

Ann Arbor

Apartment complexes agree to stop banning children from one-bedroom units

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Seven Michigan residential complexes have agreed in a lawsuit settlement with the federal government to no longer ban families with children from renting one-bedroom apartments.

The federal lawsuit accused a rental manager, Sudi Hopper, and three corporate entities that own the complexes, -- Parkside East Inc., Holt Manor Inc. and Kelly Manor Inc. -- of discrimination against families with children.

Evidence was gathered by the Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan, which had agents pose as prospective renters asking for one-bedroom units, according to the U.S. Attorney's office.

Those who said they wanted to rent a unit with their child were turned away.

"The law prohibits landlords from refusing to rent to people with children," said U.S. attorney Barbara McQuade.

"We commend the defendants in this case for agreeing to change their policies and pay damages to victims for their past discriminatory practices. This settlement will further the goal of the Fair Housing Act to protect families from discrimination because they have children."

Under the terms of the settlement, the defendants will pay \$20,000 to victims and \$5,000 in civil penalties to the U.S. government

The complexes include: Parkside East Apartments in East Lansing; Holt Manor Apartments and C and H Apartments in Holt; Kelly Manor Apartments in Owosso; Camelot Apartments in Lansing; Pine Cove Apartments in DeWitt; and Park Place Apartments in Williamston.

The defendants also agreed to inform tenants of the new nondiscriminatory policies and to provide training on the Fair Housing Act to staff and agents.

"Families with children deserve access to housing that meets their needs without facing unlawful discrimination," said Vanita Gupta, principal deputy assistant attorney general and head of the U.S. Justice Department's civil rights division.

"The Justice Department will continue to enforce the Fair Housing Act to ensure that families with children have the same rights to housing within their price range as people without children."

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin and disability.

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