



# FAIR HOUSING NEWS

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

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## GREETINGS!!!

Welcome To The August Edition Of *Fair Housing News*, Produced By The GBCHRB As A Public Service! For a free copy of any article or for a free on-line subscription: 410-453-9500/800-895-6302/[wkladky@gbchrb.org](mailto:wkladky@gbchrb.org). More info & resources: <http://www.gbchrb.org>.

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Check Out the GBCHRB's YouTube Channel - <http://www.youtube.com/user/wkladky1> - To See Episodes Of Its Popular Cable TV Show! Also, Listen to a Fair Housing Radio Show - <http://www.gbchrb.org/2rad9899.htm> - Click on any show you would like, including foreclosure problems, Baltimore racial history, Fair Housing laws, disability issues, mortgage lending discrimination. Also, [contact us](#) for FREE Fair Housing info, brochures, & posters in English, Spanish, Korean, and Russian, as well as one specifically for people with disabilities.



## NATIONAL NEWS...

### U. S. Senate Votes to Add Sexual Orientation to Hate Crime Protection.

The bill would also permit the Justice Department to intervene in hate crime cases on the local level if adequate resources were not available for a successful prosecution. To address the conservative objection that the bill could be used to stop speaking out in objection to gay rights, a provision was added forbidding prosecution for using the right of free speech. (New York *Times*, July 18, 2009:A11, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/18/us/politics/18hate.html>).

### Largest Classified Advertiser Sues for Discrimination Against Families with Children.

The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) and its member organization Fair Housing Council of Central California (FHCCC) filed a housing discrimination lawsuit against the nation's largest classified advertisement publisher, American Classifieds, LLC for publishing housing ads that state children are not allowed. It is alleged that American Classifieds published discriminatory housing advertisements in violation of the federal Fair Housing Act and California's Fair Housing and Employment Act. NFHA filed the lawsuit after a year-long investigation that uncovered over 60 discriminatory advertisements in 17 of the states where American Classifieds does business. (NFHA Press Release, July 9, 2009; <http://www.nationalfairhousing.org/>)



**The 2009 Fair Housing Trends Report of the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) Finds Discrimination is Increasing.** Major findings were: (1) More cases of discrimination in mortgage lending occurred than ever: 1,499 in 2008, 1,245 in 2007; HUD began 4 investigations into lending discrimination in 2007 and 60 in 2008, DOJ one fair lending case. (2) As Fair Housing organizations processed double the complaints of all government agencies combined, 2008 saw the highest ever complaints, 30,758, with private groups processing 20,173, HUD 2,123, and state and local agencies 8,429. DOJ filed 33 Fair Housing cases in 2008. (3) With the internet rapidly being used to begin most housing transactions, online discriminatory ads are increasing; NFHA filed more than 300 complaints of such discrimination with HUD last year. (4) Most ads discriminate against families with children, with an increase in 2007-08. (NFHA Release, May 1, 2009; <http://www.nationalfairhousing.org/>)

**HUD & Fair Housing Partners Report Record Number Of Housing Discrimination Complaints in FY2008: Over 10,000 Complaints Filed, Most Alleging Disability Discrimination.** Some 10,552 fair housing discrimination complaints were filed in FY2008, according to a report released by HUD. The report, done annually for Congress, found 44% were filed by persons with disabilities. Some 35%, or 3,699, of the complaints alleged discrimination based on race. The report describes HUD's enforcement activities that resulted in housing and monetary relief for individuals subjected to illegal discrimination, as well as fines and required education for entities charged with discrimination. Some examples: (a) HUD got a loan modification for a Hispanic couple including forgiveness of the second loan, about \$75,000; provision of a 5 percent fixed interest-rate mortgage; and waiver of all closing costs, points, and fees associated with the loan modification; (b) a \$20,000 settlement for a mother who was denied the opportunity to rent a house because she had a child, and (c) a \$40,000 settlement for a family with a disability that was denied a reasonable accommodation for their child; \$2,500 was donated to an autism group and another \$2,500 to an early childhood development center. To read the annual *State of Fair Housing* report, visit [HUD's website](#).

