

HUD FIGHTS HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

**Sample Of Fair Housing Cases
September 1997-February 2000**

**Summary of Key Actions in Support of the Nation's Fair Housing Goals
September 1997-February 2000**

September 30, 1997

CLINTON ADMINISTRATION CRACKS DOWN ON HOUSING DISCRIMINATION WITH NEW CHARGES AND \$15 MILLION IN GRANTS

In conjunction with the White House Conference on Race Relations, Secretary Cuomo announces his commitment to "crack down" on housing discrimination and to double the number of enforcement actions taken by HUD during President Clinton's second term. Several victims of discrimination speak of their experiences at the announcement. Antonina Ippolito describes how a caller threatened to firebomb her home if she leased one of her rental properties to blacks or Hispanics. Mr. And Mrs. David Fernandez of Cardwell, Idaho, recount how they were prevented from purchasing a manufactured home from Mrs. Fernandez's father because the owner of the park, in which the witness, shown only in silhouette, describes how this former rental agent was instructed to code property listings with the word "Archie"- short for Archie Bunker - if the owner did not want blacks or Hispanics as tenants.

At the same event, HUD announces the release of \$15 million in grant money to private non-profit groups that fight housing discrimination at the community level.

October 13, 1997

HUD ACTION ON FOUR HOUSING DISCRIMINATION CASES FOLLOWS CRACKDOWN ANNOUNCESBY PRESIDENT

Following up on President Clinton's September 30th pledge, Secretary Cuomo announces the successful resolution of four complaints of race-based housing discrimination in Alabama, Pennsylvania, Arizona and California. Each complaint was resolved by means of a voluntary enforcement agreement. Damages paid to complainants ranged from \$3,000 to \$10,000. These agreements, which are enforced by the Department of Justice, provide relief to individuals injured by discrimination, give HUD greater

oversight into the operations of the housing provider or agent against whom the complaint was filed, and commit the provider or agent to non-discriminatory practices in the future.

October 21, 1997

HUD CRACKDOWN ON HOUSING DISCRIMINATION CONTINUES WITH CHARGES RISING OUT OF THREATS TO BLACK FAMILY IN WEST VIRGINIA

In Charleston, West Virginia, the Department announces the filing of charges against a white family for harassing their black neighbors by barricading the path leading to the black family's land, threatening members of the black family with a gun and a knife, and hanging black plastic ducks from a white cross mounted near the black family's land. Craig and Gloria Smith said members of the Hobbs family intimidated them and their three small children with threats of violence and racial slurs ever since they moved their modular home onto a piece of land adjoining the Hobb's property.

October 30, 1997

HUD AWARDS \$11.5 MILLION TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN 32 STATES TO FIGHT ILLEGAL HOUSING DISCRIMINATION; FILES CHARGES AGAINST IOWA LANDLORD WHO REFUSED TO RENT TO BLACKS

In Davenport, Iowa, Secretary Cuomo announces the award of \$11.5 Million to civil rights enforcement agencies in 32 states. The funds will support Fair Housing investigations and enforcement by state and local government partners around the country. The Secretary also announces that HUD will take legal action against Frank Quijas, a Davenport landlord who repeatedly turned away black apartment seekers, telling them that his lawyer told him that he "doesn't have to rent to blacks." Jacqueline Ash and Andre Echols, black apartment seekers who were discriminated against by Quijas, are being represented in a civil suit against Quijas by the Department.

November 7, 1997

HUD SETTLES HOUSING DISCRIMINATION CASE INVOLVING ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN GEORGIA

Secretary Cuomo announces the successful resolution of a complaint alleging that new multi-family housing built in Tucker, Georgia, was constructed without important accessibility features required by the Fair Housing Act. The builder of Bentley Place Apartments, Charlie Roberts, acknowledges that accessible housing "is the law of the land and...a reasonable law," and pledges to retro-fit the 228-unit complex to bring it into full compliance with the accessibility requirements of the Act. In addition, the builder agrees to pay \$4,000 to the fair housing advocacy group that identified the violations.

