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### Monroe Woman Wins Discrimination Lawsuit



Cicily Pippens didn't get to rent the W. Eighth St. property she was interested in inhabiting. However, the Monroe mother of two recently received a \$ 20,000 settlement from landlord Mildred Trkula for her rental application denial after filing a housing discrimination lawsuit.

Ms. Pippens, according to a Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan release, reported that the agent at the Monroe property took a rental application away from her after the agent learned that she had two children. She has a 9-year old daughter and 1-year-old son.

"That's a pretty fair settlement for a fair housing case," said Pam Kisch, executive director of the FHC. "The message for tenants is that you have the right to live where you want to live whether you have kids or not. The message for landlords is to make sure you read the Fair Housing Act and understand the rules.'

Ms. Kisch said this is the fifth settlement recorded in Monroe for fair housing violations since 2001. The others ranged between \$20,000 and \$40,000, and one amount was not disclosed.

The FHC investigated Ms. Pippens' claim by sending testers acting as potential home seekers at various times during one month earlier this year. The results of the testing led the organization to strongly support the discrimination claim based on familial status.

Ms. Pippens contacted the FHC in January and FHC cooperating attorney Steve Tomkowiak filed the law suit in U.S. Federal District Court March 5. The case was assigned to Judge Victoria A. Roberts.

Ms. Kisch noted that pregnant mothers also are discriminated against in housing searches.

"Call us if you think you've been victims of housing discrimination," she said.

Call (877) 979-3247 for information from the FCH, which serves Washtenaw, Ingham, Monroe, Livingston, Jackson and Lenawee counties.

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