**New HUD Assistant Secretary for FH & EO is John Trasviña.** Confirmed unanimously by the Senate on May 1st, Trasviña previously was President and General Counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). There he led the "law firm for the Latino community" by advancing litigation and public policy in the areas of civil rights, immigration, education, and other issues. Trasviña began his career at MALDEF in Washington, DC, as a legislative attorney in 1985, and later worked for U.S. Senator Paul Simon as General Counsel and Staff Director for the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution. In 1997, President Clinton appointed Trasviña as Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices, where he was the highest ranking Latino attorney at Justice. He also has taught immigration law at Stanford and was Director of the Discrimination Research Center in Berkeley. [Read his full HUD biography.](#)



**HUD and National Fair Housing Alliance Roll Out Media Campaign To Fight Foreclosures And Discrimination.** On June 8th, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan and the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) announced a joint national media campaign to fight foreclosures and discrimination by providing education on alternatives to foreclosure, how to avoid predatory loan

terms, and how to recognize and report rental discrimination. The campaign includes print ads and posters on foreclosure prevention, predatory lending and rental discrimination in English, Spanish, and Chinese; television PSAs in English and Spanish; radio PSAs in English and Spanish; a movie slide; and an airport diorama. Some 26 products with some variations in English, Spanish, and Chinese will be produced. NFHA's members, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, and other advocacy groups will assist with distributing the materials. [Read the HUD press release.](#)

**Recession Slows Migration From Mexico.** Census data from the Mexican government show a sharp decrease in Mexican immigrants going to the US. About 226,000 fewer people emigrated from Mexico to other countries during 2008 than during the previous year, a 25% decline. All but a small fraction of emigration, both legal and illegal, from Mexico is to the United States. Because of surging immigration, the Mexican-born population in the United States has increased since the early 1990s, with a slight decline after Sept. 11, 2001. Researchers say that the current decline, accompanied by a decrease in arrests along the border, is mostly because of the lack of jobs in the ailing American economy. [Read the full article.](#)



**Demos Issues "The State of the Middle Class," Finding Economic Pressures Increasing.** The report by Jennifer Wheary, Thomas M. Shapiro, and Tatjana Meschede found it is increasingly difficult for Americans to get and retain a middle-class life. The costs of homeownership, healthcare, and a college education have soared, and incomes have leveled. According to the "Middle Class Security Index," a measure developed by Demos and the Institute on Assets and Social Policy, Brandeis University, fewer than one third of middle-income families were securely in the middle class in 2006, while a quarter were at high risk of falling out of the middle class. [Download the PDF.](#)



## JUSTICE DEPARTMENT NEWS...

**Department Resolves Lawsuit Alleging Disability-Based Housing Discrimination At Four Multifamily Housing Complexes In Spokane County, Washington.** On May 26, 2009, the Court entered a [consent decree](#) resolving *United States v. Lanzce Douglass, et al.* (E.D. Wa.). The [complaint](#), which was filed on September 25, 2007, alleged discrimination on the basis of disability in the design/construction of four multifamily housing complexes in the Spokane area in violation of the federal Fair Housing Act. Under the settlement, the defendants will pay all costs related to making the apartment complexes accessible to persons with disabilities and will pay \$120,000 to compensate individuals harmed. Also, the developer will pay a \$10,000 civil penalty and most of the defendants will undergo training on the requirements of the Fair Housing Act.

**Justice Department Sues Garner, North Carolina, For Disability Discrimination.** On May 19, 2009, the United States filed a [complaint](#) against the Town of Garner, North Carolina and the Town's Board of Adjustment. According to the Justice release: "The complaint alleges that the Town violated the Fair Housing Act when it refused to allow up to eight men recovering from drug and alcohol addictions to live together as a reasonable accommodation for their disabilities."

The lawsuit also alleges that the defendants have engaged in a denial of rights to a group of persons or a pattern or practice of discrimination by failing or refusing to recognize their obligation to make reasonable accommodations. The home is chartered by Oxford House, Inc., a non-profit organization that assists in the development of self-governing houses in which persons in recovery support one another's determination to remain sober. Garner permits up to six persons to live in the home, but has refused to consider requests by Oxford House Inc. to increase the number to eight. The case was referred to the Division after the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) received a complaint, conducted an investigation and issued a charge of discrimination." [Read the full Justice Department Press Release.](#)

**Religious Steering Case Settled.** On April 30, 2009, the court entered a [consent decree](#) in *United States v. Triple H. Realty* (D. N.J.). The [complaint](#) alleged that the defendants tried to force Hispanic and African-American tenants to transfer from one building to another to make room for Orthodox Jews whom were courted as tenants in 2002-2004. The complaint also alleged that the buildings in which non-Jewish tenants lived were in the rear of the property and had fewer amenities and were less well maintained than buildings at the front of the property that housed the new Jewish tenants. The Justice Department also alleged that the incoming Jewish tenants paid less rent than non-Jewish tenants for comparable apartments. According to the consent decree, the defendants are required to pay \$170,000 to identified victims and \$30,000 as a civil penalty.



