



HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES MADE EQUAL

"Ensuring equal access to housing for all people through counseling, education, and advocacy"

H:O:M:E

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Press Release

Fair Housing Complaint Filed Against **The City of Manassas**

Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Inc. announced today that it has filed a fair housing complaint against the City of Manassas for the adoption and enforcement of an ordinance defining "family" in a way that limits the ability of Latino households to live in Manassas.

"The City of Manassas has tried for several years to find ways to limit the number of Hispanic residents. This ordinance was not only designed to achieve that goal, but enforcement of the ordinance was overwhelmingly directed at Hispanic households" according to Constance Chamberlin, President of HOME. "HOME has spent more than a decade educating the community about occupancy standards and the importance of making sure that they are not culturally biased. The Manassas ordinance is not designed to address health and safety issues. It is intended to limit the ability of a particular group of people to live in the city. That is not only a violation of the law, but completely contrary to the values upon which this country was founded."

The complaint was filed today with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Virginia Fair Housing Office. It requests that the City of Manassas be directed to take all affirmative steps necessary to remedy the effect of the illegal, discriminatory conduct and to prevent similar occurrences in the future; that HOME be awarded damages for the frustration of its mission and diversion of its resources caused by the City's actions; that Manassas be assessed a civil penalty; and that HOME's attorneys fees in connection with this matter be paid.

HOME is a fair housing and housing counseling organization founded in 1971 that works throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia to ensure equal access to housing for all people through counseling, education, and advocacy. HOME provides education, training and planning assistance to local governments to help ensure that housing is offered on an equal basis, training and technical assistance to the housing industry to promote compliance with the fair housing laws, and a wide range of programs designed to help individuals and families improve their housing and give them access to neighborhoods with good schools and access to jobs.

For more information on HOME, visit www.phonehome.org