



FAIR HOUSING NEWS

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



SUMMER GREETINGS!

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NATIONAL NEWS

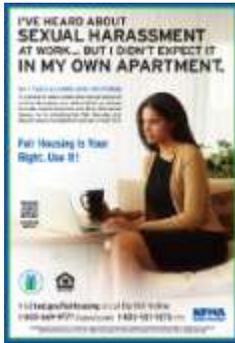
Federal Judge Dismisses Lawsuit Accusing HUD Secretary of Dismantling Obama-era Fair Housing Law. The judge found that the plaintiffs, three housing advocacy nonprofit groups, failed to prove sufficiently that they were harmed by HUD's suspension of an Obama-era rule requiring communities to address housing

discrimination. The plaintiffs alleged that HUD's action relieved local governments from being required to use the computer assessment tool for analysis of housing patterns, concentrated poverty, and disparities in access to transportation, jobs, and good schools. The localities were to identify the specific barriers in their jurisdiction, and fix them. Fair housing advocates said the ruling allows HUD to go back to an enforcement system that has failed to improve Fair Housing in the communities getting federal housing funds. As a result, HUD will continue to fund places like Zanesville, Ohio, which denied water services to communities of color, and Houston, where black and Latino neighborhoods have poor drainage services. Upon receiving their favorable ruling, HUD then announced it will amend existing fair housing regulations to ones that will " (1) minimize regulatory burden while more effectively aiding program participants to meet their statutory obligations, (2) create a process focused primarily on accomplishing positive results, rather than on analysis, (3) provide for greater local control and innovation, (4) seek to encourage actions that increase housing choice, including through greater housing supply, and (5) more efficiently utilize HUD resources."

[Read the August 18, 2018 Washington Post article.](#) [Read the August 22, 2018 HUD press release.](#)

DOJ and HUD Launch Public Awareness Campaign with Victims of Sexual Harassment in Housing. It has released a public service announcement (PSA) to raise awareness and reach victims of sexual harassment in housing. In the 60-second PSA, three female victims in DOJ





sexual harassment lawsuits under the Fair Housing Act share their experiences and say that sexual harassment in housing is a violation of civil rights. DOJ and HUD will distribute the PSA. It is posted on the DOJ's YouTube channel and HUD's YouTube channel. One victim in the video had a landlord who threatened to evict her if she did not have sex with him. "It was something that I didn't want to do but I had to do it. I didn't know I had a choice at that time, but now that I do, I want other people to know that they do. [I want] other women to know that they don't have to take this. This is just uncalled for. It's unspeakable." HUD has distributed the video all Public Housing Agencies. It will air in all national media markets, be distributed by social media to DOJ and HUD followers, and

publicized by other government agencies, partners, and organizations. The PSA also will be given to fair housing groups, legal aid organizations, and other partners. [Read the July 23, 2018 DOJ press release.](#)

The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Honors August 6th as the 53rd Voting Rights Act Anniversary.

Its Chairman, Congressman Cedric L. Richmond (D-LA-02), as well as the CBC Voting Rights Task Force co-chairs, Congressman G. K. Butterfield (D-NC-01) and

Congresswoman Terri Sewell (D-AL-07) released the following statement recognizing August 6th as the 53rd anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965: "The Voting

Rights Act is one of the most important pieces of civil rights legislation in American history, ensuring all Americans have an equal opportunity to participate in our country's democratic process. However, since the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which gutted a key part of the Voting Rights Act, voting rights have been under attack. States across the country continue to pass laws that suppress the African-American vote, including strict voter ID laws, political and racial gerrymandering, and the purging of voters from rolls. American voters have a harder time casting a ballot in 2018 than they did a decade ago. These laws intentionally target marginalized communities, silencing the voices of eligible voters who have a right to engage in our democracy. This past June, experts in election law provided evidence of voter suppression to Members of Congress during a panel hosted by the Congressional Black Caucus Voting Rights Task Force. As the Senate considers the



confirmation of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court, let us be reminded that the rights of African Americans to fully participate in democracy and every facet of social and economic life are at stake. The next Supreme Court justice will play a critical role in determining whether the Court will further roll back voting rights, and Judge Kavanaugh has demonstrated a complete lack of commitment to protecting free and fair elections. It has been 53 years since the passage of the Voting Rights Act and the struggle to realize

the right to vote for every American is more urgent than ever. As we recognize the anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, we renew our call on the Republican-led Congress to pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act and protect the right to vote for every American." [Read the August 6, 2018 CBC article.](#)