November 10, 1997

PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES “MAKE ‘EM PAY” CRACKDOWN, BOOSTING FINES FOR HOUSING DISCRIMINATION HATE ACTS

As part of his crackdown on hate crimes, President Clinton announces a five-part “Make ‘Em Pay” initiative to fight housing-related acts of hate, violence and intimidation with sharply higher fines and increased enforcement. The plan set forth by the President and Secretary Cuomo: Increases penalties for hate acts involving housing discrimination; Strengthens the partnership between HUD and the Department of Justice; Creates a closer relationship between HUD and non-federal civil rights agencies; Promises more training on the investigation and resolution of hate crime complaints; and Commits HUD to development of a new interactive site on its existing Web Page to make it easier to report hate crimes.

November 13, 1997

HUD FUNDED GROUP ANNOUNCES SETTLEMENT OF SUIT AGAINST LANDLORD CHARGED WITH EVICTING BLACK NUN BECAUSE OF HER RACE

Secretary Cuomo commends the Leadership Council of Chicago for their use of HUD funds to investigate and resolve a complaint filed by the Sisters of Providence after two nuns were evicted from a Chicago apartment, allegedly because one was black. Sister Kathleen Burke, who is white, describes how she had leased an apartment with another nun from Clarence and Eileen Jacobs for four years. After Burke’s roommate left, Phyllis Sheppard, a black psychologist and also a Sister of Providence at the time, moved in with Burke. When a member of the Jacobs family met Sheppard and became aware of he race, the nuns were abruptly told to vacate. The Jacobs agree to pay the Order an undisclosed sum in addition to the \$165,000 required to settle a related complaint filed before the city human relations commission.

November 15, 1997

HUD AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS JOIN FORCES TO PROMOTE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY & BOOST MINORITY HOMEOWNERSHIP UNDER PRESIDENT’S ONE AMERICA INITIATIVE

During the national convention of the National Association of Realtors in New Orleans, Secretary Cuomo and NAR sign a historic partnership agreement to promote equal housing opportunity and increase minority homeownership. The initiative creates a new training and certification program open to more than 1.5 million real estate professionals across the nation. NAR adopts President Clinton’s One America Logo for use by agents who are trained and certified in fair housing, committed to the principals of equal housing opportunities, and who have no fair housing violations filed against them.

November 25, 1997

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION CHARGES ARE FILED AGAINST OWNERS AND MANAGERS OF RICHMOND, VA, APARTMENT COMPLEX; MANAGER ALLEGEDLY SAID SHE WOULD KEEP "NIGGERS" OUT

In Richmond, Secretary Cuomo announces that HUD will file housing discrimination charges against the owners and managers of Wedgewood Village, an apartment complex in Richmond, Virginia, for refusing to rent to African Americans. HUD's uncovered black apartment-seekers who were provide false information to discourage them from applying to Wedgewood Village. White tenants told HUD that the on-site apartment manager, Rita Baines-Lewis boasted to them that she was "keeping the niggers out." The civil charges announcesare against Lewis, the apartment management company, and the owners of the apartments for discriminating against prospective black tenants. In addition, HUD issues an order barring Lewis from employment by any company that receives HUD housing assistance for one year.

DECEMBER 5, 1997

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION CHARGES ARE FILED AGAINST LOUISIANA APARTMENT OWNER

In Lake Charles, Louisiana, Secretary's Representative Betsy Julian announces the filing charges against Danny LeBlanc of Lake Charles for refusing to rent a studio apartment to Gene Lewis of Mossville because Lewis is African American. Lewis responded to an advertisement to see the studio apartment, located in a four-unit building, and was shown the unit by a woman who allegedly warned him that the owner told him, "I don't like to rent to you people ... brown, black, colored, whatever you call yourselves." Later, a representative from the community organization ACORN called and LeBlanc told him that an apartment was still available. The Department's investigation revealed that within 12 days of Lewis' initial call to LeBlanc, LeBlanc rented three units --- all to whites.

DECEMBER 15, 1997

JUSTICE TAKES ACTION ON HUD DISABILITY COMPLAINTS IN LAS VEGAS

Following an investigation conducted by HUD, the Department of Justice files a lawsuit against Rock Spring Vista Properties, the developers and architects of four housing developments in Las Vegas, Nevada, for allegedly failing to construct housing complexes that are accessible to persons with disabilities.

JANUARY 5, 1998

**HUD REACHES AGREEMENT WITH PINELLAS COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
OVER FAIR HOUSING LAW VIOLATIONS**

The Department announces that the Pinellas County Housing Authority in Florida has signed a voluntary compliance agreement to end housing discrimination uncovered by HUD investigators. The agreement commits the housing authority to take a series of actions over a five-year period to ensure that the Authority's minority and disabled residents get the same treatment, housing options, and level of services as majority residents. The Housing Authority has agreed to help move African American residents to predominately white housing and to reimburse residents with disabilities for improvements they made to their units.