## LENDING & FORECLOSURE NEWS...

**U. S. Treasury, The Department Of Justice, The Federal Trade Commission, And HUD Start Joint Effort To Fight Mortgage And Foreclosure Scams.** The administration's \$75 billion effort to help nine million mortgage holders get new or refinanced loans is drawing increasing interest from homeowners - as well as scam artists, according to Treasury Department officials. "Those who would seek to prey on the most vulnerable also seek to intensify their efforts as well," Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said. "We will aggressively pursue those involved in mortgage rescue scams." State attorneys general will also work on the project. The Treasury's financial crimes investigative unit is sending financial institutions a checklist to help them spot suspicious loan activity and foreclosure rescue scams. As an example of the level of scam activity, the Federal Trade Commission reviewed online and print advertising for mortgage foreclosure companies nationwide and found "71 distinct companies running suspicious ads," according to the Treasury Department. Resultingly, the FTC has filed five civil cases against companies offering loan modification or foreclosure services, including one against a company that spent \$9 million on TV and radio ads in under a year. [Read the full CNN Money article here.](#)

**Treasury Releases Capital Purchase Program Monthly Lending Report Data.** On June 1st, the U.S. Department of the Treasury released data from its first Capital Purchase Program (CPP) Monthly Lending Report. According to Treasury: "The CPP Monthly Lending Report includes all participants in the CPP and will be published regularly in addition to the Monthly Lending and Intermediation Snapshot of the top 21 CPP participants, which Treasury first released in January, 2009. The Lending Report will report on a monthly basis the average outstanding

balances of consumer loans, commercial loans, and total loans from all CPP participants. The first Monthly Lending Report includes data from 500 banks for the period of February and March, 2009, and information from the snapshot for the top 21 participants. The report found the total average outstanding loans for all CPP participants were \$5,279 billion in February and \$5,237 billion in March. Treasury launched the Monthly Lending Report and the Monthly Lending and Intermediation Snapshot in January in order to provide increased insight into trends in lending by making new information available about loans outstanding from CPP institutions. Through the CPP, the Treasury invests in viable banks to stabilize the financial system by building up the capital bases of banks, enabling continued lending and economic recovery. Since creating the CPP in October, 2008, Treasury has invested in more than 600 banks of all sizes in 48 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia." [Read the full Treasury release.](#)

**Insurance Costs Rise, Despite Falling Values.** According to a report reprinted in the national Realtors [website](#), the cost of homeowners insurance is not decreasing despite the large declines in sale prices. "There has been a lot of noise lately around market values, but market value and the cost to rebuild are two totally different things," says Elaine Baisden, vice president of national property for property casualty insurer Travelers. Marshall & Swift, which calculates building costs, says it can cost 30% more to rebuild than to build. Reconstruction costs are greater because of demolition and removal expenses and the price of bringing older structures up to current codes. While mortgage companies require borrowers to carry 100% coverage at time of closing, it is unnecessary to continue this coverage because the value of the land isn't at risk. Typically, the building lot accounts for 25% of a home's value. *Source: United Feature Syndicate, Lew Sichelman (06/12/2009)*

**The National Community Reinvestment Coalition's (NCRC) nationwide "Day of Action" Was Held on June 11th. Actions in Over 50 Cities Called for Job Creation, Foreclosure Prevention, and Community Rebuilding.** Community organizers held rallies and public events calling for greater accountability and integrity in the US financial system, highlights the damage to communities as a result of the economic crisis, supports legislative reforms to create jobs, stop foreclosures and rebuild communities and supports the passage of the Community Reinvestment Modernization Act of 2009 (HR 1479). "The current crisis demonstrates that consumer protections are integrally linked with the safety and soundness of the financial system. As the government has propped up financial institutions with trillions of dollars in investments, loans and guarantees, it has not done enough to not protect working Americans from foreclosure and job loss, or to prevent this crisis from occurring again," said John Taylor, president & CEO of [NCRC](#).

