



For Immediate Release

Leah Maddox, Equal Rights Center, 202.370.3227

lmaddox@equalrightscenter.org

Equal Rights Center Files Discrimination Suit Against Owner and Manager of Fieldpointe Apartments *Apartments in Frederick County, MD, Charged with Discriminating Against Latinos*

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 27, 2010 – Today, the [Equal Rights Center](http://www.equalrightscenter.org) (ERC), a national non-profit civil rights organization, filed suit against Richman Property Services, Inc., and Carrollton Associates Limited Partnership, alleging that they have engaged in discrimination on the basis of national origin against prospective Latino tenants at Fieldpointe Apartments in Frederick, MD.

“The debate over immigration has unfortunately resulted in more discrimination against Latinos in general—irrespective of their immigrant status,” said ERC Executive Director, Don Kahl. “This form of illegal discrimination does more than act as a barrier to where a family chooses to live; it also has an impact on the family’s health, security, and economic well-being.”

According to the complaint filed on October 27, in U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland, Richman Property and Carrollton Associates treated Latino prospective tenants at Fieldpointe Apartments less favorably than white prospective tenants by offering less favorable terms, conditions, and privileges, and by failing to make certain apartments available for rental to Latinos while making the units available to white prospective tenants. These actions are in direct violation of the Fair Housing Act, a federal law that prohibits discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, and in other housing-related transactions based on certain personal attributes, including race, color and national origin.

“The Fair Housing Act has been in place for more than 40 years and requires that potential applicants for housing be treated fairly and without discrimination based on their national origin,” said one of the attorneys for the ERC, Megan Whyte, Director of the Fair Housing Project at the Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs. “The alleged discrimination by the defendants at Fieldpointe Apartments is unacceptable and we hope this lawsuit sends the message that all persons have the right to fair housing without discrimination on the basis of their national origin.”

Frederick County, Maryland, has experienced an increase in the Latino population from 2.4% of the total population in 2000, to 6.3% of the total population in 2009. Through outreach work conducted in Frederick County, the ERC became aware of an increase in complaints of discriminatory treatment based on national origin. As a result, the ERC conducted an investigation to determine if Latinos faced illegal discrimination when seeking rental housing. Today’s lawsuit is a result of that investigation.

Earlier this year, the ERC released a report documenting discrimination against Latinos seeking housing in Frederick County, [“Fair Housing for All: The Disparate Response to Latino Housing in Frederick County, MD.”](#) and has participated in several meetings and outreach events in the county to address and remediate the discrimination

Specifically, with respect to the ERC’s investigation at Fieldpointe, the ERC found, among other things, that the defendants:

- Denied the availability of apartments to Latino persons while telling white persons about available apartments;
- Offered rental incentives to white persons while failing to offer those incentives to Latino persons;
- Offered more favorable security, lease, and application terms to white persons than to Latino persons; and
- Offered more housing options to white persons than to Latino persons.

The ERC is represented by the Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs, a civil rights organization, and the law firm, Dickstein Shapiro, LLP.

###

About the Equal Rights Center (www.equalrightscenter.org)

Originally formed in 1983, the Equal Rights Center (ERC) is a national non-profit civil rights organization based in Washington, D.C. With members located in 33 states and the District of Columbia, the ERC works nationally to promote equal opportunity in housing, employment, disability rights, immigrant rights, and access to public accommodations and government services for all protected classes under federal, state, and local laws.

About the Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs (<http://www.washlaw.org>)

The Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs was established in 1968 to provide pro bono legal services to address issues of discrimination and entrenched poverty. Since its founding, the Committee has handled more than 5,000 cases on behalf of individuals and advocacy organizations in the areas of equal employment, fair housing, public accommodations, public education, asylum and refugee rights, and disability rights. For more information about the Committee, see www.washlaw.org. The Committee can be reached at 202.319.1000.