



Gulf Coast Fair Housing Center
2218 – 24th Avenue
Gulfport, MS 39501

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News Release

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THE SIGN SAID IT ALL: “NO PETS, NO CHILDREN”

Biloxi, MS- On September 30, 2009, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued a charge of discrimination against Andrea Theresa Endris, Dan Johnson and Opal Johnson, Andrea Theresa Endris Revocable Living Trust, the Endris Trust and the Andrea Theresa Endris Family Trust, alleging discrimination on the basis of familial status in violation of the Federal Fair Housing Act. The Federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability and familial status.

The Gulf Coast Fair Housing Center (GCFHC), a nonprofit dedicated to enforcing fair housing rights, was alerted to the presence of a discriminatory sign placed in the front yard of a vacant home for rent advertising, “No pets, No children.” The home is owned by Andrea Endris. The Federal Fair Housing Act prohibits landlords and their agents from making statements and creating signs, that indicate a preference or discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability and/or familial status.

A subsequent investigation by GCFHC determined that people who were otherwise qualified were not allowed to rent the home because they had children. The Federal Fair Housing Act also prohibits landlords and their agents from denying availability or indicating a preference based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability and/or familial status. GCFHC filed a complaint with HUD. The HUD investigation confirmed discrimination had occurred.

GCFHC’s Executive Director Charmel Gaulden stated, “With limited options due to natural disasters, discriminatory actions by housing providers become particularly abominable, as they deny housing opportunities as well as send a signal to the neighborhood that this type of exclusionary behavior is acceptable. GCFHC is here to set that record straight.”

In Biloxi, Mississippi, the city where the discriminatory act occurred, over 60% of the city’s housing stock was damaged during Hurricane Katrina. Biloxi is currently in the process of reviewing the Five Year Consolidated Plan, a document submitted to HUD in preparation of receiving Community Block Grant Funds. According to the plan, rental rates increased 29.3% for



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a 3-bedroom apartment after Hurricane Katrina. Special focus on the provisions of the Fair Housing Act is urged in light of this recent charge of discrimination. The HUD charge, pictures of the discriminatory ad, the city of Biloxi's 5 year Consolidated Plan and more information about discrimination against families with children are available at www.makeitfair.com.

The Gulf Coast Fair Housing Center (GCFHC) is a private non-profit organization. GCFHC was established by a group of concerned Gulf Coast citizens in 2003 with the help of the National Fair Housing Alliance. GCFHC is dedicated to eliminating housing discrimination and furthering equal housing opportunities through education, outreach, advocacy, and enforcement of fair housing laws across the Mississippi Gulf Coast.