

Children discriminated against in renting, woman says

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An Ypsilanti Township apartment complex that reportedly told a woman her children could not share the same bedroom because they were not of the same sex faces a discrimination lawsuit.

Carmel Oliver of Ypsilanti, assisted by the Fair Housing Center of Washtenaw County, filed a lawsuit Thursday in U.S. District Court in Ann Arbor against Cobble Creek Apartments, 212 Steven Drive.

According to the lawsuit, when Oliver

went to Cobble Creek with her 8-month-old daughter and 6-year-old son, she was told that children not of the same sex could not share a bedroom. Oliver contacted the Fair Housing Center to complain.

"I felt like they were closing the door in my face," said Oliver, in a prepared statement. "I was hurt."

The Fair Housing Center said it sent testers to Cobble Creek who confirmed the rule and also found that the apartment complex does not allow a child to share a bedroom with a parent.

Judy Lupu, manager of Cobble Creek,

said she would not comment on the lawsuit.

Pam Kisch, executive director of the Fair Housing Center in Ann Arbor, said that because Cobble Creek does not prohibit two adults who are not of the same sex from sharing a bedroom and does not restrict children of the same sex from sharing a room, the apartment's policy violates the Federal Fair Housing Act. The federal act forbids discrimination based on familial status and sex.

The Fair Housing Center provides investigative services, advocacy and attorney referral to victims of housing discrimination.

This is the second lawsuit this year in which Fair Housing Center of Washtenaw County has been involved. In March, Ashaki Robinson, a 21-year-old University of Michigan student filed an age discrimination lawsuit in Washtenaw County Circuit Court against Russell Anderson Apartments in Ypsilanti Township.

Robinson was told that the complex did not rent to students. After sending students posing as renters to the apartments, the Fair Housing Center found a 50-year-old U-M student was offered an apartment while younger students were refused rentals.