

[Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan](http://www.fhcmichigan.org)

(877) 979-FAIR, info@fhcmichigan.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, December 3, 2013

Contact: FHC Executive Dir. Pam Kisch, (734) 994-3426; Attorney Steve Tomkowiak (248) 543-1600

MONROE MICHIGAN MOM SETTLES NEW DISCRIMINATION SUIT FOR \$20,000

MONROE, MICHIGAN -- Cicily Pippens of Monroe, Michigan has settled her housing discrimination law suit against landlord Mildred Trkula for \$20,000, with assistance from the Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan.

Ms. Pippens contacted the Fair Housing Center in January of 2013 to report that the agent at a West Eighth Street property in the City of Monroe took a rental application away from her after the agent learned that she has two children.

The Fair Housing Center investigated the claim of housing discrimination by sending testers who acted as potential home seekers and reported their experiences to FHC staff. Testers were sent to the identified location at various times during the period of a month. The results of FHC testing strongly supported Ms. Pippens' claim of discrimination based on familial status.

According to the lawsuit, the defendant, Mildred Trkula, told Pippens that “*they* really do not want children living here.” Ms. Trkula is the owner of the property. The lawsuit also reveals that the defendant told FHC testers “you can’t have kids,” “it is an adult unit,” and that when a previous tenant “found a girlfriend with kids” she, Ms. Trkula, “got rid of them.”

FHC staff met with Ms. Pippens in early February 2013, to discuss her options. Ms. Pippens chose to go to litigation with a Fair Housing Center Cooperating Attorney, selecting Steve Tomkowiak to handle her case. On March 5, 2013, Mr. Tomkowiak filed *Pippens v Trkula* in U. S. Federal District Court. The case was assigned to Judge Victoria A. Roberts.

A private non-profit organization, the Fair Housing Center opened in 1992 to provide fair housing investigations, advocacy, education, conciliation, and attorney referrals to those who believe they have been the victims of illegal housing discrimination. The Fair Housing Center serves Washtenaw, Ingham, Monroe, Livingston, Jackson, and Lenawee counties.

The mission of the Fair Housing Center is to end discrimination in housing and public accommodations and to promote accessible, integrated communities.

Michigan Mom Settles Discrimination Suit/ 2

The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under a grant with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Government.

###