HUD found that the Housing Authority had been excluding African Americans from predominantly white developments and also made residents with disabilities pay for their own access improvements, such as wheelchair ramps (PHAs are responsible for these costs). Since 1987, only four African American elderly families have lived in the Housing Authority's two elderly developments, and HUD also found a pattern of residential segregation at two of the family developments.

JANUARY 14, 1998

**IOWA LANDLORD ACCUSED OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGREES TO PAY
BLACKS \$24,000 AFTER HUD FILES CHARGES**

Secretary Cuomo announces that a Davenport landlord has agreed to pay three African Americans a total of \$24,000 to settle housing discrimination charges filed by HUD. Landlord Frank Quijas will pay each of the three \$8,000 to avoid further legal proceedings, Cuomo said. Quijas also agreed in the settlement to sell the three duplex apartments he now rents out and to leave the real estate business. In addition, Quijas agreed to apologize in writing to Jacqueline Ash, Andre Echols, and Tondalaya Williams all black resident of Davenport.

Ash, Echols, and Williams all said Quijas directly told them he would not rent to black tenants. During HUD's investigation, Quijas told investigators he had not rented to African Americans in about 25 years.

JANUARY 15, 1998

**INVESTIGATION IS LAUNCHED INTO ALLEGED WIDESPREAD "DISCRIMINATION
WITH A SMILE" IN CALIFORNIA APARTMENTS**

Secretary Cuomo launches an investigation of allegations of widespread housing discrimination by a Southern California property management company and owners of nine Orange County apartment complexes with over 1,300 units.

“Illegal actions alleged at these apartments involve discrimination with a smile,” Cuomo said. “Instead of telling people to their faces that minorities are unwelcome in an apartment complex, rental agents allegedly told some of them politely --- and falsely --- that no apartments were available or none would be available for several weeks.

JANUARY 19, 1998

VICE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES \$22 MILLION INCREASE PROPOSED BY CLINTON ADMINISTRATION TO FIGHT HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

Vice President Al Gore announces that President Clinton will propose a \$22 million budget increase for HUD to intensify the fight against housing discrimination. The increase, to be proposed in the president’s 1999 Federal Budget, would boost funding for HUD’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity to \$52 million from the current \$30 million - a 73 percent increase. The initiative is a primary element of the President’s “One America” policy to bring Americans together.

FEBRUARY 2, 1998

HUD SETTLES HOUSING DISCRIMINATION LAWSUIT INVOLVING DISABLED WOMEN IN ALABAMA

Secretary Cuomo announces a \$110,000 settlement of a housing discrimination lawsuit filed by a disabled Alabama woman who said her landlord refused to move her to an apartment that is wheelchair-accessible.

The woman, who asked not to be publicly identified, said she has been unable to enter the only bathroom of her apartment in Jemison since moving there in April 1995 because her wheelchair will not fit through the door. As a result, the woman has been dependent on her two teenage daughters to help her meet her personal hygiene needs outside the bathroom.

FEBRUARY 12, 1998

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION CHARGES ARE FILED AGAINST TEXANS ACCUSED OF REFUSING TO RENT APARTMENTS TO BLACKS

Secretary Cuomo announces filing of housing discrimination charges against the manager and owners of two Austin, Texas, apartment complexes, accusing them of falsely telling an African American man that no apartments were available at the same time apartments were being rented to whites.

Black and white volunteers posing as prospective tenants at the apartments found that black “testers” were told no units were available or were discouraged from applying, while white testers were shown available units.

FEBRUARY 17, 1998

**ARIZONA LANDLORD AND NEWSPAPER ACCUSED OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST PARENTS AGREE TO SETTLEMENT**

An Arizona landlord accused of illegally discrimination against a couple because they have children – and a newspaper that published ads for an adults-only section of the landlord’s apartment complex— have agreed to a \$90,000 settlement of housing discrimination charges, Secretary Cuomo announces.