UN Official Criticizes US for Human Rights Council Withdrawal and Failure to Address US Poverty. The human rights expert presented a damning report into how the current US administration is not tackling



poverty. The Report by Philip Alston, the special consultant on extreme poverty and human rights, found that “40 million Americans live in poverty and 18.5 million of those live in extreme poverty. In addition, vast numbers of middle class Americans are perched on the edge, with 40% of the adult population saying they would be unable to cover an unexpected \$400 expense.” He also criticized the US ambassador to the UN for saying the 47-nation council was a “cesspool of bias” as part of the withdrawal announcement. Austin replied that she should be paying attention to problems in the US. “Speaking of cesspools, my report draws attention to those that I witnessed in Alabama, as raw sewage poured into the gardens of people who could never afford to pay \$30,000 for their own septic systems in an area remarkably close to the State capital... When one of the world's wealthiest countries does very little about the fact that 40 million of its citizens live in poverty, it is entirely appropriate for the reasons to be scrutinized,” he said. [Read the June 22, 2018 London Independent article.](#)



MORTGAGE LENDING NEWS

Payday-Loan Mogul Indicted for Masterminding Phantom Debt Scheme. The mogul allegedly made up millions of fake debts and sold them to bill collectors, victimizing people across the US.

“Tucker defrauded third-party debt collectors and millions of individuals listed as debtors through the sale of falsified debt portfolios,” read the indictment delivered in Kansas City, Missouri. “These portfolios were false in that Tucker did not have chain of title to the debt, the loans were not necessarily true debts, and the dates, amounts and lenders were inaccurate and in some case fictional.” His brother was sentenced in January to 16 years in prison for an unrelated payday-loan scheme, having made so much that he funded his own professional Ferrari racing team. The brother was convicted of systematically violating state laws by charging interest as much as 1,000 percent annually. [Read the July 2, 2018 Bloomberg.com article.](#)

Wells Fargo lays off Over 600 mortgage workers. The home lending business has struggled as rising interest rates hurt refinancing demand. Wells Fargo’s mortgage banking income fell 33 percent in the second quarter from a year earlier. The latest cuts were mainly to retail fulfillment and servicing jobs, Goyda said, reflecting a continued slump in application volumes. While 42 employees in Frederick, Maryland, will be let go, cuts are concentrated in Orlando, Florida; Ranch Cordova, California; Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Charlotte, North Carolina. The bank currently does not plan for additional layoffs in Maryland. Wells Fargo has said it will cut \$4 billion in costs by 2020 to increase profits as it operates under a Federal Reserve penalty for malfeasance.. Wells Fargo is Greater Baltimore's fourth-largest bank with \$7.2 billion in local deposits as 2017, according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. [Read the August 24, 2018 Reuters.com article.](#) [Read the August 28, 2018 Baltimore Business Journal article.](#)



MARYLAND NEWS

After Almost Sixty Years of Accomplishment, Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc. (BNI), a Leading Fair Housing Advocate, Ceases Operations. From their [August 2, 2018 press release](#): " It is

with great sadness that the BNI board came to the decision to close the organization, especially given its long, proud history and the ongoing needs in the community for its services,” Robert Pierson, BNI's Board Chair, remarked... “While we had all hoped to see BNI through to its next chapter, it became clear that the organization faced insurmountable obstacles to its continued operation,” John Herron, interim Executive Director, stated. “The board wishes to express its deep gratitude to BNI’s very talented staff, who demonstrate their commitment and tireless devotion to housing justice in the work they do every day for BNI,” continued Robert Pierson. “The board remains committed to helping BNI’s staff through this difficult transition and hopes BNI’s partners will continue the vital work to promote justice in housing.” Founded in 1959, BNI fought for housing justice, handled thousands of housing discrimination complaints and counseled callers with a busy tenant/ landlord hotline. Tenants and landlords can get services through the Maryland District Court Self-Help Resource Center at <https://www.courts.state.md.us/legalhelp/districtctselfhelpctr>, telephone 410.260.1392.

Study Finds Regional Coordination Between Governments is Lacking in the Baltimore Area.

