "Alter(ed) the housing policy of the State to provide for fair housing to all citizens regardless of source of income; prohibiting a person from refusing to sell or rent a dwelling to any person because of source of income; prohibiting a person



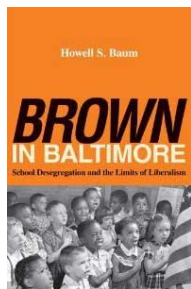
from discriminating against any person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling because of source of income; etc. " HB 1261 of 2008 received a hearing in the House Environmental Matters Committee, but no further action was taken. SB 934 of 2007 did not receive a hearing. HB 853 of 2003 and HB 932 of 2004 received an unfavorable report from the House Environmental Matters Committee. There were several partners in the effort to pass the legislation, and it was opposed by major rental development owners. The Judicial Proceedings Committee voted the bill unfavorably on March 4. [Read the legislative summary.](#)

## RESOURCES



**Interested in Fair Housing? Then You Need to Visit the GBCHRB's YouTube Channel - <http://www.youtube.com/user/wkladky1>!** Also, Listen to a Fair Housing Radio Show - <http://www.gbchr.org/2rad9899.htm> - Click on any show, including foreclosure problems, Baltimore racial history, Fair Housing laws, disability issues, mortgage lending discrimination, & more.

**The GBCHRB Distributes Free Fair Housing Brochures, Posters, and Guides.** [Contact us](#) for FREE Fair Housing info, brochures, & posters in English, Spanish, Korean, and Russian, as well as one specifically for people with disabilities.

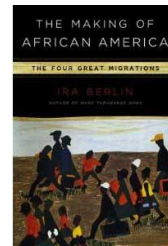


## INTERESTING READING

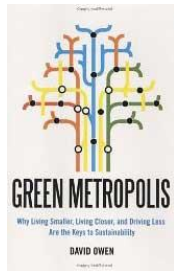
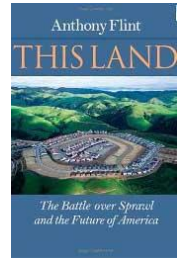
*Fair Housing, Environmental*

**Brown in Baltimore: School Desegregation and the Limits of Liberalism** by Howell S. Baum. Cornell University, 2010. 272pp. \$24.95. In the first book on the history of Baltimore school desegregation, Baum examines how the City's school board, after the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, voted to desegregate and had a free choice policy making integration voluntary. Baltimore's school desegregation proceeded peacefully, without the strong resistance or violence that occurred elsewhere. Few whites, though, chose to attend school with blacks, resulting in temporary modest desegregation, and then schools resegregated and became increasingly segregated. "Baum examines how Baltimore's distinct identity as a border city between North and South shaped local conversations about the national conflict over race and equality. The city's history of wrestling with the legacy of *Brown* reveals Americans' preferred way of dealing with racial issues: not talking about race. This avoidance, Baum concludes, allows segregation to continue."

**The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations** by Ira Berlin. Viking, 2010. 320pp. \$27.95. Focusing on the cultural, political, and social impacts, Berlin explores the four migrations that are the distinct culture of African Americans: the transatlantic slave trade; the migration of African slaves from the Atlantic coast to southern plantations; the great migration from the rural South to the urban North, especially during World War II; and the latest movement, the immigration to the U.S. of people of African descent from Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe.

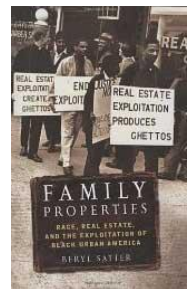


**This Land: The Battle over Sprawl and the Future of America** by Anthony Flint. Johns Hopkins University, 2006. 310pp. \$27.00. This historical perspective on how we became a suburban nation is really the untold story of development in America, focusing on the clash of political, economic and cultural forces. To one reviewer, "It is the story of burgeoning anti-sprawl movement, a 1960s-style revolution of New Urbanism, smart growth, and green building. And it is the story of landowners fighting back on the basis of property rights, with free-market libertarians, homebuilders, road pavers, financial institutions, and even the lawn-care industry right alongside them."