The settlement is believed to be one of the first of its kind in Arizona involving a newspaper accused of illegally publishing a discriminatory housing ad in violation of the Fair Housing Act. In addition, the \$75,000 cash portion of the settlement is the largest amount ever paid to settle a charge of housing discrimination against families with children in Arizona, according to the Southern Arizona Housing Center in Tucson. The Housing Center filed the lawsuit on behalf of a family that said they were told they could not rent an apartment at the Plaza Apartments in Sierra Vista because it was in an area reserved for adults.

MARCH 9, 1998

**PROVIDER OF HOUSING FOR HISPANIC PERSONS SETTLES DISCRIMINATION
LAWSUIT FOR \$101,000**

Secretary Cuomo and Project Sentinel, a Bay Area fair housing agency funded by HUD, announce the settlement of a federal court lawsuit alleging that the managers and owner of El Granada Mobile Home Park in Moss Beach discriminated against Hispanic residents and Hispanic prospective applicants. The plaintiffs, which included buyers, sellers, and Realtors of mobile homes in the park, settled the matter with the park for undisclosed terms, while the park paid Project Sentinel \$101,000 for investigative and legal expenses.

After the plaintiffs approached the fair housing group about possible discrimination in the park, Project Sentinel investigated the matter by conducting paired tests using Hispanics and Caucasian testers posing as mobile homeseekers and by examining rental application files. The plaintiffs and Project Sentinel filed suit after the investigation revealed alleged discriminatory practices.

MARCH 10, 1998

**HUD ANNOUNCES LANDMARK \$1.4 BILLION LENDING
DISCRIMINATION SETTLEMENT; WILL CONDUCT STUDY
OF MORTGAGE DISCRIMINATION**

HUD signs a landmark \$1.4 billion agreement with three Texas mortgage lenders (Temple-Inland Mortgage Corporation, Banc One Mortgage Corporation and Overton Bank and Trust) following an investigation of claims that the lenders provided inferior terms to blacks and Hispanics who were seeking loans. More than 20,000 low - and moderate-income and minority families are expected to receive home mortgages as a result of the agreement.

The three lenders committed to the agreements after the Fort Worth Human Relations Commission filed fair lending complaints with HUD under the Fair Housing Act, based on testing results alleging unlawful discrimination.

MARCH 13, 1998

**OPEN HOUSING CENTER FILES LAWSUIT ALLEGING HOUSING DISCRIMINATION
BY BROOKLYN REAL ESTATE AGENCY**

The Open Housing Center of New York files a federal class action lawsuit accusing a Brooklyn realty company of illegal housing discrimination against African Americans, the Center and Secretary Cuomo announce.

The Open Housing Center, which receives HUD funding, says it filed the suit in U.S. District Court in Brooklyn against Ted Bouzalas Realty in Brooklyn, and its owners/agents, based on tests that showed the realty company consistently turned away prospective black on tests that showed the realty company consistently turned away prospective black tenants by telling them no apartments were available - at the same time it was showing apartments to whites.

MARCH 31, 1998

**HUD CHARGES OREGON MOBILE HOME PARK OWNER WITH HOUSING
DISCRIMINATION THAT HARMS BOY, HIS PARENTS, AND ELDERLY WOMAN**

Secretary Cuomo announces that HUD has filed housing discrimination charges against a Salem mobile park owner accused of refusing to rent space to a couple because they had a 4-year old son. The civil charges filed by HUD accuse Larry Angell, owner of the Scofield Mobile Home Park, and park manager Hazel Dwigans of illegally discriminating against Paul and Margo Gibson and their then 4-year old son, Christopher, by refusing to allow them to live in the park last April.

The refusal forced the Gibson family to cancel their plans to purchase a mobile home in the park from Lorna Knodel, who was then 89. Knodel is also listed as a discrimination victim because of the lost sale, as is her real estate agent. Additionally, the Fair Housing Council of Oregon conducted comparison tests that found housing discrimination was occurring.

APRIL 3, 1998

HUD ANNOUNCES RECORD \$3.1 BILLION LENDING DISCRIMINATION SETTLEMENT, WINS \$325,000 HOUSING DISCRIMINATION CASE IN NEW ORLEANS, FILES CIVIL CHARGES AGAINST FOUR MISSOURI MEN IN CROSS-BURNING CASE

Secretary Cuomo announces the highest settlement of mortgage lending discrimination allegations in U.S. history - a conciliation agreement signed by AccuBanc Mortgage Corp. targeted \$2.1 billion in mortgages to minorities and low - and moderate-income families in the next three years to enable them to become homeowners. In addition, AccuBanc agreed to spend \$24 million over the next three years in mortgage closing will receive mortgages because of the agreement.