In their review of the HUD-funded Opportunity Collaborative consortium's 2015 Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (released after Freddie Gray's death), the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education (University of Maryland) included participants, governments, nonprofits, and experts. Among the findings were that significant progress toward housing equity is minimal because governments will not cooperate to enact policy changes like the HOME Act, which would have eliminated housing discrimination based on source of income. The failure of regional transportation projects, like the withdrawn Red Line, have severely hampered low-income neighborhoods. Growth remains very unequal, politicians concentrate only on their own jurisdictions, and regional coordination to address problems is almost non-existent. The result is that the region lags in several areas and the problems persist. [Read the July 29, 2018 Baltimore Sun article.](#)



Dan Rodricks Reminds Baltimore that a "Big-Think Regional Approach to Baltimore's Problems would pay off for Everyone Around Here."

In an essay, the Baltimore Sun columnist said that the late Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz did this when he urged county residents to patronize city restaurants and canceled the City's bill for police help in restoring order after the 2015 Penn-North protests and violence. Rodricks also cited research done by Johns Hopkins and Harvard sociologists that found that families with children who moved to low-poverty neighborhoods did economically and

socially better. This was true despite Baltimore having a very low rate of social mobility for those born in poverty. Also, University of Baltimore researchers discovered that improving public transportation and increasing affordable housing helped both low-income households and the total region. [Read the August 15, 2018 Baltimore Sun article.](#)



HUD & DOJ ENFORCEMENT

HUD Reaches Agreement With California Housing Providers Settling Claims Of Disability Discrimination.

The providers in Oakland and Santa Cruz, California, allegedly discriminated against an applicant with disabilities when they rejected her request

for modifications to a wheelchair accessible unit and instead rented it to a family that had applied at a later date and not needing the accessible features. The woman with a disability filed a complaint with HUD that she had been denied renting one of two wheelchair accessible units using her Housing Choice Voucher. Under the terms of the agreement, the providers will pay the woman \$7,500 and allow her to remain on the wait list for another accessible unit. They will modify their policies and procedures to make certain that the processing of a reasonable accommodation and/or modification request will not unreasonably delay a tenancy decision or skip over an applicant to be skipped for an available unit to rent to one who applied at a later date. The provider also will not rent an accessible unit to an applicant who does not need the unit's accessibility features when there is an application from an eligible qualified applicant with disabilities who needs these. [Read the agreement.](#) [Read the August 20, 2018 HUD press release.](#)

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Wins \$410,000 Settlement of Housing Discrimination Lawsuit Against Tinley Park, Illinois, for Disapproving a Low-Income Housing Development.

The northern suburb of Chicago violated the Fair Housing Act when it refused to approve in 2016 a low-income housing development in the face of race-based community opposition. This was despite the finding by the Tinley Park Planning Department that the project was in “precise conformance” with the applicable building rules. Under Tinley Park’s zoning ordinances, its Plan Commission should have approved the project and let construction begin. Instead, Tinley Park trustees requested the Plan Commission table its consideration of the project. The Plan Commission complied and thus ended the project. Under the settlement, the Village will pay \$360,000 in monetary damages to the Village’s former planning director who was put on leave because she supported the project, as well as a \$50,000 U.S. civil penalty. The Village also will train elected officials and individuals involved in the planning process, develop a fair housing policy, and hire a fair housing compliance officer. The property's developer made a separate settlement with the Village in 2017. [Read the August 24, 2018 DOJ press release.](#)



DOJ Files Sexual Harassment Lawsuit Against Owner of Cullman, Alabama, Rental Property.

The lawsuit alleges that the residential property owner and landlord in Cullman, Alabama, sexually harassed female tenants in violation of the Fair Housing Act. The owner allegedly demanded or pressured female tenants to engage in sexual acts with him in exchange for rent or to prevent eviction; evicting female tenants when they refused his advances; made female tenants feel unsafe by stalking them and entering their residences without permission; and made unwelcome sexual comments and advances. This lawsuit seeks monetary damages for the victims, civil penalties, and a court order against future discrimination. This lawsuit is part of DOJ's Sexual Harassment in Housing Initiative (SHHI) which was begun in October 2017 and went national in April 2018. DOJ has filed or settled 10 sexual harassment cases and has gotten over \$1.6 million for victims of sexual harassment in housing since January 20, 2017. [Read the July 9, 2018 DOJ press release.](#)

Missouri Man Sentenced to Two Years in Jail for Committing Hate Crimes.