## **LOCAL NEWS...**

**The Annual GBBR Realtor Fair is October 22, 2009.** The annual Realtor Fair is the largest real estate showcase in the area. This year's event will be held at Martin's West on Thursday, October 22nd. For more info, contact the Greater Baltimore Board of Realtors at 410-337-7200 or go to their website at <http://www.gbbr.org/>.

**The Baltimore Metro Area Ranks 9th in Home Appreciation In Past 10 Years.** The analysis of the first quarter of 2009 by the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) was reported in Bizjournals. The FHFA, which tracks millions of mortgages purchased or securitized by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, calculated quarterly price indexes for single-family homes in 384 metropolitan areas, based on repeat sales or refinancings of units in its database of 36 million houses. (<http://www.gbbr.org/news/index.php?story=139>)



## **DID YOU KNOW?**

**Disability Rights Online News is a Great Resource for Disability News. Check it out:** <http://www.ada.gov/disabilitynews.htm>. In its April issue, the bi-monthly update about the Civil Rights Division's activities in the area of disability rights features info about the [ADA](#), [Fair Housing](#), [ADA Mediation](#), and [ADA Outreach](#).

**HUD and the Treasury Department Have Two New Websites to Help Homeowners with Foreclosure Prevention.** The website <http://www.makinghomeaffordable.gov/> has a self-assessment for eligibility, help in locating a housing counseling agency, loan look-up, contacting a mortgage servicer, resources, and more. The other - <http://www.financialstability.gov/> - defines financial terms, discusses relevant regulations, lists local projects of the Capital Purchase Program, etc.

**The GBCHRB Has Brochures, Self-Help Guides To Fair Housing, Curricula For Renting & Buying Housing, And Much More For No Cost!** Contact us at: 410-453-9500 / 800-895-6302 / [wkladky@gbchrb.org](mailto:wkladky@gbchrb.org).

**Do You Need Help or Info About Avoiding Foreclosure?** Contact <http://www.mdhope.org>.

**The GBCHRB's Neighborhood Beat TV Show Is on Cable Stations Across Maryland!** Hosted by Dr. Bill Kladky of the GBCHRB, the 30-minute interview show runs in Baltimore City, the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, Calvert, St. Mary's, Talbot, Prince George's, and Montgomery, and the City of Takoma Park. Call 410-453-9500 / [wkladky@gbchrb.org](mailto:wkladky@gbchrb.org) for days and time, or go to the GBCHRB's website YouTube Channel - <http://www.youtube.com/user/wkladky1> - to see episodes of the show.

**Check Out These Interesting Web Videos On Fair Housing...** View on FORA.tv a Shabbat in Commemoration of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King taped at the Sixth and I Historic Synagogue: [here](#). See a FORA.TV Taping Of A Lecture and Discussion On "The History Of The Race Issue": [http://fora.tv/2007/03/26/History\\_of\\_the\\_Black-White\\_Race\\_Issue](http://fora.tv/2007/03/26/History_of_the_Black-White_Race_Issue). Don't Forget: Youtube As A Lot Of Fair Housing Videos, From PSAs To Snippets Of Everything: [http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_type=&search\\_query=fair+housing&aq=f](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_type=&search_query=fair+housing&aq=f)

## **INTERESTING BOOKS...**

Leonard W. Levy, *Origins of the Bill of Rights*. New Haven: Yale University, 2001. paper.

\$15.95. Levy devotes chapters to important protections: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, habeas corpus, prohibitions on bills of attainder, etc. Each topic has its sources, English common law, Enlightenment philosophy, colonial state constitutions, the social and historical forces that influenced the evolution of each right.

Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009. 512 pp. \$30.00. hardcover. Excellent history of exploitative real estate sales to African Americans during the 1940s through 1960s. The focus is on the author's father's struggle to maintain his housing values in a neighborhood under attack. Recommended.

## **REST IN PEACE...**

**Jack Kemp, Star on Field and in Politics, Dies at 73.** Jack Kemp, the former football star turned Congressman, was Secretary of HUD under the first President George Bush and the Republican vice-presidential nominee in 1996. His passing was mourned by a number of Fair Housing groups and organizations. In his 18 years in the House and thereafter, Kemp tried to get his party to seek more support from blacks and other minorities. “The party of Lincoln,” he wrote after the 2008 election, “needs to rethink and revisit its historic roots as a party of emancipation, liberation, civil rights and equality of opportunity for all.”

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/03/us/03kemp.html>)