Test of AccuBanc service were conducted by whites and minorities posing as applicants for home mortgage loans. One test in Dallas showed that a minority tester was told he was eligible for an \$85,000 loan, while a white tester with a less favorable financial record was told he was eligible for a loan of \$110,000 to \$150,000.

In New Orleans, a housing discrimination lawsuit against the Riviera Oaks Apartments is settled for \$325,000. The apartment owners were accused of segregating African American tenants in apartments on one side of the 140-unit complex, requiring them to use a separate swimming pool from whites, and denying them the same services provided to white tenants. Owners of the apartments have fired the on-site manager and are selling the apartments.

Additionally, HUD files civil charges of housing discrimination against four Missouri men involved in a cross-burning in Rushville at the home of a woman of Cape Verdean heritage who they believed was part of an African American family. Liza Costa found a seven-foot cross burning on her front lawn last year. "I don't understand what these men were thinking," she said. "I don't understand what gave them the right to decide who's good enough to live in this town."

APRIL 21, 1998

HUD LAWSUIT ENDS IN VICTORY FOR DISABILITY COMMUNITY; DEPARTMENT, LENDER SETTLE DISCRIMINATION ALLEGATIONS

HUD civil action on behalf of the Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living, a service and advocacy organization for persons with disabilities in Joliet, IL, forces a builder to make new multifamily housing units accessible to persons with disabilities and pay damages estimated at \$62,000.

HUD's Chief Administrative Law Judge ordered Perland Corp. and its president/owner, William Persico of Crest Hill, IL, to retrofit seven unsold condominiums and the common area for one building to bring them into compliance with the Fair Housing Act. Thomas A. Buchar and Associates, Inc., the architects at the Meadow View Terrace Condominiums in Joliet, settled separately and agreed to pay \$9,000.

Additionally, the Secretary announces that SFM Mortgage, with headquarters in Bedford, TX, has agreed to settle a lending discrimination complaint by committing more than \$35.4 million over the next three years to improve homeownership opportunities for expected to receive home loans as a result of the agreement with HUD. Testing results showed treatment by SFM employees toward African American and Hispanics which did not meet the company's own standards and may have violated the Fair Housing Act.

May 21, 1998

CUOMO ANNOUNCES HOUSING DISCRIMINATION CHARGES AGAINST RICHMOND LANDLORD ACCUSED OF REFUSING TO RENT TO BLACK WOMAN

Secretary Cuomo announced that HUD filed housing discrimination charges against the owner of a Richmond, VA, apartment house, accusing him of refusing to rent to a woman because she is black and because she has a child. Gerald Quincy Loney, an African American woman who is the mother of an 11-year-old son, said she called landlord Latane Frank Norman after she saw an ad for a vacant apartment in his building, and he told her the rent was \$500 a month. After talking with her on the telephone and asking additional questions about her son, Norman raised the rent to \$575 and told her she could not immediately see the apartment. When Loney called in several days she said Norman told her the rent for the apartment was now \$700. Loney said she insisted on seeing the apartment and made an appointment, but Norman did not keep the appointment. Two weeks later, Loney noticed the apartment was again being advertised so she said she had a white co-worker inquire and that person was told the rent was \$500. Loney said she then called Norman again, disguising her voice, and was told the rent was \$500.

A tenant of the apartment house later told investigators that Norman had said that a "colored lady" with children had come by to see the apartment and that he did not want anything to do with children in his apartments, even though he knew he could get into trouble for not renting to families with children. The tenant, who is a single white woman, said Norman told her that he wanted "decent people" like her to rent the apartment.

June 4, 1998

CUOMO ANNOUNCES CHICAGO-AREA LANDLORDS ACCUSED OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGREE TO PAY INTERACIAL COUPLE \$65,000

Secretary Andrew Cuomo announced that two suburban Chicago landlords – accused of refusing to rent to an interracial couple and of turning away other blacks – agreed to pay a \$65,000 settlement.