The 50-year-old of Wright City, Missouri, was found guilty of "obstructing persons in the free exercise of religious beliefs, in violation of 18 U.S.C. 247(a)(2)." The judge lengthened the sentence because the man



selected victims based on their religion, which is a hate crime. Apparently, the man made many telephone calls to the Islamic Society of Augusta (ISA) during which he threatened to “kill,” “bomb,” “shoot,” “behead,” “slaughter,” “execute,” “light on fire,” and “murder” members of the mosque, to “hunt down” and “zone in” on Muslims, and to “blow up the mosque.” In response to the threats, the ISA improved their security system and hired off-duty police for extra security during services and community events. The court ordered the man to pay almost \$30,000 in restitution to cover those costs. [Read the July 24, 2018 DOJ press release.](#)



CALENDAR

The [Maryland ACLU](#) will hold its annual **Constitution Day forum on Women's Rights on September 20, 2018 in Baltimore**. The full topic is "Women's Rights in the Age of Gender Inequality, Me Too, and Trump." It will take place at Falvey Hall, MICA, on 1301 West Mount Royal Avenue. The panel includes Mónica Ramírez, an activist lawyer working especially for Latinas, farm workers, and immigrant women. Tickets are free, but RSVP is required. Contact Meredith Curtis Goode at curtis@aclu-md.org.

The [Baltimore City Office of Civil Rights](#) will hold its **27th Annual Civil Rights Breakfast on September 25, 2018 in Baltimore**. Going from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., the Breakfast will be at the Hilton Baltimore Hotel, 401 W. Pratt Street in Baltimore. Spoken Word Performance by Poet Lady Brion. Three awards will be presented: the Walter P. Carter Award to a Baltimore City Public School fifth grader who attends a Baltimore City Public School that exemplifies community engagement, leadership and a passion for Civil Rights; the Dr. Lenwood Ivey Award a City High School student who exemplifies community engagement, leadership and a passion for Civil Rights; and the JPC Award to a newly released Baltimore City resident. The keynote speaker will be Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, who is the 117th elected and consecrated bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. To complete the Registration Form, go [here](#). [Read more about Bishop McKenzie on the AME's Texas website.](#)



On September 27, 2018, "An Evening with the Arts" will be held by [Disability Rights Maryland](#) (DRM) at the [Baltimore Museum of Art](#). DRM and the community will honor and celebrate its 40 years serving Marylanders with disabilities. It will feature local arts groups with a variety of artists with and without disabilities. If you are interested in being a sponsor of DRM's 40th Anniversary Gala, call (410) 727-6352.

The **24th Annual Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Concert Against Hate** will be held on **November 8, 2018**. Featuring

the National Symphony Orchestra, the event will be at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., from 8:30 p.m. Preceding it will be the Kay Family Award Reception and Dinner at 5:30 p.m., followed by the NextGen Pre-Concert Reception at 7:00 p.m. Honorees will be Gavin Grimm (transgender rights advocate), Tolu Olubunmi (DREAMer and immigrant rights advocate), Ann



Jaffe (Holocaust survivor and educator), and Chief Louis M. Dekmar (bridge builder for racial reconciliation in the South). For more information: <http://adlconcert.org> or call 202.261.4635.

The [Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition](#) (MCRC) will hold an **Economic Summit & Consumer Celebration on November 15, 2018**. It will be at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 890 Elkrigde Landing Road, Linthicum Heights, Maryland 20190. This is Maryland's largest annual celebration of consumer rights and of Maryland's consumer protection heroes. There will be expert panels on student loans, older adults and economic security, furthering fair housing in Maryland, etc. The Consumer Celebration from 5:50-8:30 p.m. will include drinks, food, conversation, a silent auction, a speaker series, and more. Proceeds will benefit MCRC. [For more information.](#)



FAIR HOUSING RESOURCES

The July, 2018 Issue of HUD's *Cityscape* is a **Symposium on Connections Between Health and Housing**. As the editors' introduction states: "Historically, the housing-health nexus has been primarily associated with physical exposures and dilapidated housing; however, recent studies suggest that adverse health outcomes are also linked to housing rental assistance status, housing insecurity, a lack of affordable housing, and neighborhood quality." [Read the July, 2018](#)

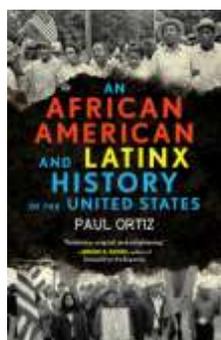
[Cityscape issue.](#)

Interested In Fair Housing? Community Development? Insurance? Foreclosure Prevention? Check Out the [GBCHRB's YouTube Channel!](#) You can watch interviews about insurance, discrimination, affordable housing, Fair Housing laws, disability issues, mortgage lending, and related. Our radio shows: <http://www.gbchr.org/2radio.htm>.