**Green Metropolis: Why Living Smaller, Living Closer, and Driving Less are the Keys to Sustainability** by David Owen. Riverhead, 2009. 368pp. \$25.95. Manhattan is by far the greenest place in America, argues Owen. New York City is a model of sustainability: its extreme density, compactness, and congested traffic encourage a car-free lifestyle centered on walking and public transit. The massive apartment buildings use the heat escaping from one dwelling to warm the ones adjoining it, resulting in per capita greenhouse gas emissions less than a third of the average. Along the way, Owen attacks the powerful anti-urban bias of American environmentalists.

**Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America** by Beryl Satter. Metropolitan Books, 2009. 512 pp. \$30.00. Part family story and part sociology, this is a powerful study of one family's Chicago living experiences, documenting the financial and legal exploitation of the urban black community.



### *Subprime Housing*

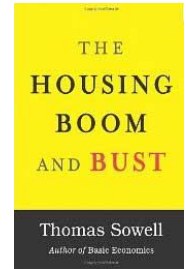
**The Subprime Virus: Reckless Credit, Regulatory Failure, and Next Steps** by Kathleen C. Engel and Patricia C. McCoy. Oxford University, to be published in December, 2010. 416pp. \$34.95. By two experts, this looks like it will be one of the good ones. It is supposed to be "the full story behind the subprime crisis. The authors, experts in the law and economics of financial regulation and consumer

lending, offer a sharply reasoned, but accessible account of the actions that produced the greatest economic collapse since the Great Depression. Wall Street peddled subprime loans to investors through complex but dodgy financial instruments that spread like a virus. A central theme in the book is the role of federal banking and securities regulators, who were well aware of lenders' risky, deceptive mortgages and of Wall Street's addiction to high stakes financing. These regulators, believing that markets would self-correct, did nothing until the crisis erupted."

**Housing Policy in the United States** by Alex F. Schwartz. Routledge, 2010. 384pp. \$49.95. The most widely used and most widely referenced "basic book" on housing policy has now been substantially revised to examine the collapse of the housing market in 2007 and the related financial crisis. The text covers the impact of the crisis in depth, including policy changes put in place and proposed by the Obama administration, as well as includes the latest data on housing trends and program budgets, and an expanded discussion of homelessness.



**The Housing Boom and Bust** by Thomas Sowell. Basic Books, 2009. 192pp. \$24.95. This is a plain-English explanation of how we got into the current economic disaster that developed out of the economics and politics of the housing boom and bust. The “creative” financing of home mortgages and the even more “creative” marketing of financial securities based on American mortgages to countries around the world, are part of the story of how a financial house of cards was built up—and then suddenly collapsed.



## REST IN PEACE

**David Ginsburg, Urban Advocate, Dies at 98.** Ginsburg, a liberal lawyer and longtime Washington insider who helped found the Americans for Democratic Action, led the presidential National Commission on Civil Disorders ("the Kerner Commission") on race relations whose report, in 1968 after race riots in Detroit, Milwaukee, Los Angeles, Newark and Chicago, among others, warned that the United States was “moving toward two societies - one black, one white, separate and unequal.” In a report that was a surprise best seller in paperback, the commission argued that the riots were a form of social protest by blacks against longstanding injustices and that white Americans, largely oblivious to the plight of black citizens, were complicit in creating a racist, economically oppressive society. [Read the New York Times obituary.](#)

**Mario Obledo, Hispanic Rights Leader, 78.** Obledo created and led many Hispanic political and civil rights institutions, including the [Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund](#), the [Hispanic National Bar Association](#), the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project and the [National Coalition of Hispanic Organizations](#). He was president of the League of United Latin American Citizens. With Pete Tijerina, he founded the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund with \$2.2 million from the Ford Foundation and guidance from the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. They had no trouble finding



injustices. They filed a suit saying a utility discriminated against Hispanic job candidates by having a height requirement, and they won. They forced schools to desegregate, courts to reform jury selection, swimming pools to integrate and businesses to take down signs barring Mexicans from entering. “Discrimination was so widespread, I claimed that filing a lawsuit was like picking apples off a tree,” Mr. Obledo told The San Antonio *Express-News*. When President Bill Clinton presented him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998, the citation said Mr. Obledo had “created a powerful chorus for justice and equality.” He was called the “Godfather of the Latino Movement” in the United States. [Read the New York Times obituary.](#)