Eric and Beth King were trying to move from Marietta, GA, to the Chicago area when they responded to a newspaper ad for a house owned by Barbara and Kenneth Civik and managed by Barbara Civik. Eric, who is black, and Beth, who is white, and their 20-month-old daughter went to see the property. Barbara Civik showed them the house but when the couple called back that night saying they wanted to sign a lease, Civik allegedly told them she would not rent to an interracial couple because she feared for their safety, and because she was afraid the property would be damaged, among other explanations.

June 9, 1998

**HUD FILES DISCRIMINATION CHARGES AGAINST MISSOURI DEVELOPER
ACCUSED OF REFUSING TO SELL HOME TO AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN**

HUD filed charges of housing discrimination against a white developer for allegedly refusing to sell a house in an all-white subdivision outside St. Louis MO, to a black woman and making offensive comments to her real estate agent. In November 1997, Shannon Graham of Cedar Hills, her fiancé, and real estate agent visited some homes in High Ridge, a Jefferson County community southwest of St. Louis. They met with development representative Dennis Riebold, and viewed a model house. During the visit, Riebold gave the real estate agent a message to call a telephone number. The agent later called from her car phone, and spoke to Dennis' father, Leonard, president of C & R Construction and Development Company and developer of the property. The agent said Leonard Riebold asked her if her clients were black, and when she said they were, he allegedly made offensive statements to her and said that she should have known better than to bring them to his development.

June 16, 1998

**CUOMO SAYS OREGON MOBILE HOME PARK OWNER AND MANAGER AGREE TO
PAY \$27,000 AFTER HUD FILES HOUSING DISCRIMINATION CHARGES**

Secretary Cuomo announced that an Oregon mobile home park owner and the park's manager agreed to pay \$27,000 to settle housing discrimination charges accusing them of refusing to rent to a couple because the couple had a 4-year-old son. Larry Angell, owner of the Scofield Mobile Home Park near Salem, OR, and park manager Hazel Dwigans agreed to make the \$27,000 payment to settle the discrimination charges filed by HUD. HUD accused the two of illegally discriminating against Paul and Margo Gibson and their then-4-year-old son, Christopher, by refusing to allow the family to live in the park in April 1997.

October 15, 1998

**JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND HUD ANNOUNCE RECORD \$480,000 SETTLEMENT
IN HOUSING DISCRIMINATION CASE IN VIRGINIA**

HUD and the Justice Department announced that the owners and managers of a Richmond, Virginia, apartment complex who were accused of refusing to rent to African Americans agreed to a \$480,000 settlement – the largest settlement ever in a rental discrimination case in Virginia.

The agreement required the owners and managers of Wedgewood Village Apartments to pay damages and civil penalties for allegedly discouraging African Americans from renting apartments for the past eight years. Additionally, the owners and managers have agreed to develop a fair housing policy, require their employees to attend fair housing training, and hire an independent consulting firm to conduct self-testing of the apartment complex over the next three years.

Larry B. Hall, Jr. and Rokena Dunaway said they were denied apartments at Wedgewood Village because they are black. Hall said that when he tried to apply for an apartment he was told falsely by an apartment employee that to live in the complex a person had to be either a single parent, a Social Security recipient, or handicapped. Later, he said he learned from a white friend living at Wedgewood that a white applicant was not given the same requirements and was given an application. Dunaway, a mother of two children, said she was told she would need an income above \$20,000 and that she would be on a waiting list for three to six months to get an apartment. She said white applicants were given identical two-bedroom apartments ahead of her without a wait.

October 26, 1998

**CUOMO WELCOMES \$100 MILLION HOUSING DISCRIMINATION VERDICT
RESULTING FROM HUD TESTING AGAINST NATIONWIDE INSURANCE**

Secretary Cuomo welcomed a record \$100 million judgment issued by a Richmond, VA jury against Nationwide Insurance Co., after a jury concluded that HUD-funded testing showed the company engaged in a pattern of discrimination against black homeowners and inner city neighborhoods. Five fair housing groups received \$1.5 million from HUD in 1995 to conduct testing that led to the verdict. Blacks and whites posing as homeowners conducted testing that determined that Nationwide agents treated people differently based on their race and on the racial makeup of the neighborhoods in which they lived. One of the groups receiving HUD funding – Housing Opportunities Made Equal, of Richmond – brought the lawsuit that resulted in today's verdict.

The Richmond Circuit Court jury found that Nationwide – based in Columbus, OH – offered superior homeowners insurance coverage on homes in white neighborhoods, and at the same time often

denied covered or offered less desirable or more costly coverage on comparable homes in black neighborhoods.