The GBCHRB Distributes Free Fair Housing Brochures, Posters, and Guides. We have Fair Housing information, brochures, guides, & posters in English, Spanish, Korean, Russian, and for people with disabilities. We also distribute brochures and guides about housing and insurance. 410.929.7640 or <mailto:wkladky@gbchr.org>.



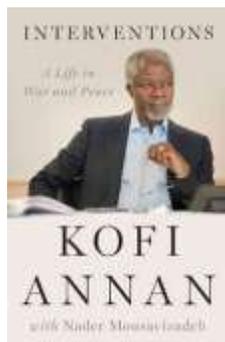
What Do You Think of This Newsletter? Is it good? Bad? How can we improve it? What issues should we cover more? Less? Any good ideas? Tips? Good jokes?! Positive or negative, we want to hear from you! We appreciate constructive criticism! Send comments to <mailto:wkladky@gbchr.org>.



HAVE YOU READ?

***An African American and Latinx History of the United States* by Paul Ortiz.** Beacon Press, 2018. 296 pages. \$27.95, hardcover. This interesting history is told from the interconnected perspectives of Latinx and African Americans. The author argues that the "Global South" was crucial to American development. He "links racial segregation in the Southwest and the rise and violent fall of a powerful tradition of Mexican labor organizing in the twentieth century, to May 1, 2006, known as International Workers' Day, when migrant laborers—Chicana/os, Afrocubanos, and immigrants from every continent on earth—united in resistance on the first "Day

Without Immigrants.” As African American civil rights activists fought Jim Crow laws and Mexican labor organizers warred against the suffocating grip of capitalism, Black and Spanish-language newspapers, abolitionists, and Latin American revolutionaries coalesced around movements built between people from the United States and people from Central America and the Caribbean.” It is stressed that advocates must build bridges with other nations of the Americas.



REST IN PEACE

Kofi A. Annan, United Nations Diplomat, 80. A Ghanaian, Annan was the Secretary-General on the United Nations (UN) from 1997-2006. Annan and the UN received the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize for reviving the UN and emphasizing human rights. Formerly with the World Health Organization, Annan was remembered as a strong advocate for peace, development, and human rights. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the UN General Assembly, remembered him: "He dedicated his life to making the world a better, more peaceful, and just place for all people. And in many ways, he is a symbol for the shared values of the United Nations." Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said Annan is simply "irreplaceable." Annan's memoir *Interventions: A Life in War and Peace* (Penguin Press, 2012) is well worth reading. [Read the August 18, 2018 London Guardian obituary.](#)

Dr. Dorothy Cotton, Civil Rights Leader, 88. Cotton was one of the few women with a prominent role in the Civil Rights movement. Part of the inner circle of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., she was the only women on the executive staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). As 1960-1968 SCLC education director, she helped organize many Southern marches and protests. Cotton began and led the SCLC's citizenship education program about voting rights and civil rights movement leadership and action (e.g., sit-ins, registration drives, demonstrations). She also served as the Southeastern Regional Director of ACTION during Jimmy Carter's presidency, worked for Cornell University, and received many honors. [Read the August 14, 2018 New York Times obituary.](#) [Read the June 13, 2018 Smithsonian Magazine article](#)



Robert Ellis Smith, Civil Rights Journalist, 77. Smith covered the South during the 1960s with the weekly *Southern Courier* (1965-1968) in Montgomery, Alabama. Upset by the September 15, 1963 Sunday school bombing in Birmingham, he founded the paper to report on events of the civil rights movement that mainstream media did not. The *Courier* was funded by two Northern foundations, mail subscriptions outside the South, and street and door-to-door sales in Alabama and Mississippi. Also writing for three other newspapers, Smith was a civil rights official with the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (now Health and Human Services). He also served on the District of Columbia's Human Rights Commission. [Read the August 9, 2018 Washington Post.](#)