January 15, 1999

**CUOMO SAYS SAN FRANCISCO AREA DEVELOPER PAYS BLACK COUPLE
\$71,000 TO SETTLE COMPLAINT OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION**

Secretary Cuomo announced that one of America's largest housing developers will pay a black couple \$71,000 to settle a complaint accusing the firm of refusing to sell the couple a San Francisco Bay area home. Centex Homes, a division of Centex Real Estate Corporation, agreed in an enforcement agreement with HUD to settle a housing discrimination complaint filed with HUD in 1997 by Oakland, CA residents Sylvia Myles and Bruce Soublet.

Centex admitted no wrongdoing in the settlement. The married couple said they were given conflicting information by Centex representatives and felt they were being discouraged from buying a home in Centex's Five Canyons upscale home development in Castro Valley. They said they wanted to move to the area so their young daughter, Amber, could grow up in a safe neighborhood with good schools.

May 4, 1999

**U.S. ATTORNEY SETTLES DISCRIMINATION SUIT AGAINST WORCESTER
RENTAL AGENCY, FOLLOWING HUD INVESTIGATION**

In a case investigated by HUD, the president of a Worcester, MA apartment rental agency admitted her company routinely discriminated against blacks, Hispanics and families with children, in a consent decree signed with the U.S. district Attorney for Massachusetts. Karen Soucie of Choice Property Consultants admitted the company used codes on listings – such as “ARCHIE” for Archie Bunker – to indicate the prejudice of a landlord. Soucie's firm agreed to pay \$30,000 to The Housing Discrimination Project, the Holyoke, MA agency that brought the complaint to HUD.

May 15, 1999

**HUD REPORT ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC HARASSMENT AT BOSTON
HOUSING AUTHORITY FINDS PROGRESS MADE SINCE 1996;
TROUBLING PROBLEMS REMAIN IN SOME AREAS**

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Secretary Cuomo in Boston released a report that concluded the Boston Housing Authority had made significant progress since 1996 responding to racial and ethnic harassment in housing authority

properties, but that troubling problems persist in some areas. The HUD report included over 50 recommendations for improvements in BHA operations to address continuing problems. Boston Mayor Thomas Menino pledged to carry out the HUD recommendations in an Improvement Plan over the next 12 months.

September 15, 1999

**NEW REPORTS DOCUMENT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST
MINORITIES BY MORTGAGE LENDING INSTITUTIONS**

In a HUD-commissioned report, the Urban Institute found that minorities trying to buy homes continue to face discrimination from mortgage lending institutions. The report said that “not all Americans enjoy equal access to the benefits of homeownership, in part because of unequal access to capital.” It also said that “minorities are less likely than whites to obtain mortgage financing and, if successful in obtaining a mortgage, tend to receive less generous loan amounts and terms.”

Secretary Cuomo released the Urban Institute report at a news conference with members of Congress and leaders of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN). ACORN released its own study at the same time demonstrating continuing racial disparities in the national home purchase, mortgage and refinancing markets. Congress Members James Clyburn of South Carolina, Eleanor Holmes Norton of the District of Columbia, and Loretta Sanchez and Xavier Becerra of California also attended.

October 8, 1999

**ELGIN, ILLINOIS WILL REVAMP ENFORCEMENT OF OCCUPANCY CODE TO SETTLE
COMPLAINTS BY HISPANIC FAMILIES OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION**

Secretary Cuomo announced that Elgin, Illinois will change the way it inspects homes for occupancy code violations and will pay seven Hispanic families a total of \$10,000 to settle housing discrimination complaints. The complaints – filed with HUD by the families between October 1998 and May 1999 – alleged that the City of Elgin targeted Hispanic families for selective enforcement of occupancy standards that limit the number of people who can live in a home. The City of Elgin agreed to conciliate the case before more investigation was required, and admitted no wrongdoing in the settlement. The families told HUD that inspectors showed up unannounced at night and early in the morning – including 5 a.m. on one occasion – to see how many people were inside a home. The families also complained to HUD that City code inspectors entered homes without obtaining permission from occupants who did not speak fluent English.

November 10, 1999

**APARTMENT OWNERS PAY \$100,000 TO SETTLE
HOUSING DISCRIMINATION LAWSUIT IN TURLOCK, CA**

Secretary Cuomo announced that owners of a northern California apartment complex have paid \$100,000 to settle a housing discrimination lawsuit that accused their maintenance man of threatening an African American tenant and using a racial slur.

Jamil I. and Faud J. Khuri, doing business as the Khuri Family Trust, paid \$100,000 to settle the federal lawsuit. The suit accused maintenance man Robert Lafenier, who is white, of committing a housing discrimination hate crime by harassing African American tenant Charletta Fairrer at the Elia Court Apartments in Turlock.

Fairrer and her then-18-month-old son moved into the Elia Court Apartments in May 1997. In her lawsuit, Fairrer alleged that on several occasions in 1997 Lafenier threatened her and used racial slurs, once telling her: "You f***ing ni**er, if you ever knock on my door again I'll f***ing kill you." In addition to the verbal harassment, Fairrer said that the letters "S.W.P." and lightning bolts were scratched onto her front door. She said that Lafenier's girlfriend told her later that the markings stood for "Supreme White Power." In addition, Fairrer said a beer bottle was thrown at her car as it sat parked outside her apartment building on another occasion. Fairrer said that she reported the incidents several times to the apartment complex manager Melissa Cohea, who allegedly told Fairrer nothing could be done.

November 24, 1999

**HUD FILES CHARGE AGAINST NEW YORK LANDLORDS ACCUSED OF
DISCRIMINATING AGAINST WOMAN BECAUSE OF BIRACIAL GRANDSON**

Secretary Cuomo today announced that HUD had filed a housing discrimination charge against New York landlords accused of telling a white grandmother she would have to move out of her apartment because she planned to occasionally care for her 3-year-old biracial grandson. HUD charged landlords Laura and Agustino Craveiro, who briefly rented out a second-floor apartment in their home in the Long Island, NY community of West Islip to Ann O'Dea. Ms. O'Dea said that the day after she moved into the apartment in the Craveiro home, she told Mrs. Craveiro – in response to a question – that she occasionally cared for her grandson, Travis, on Saturdays. Ms. O'Dea said Mrs. Craveiro, who asked about Travis' racial background, then said: "I have to ask, can you baby-sit elsewhere, because the neighbors object to it." About an hour later, Ms. O'Dea said Mrs. Craveiro told her she had until the end of the month to leave.

December 15, 1999

**CUOMO AWARDS \$15 MILLION IN GRANTS TO HELP
GROUPS IN 53 CITIES FIGHT HOUSING DISCRIMINATION**

Secretary Cuomo awarded \$15 million in grants to groups in 53 cities to help them fight housing discrimination. The grants Cuomo went to a broad cross-section of public and private fair housing groups and state and local agencies. The groups will use the funds to investigate allegations of housing discrimination, educate the public and housing industry about housing discrimination laws, and work to promote fair housing. The grants are funded under HUD's Fair Housing Initiatives Program.

January 17, 2000

CUOMO ANNOUNCES NEW CAMPAIGN AGAINST HOUSING DISCRIMINATION, AND CHARGES IN PENNSYLVANIA AND NY FAIR HOUSING CASES

Secretary Cuomo announced a public awareness campaign to help people fight back against housing discrimination, and announced housing discrimination charges in cases in Pennsylvania and New York. In the Martin Luther King Day announcement of the two cases, Cuomo said:

- HUD has charged a hate group leader in Philadelphia with violating the Fair Housing Act for making death threats against a fair housing advocate on his Internet web site and in a television interview. Cuomo said that Ryan Wilson of Philadelphia and the hate group he runs – ALPHA HQ – have been charged by HUD with violating the Fair Housing Act. The charge stems from threats posted on Wilson's Internet web site and made by him in a TV interview against fair housing advocate Bonnie Jouhari, formerly of Reading, PA.
- HUD has filed housing discrimination charges against the operator of a room rental locator service in New York City who refused to help deaf people find housing, and who steered people posing as renters to different neighborhoods based on their race. In early 1999, Keith Toto called Space Hunters using the services of a relay operator. Relay operators are typically used by hearing impaired people to communicate by phone with parties who do not have a Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD). Toto said that the person who answered at Space Hunters said the company did not serve people with disabilities, used an obscenity when questioned, and hung up. Company President John McDermott told HUD investigators that he did not have time to deal with relay operators serving people with hearing impairments and it was his policy not to talk to them.

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