



Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity

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GCEO Case No. 20150008
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FOR RELEASE
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GCEO CHARGES GEORGIA HOUSING PROVIDERS WITH DISABILITY & FAMILIAL STATUS DISCRIMINATION & APPROVES SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

GEORGIA - The Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity (GCEO) announced today that it has charged an apartment complex owner and property management company in Atlanta (Buckhead), Georgia with violating the Georgia Fair Housing Law (GFHL). GCEO claims the owner, and property management company of the apartment complex engaged in discrimination by making discriminatory statements about a resident's minor child with disabilities and a family with children. [Read the charge.](#)

The Georgia Fair Housing Law prohibits housing providers from discriminating against persons with disabilities and families with children under the age of eighteen. Housing may exclude children only if it meets the Georgia Fair Housing Law's exemption for housing for older persons. It is also unlawful to make statements indicating a preference, limitation, or discrimination because of disability and familial status.

"Housing providers do not have the right to impose unequal treatment on two of our most vulnerable populations. Families with children and persons with disabilities should have the right to enjoy the place that they call home free of discrimination, yet too many continue to have this right denied," said Allona Lane Cross, GCEO's Executive Director. "GCEO is committed to enforcing the Georgia Fair Housing Law and holding housing providers accountable to ensure that families with children and persons with disabilities including minors are able to thrive within their communities and have access to equal housing opportunities."

The case was originally referred to GCEO by Metro Fair Housing Services, Inc. The Complainant, a mother of two children, one of which was a disabled minor child filed a complaint with GCEO alleging that because of her race, familial status, and her minor child's disability, the Respondents discriminated against her by making a discriminatory statement with respect to the rental of a dwelling, setting different terms, conditions, or privileges for the rental of a dwelling, setting different terms, conditions, or privileges for the provision of services and facilities, and subjecting her and her family to intimidation, harassment, and coercion. The tenant further alleges the lease was not renewed because she declined the Respondent's request for her to sign a seven day cure letter agreeing to vacate the premises, if her disabled child was seen doing anything "suspicious."

The GCEO charge alleges the owners and property manager of the apartment complex made discriminatory statements about the Complainant's minor disabled child and their family, which were recorded. Specifically, Respondents made a

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statement with respect to the rental of a dwelling (renewal of a lease), and the statement indicated a limitation or discrimination on the basis of familial status and disability. With respect to familial status, the property manager attempted to limit Complainant's minor child's use of the subject property by stating that they do not want to get calls from residents to the courtesy officer about "teenage boys" roaming around the parking lot or sleeping in the breezeways. The investigation found that her reference to "teenage boys" also constituted discrimination generally against families with children because the property manager appears to assume that residents will call the Courtesy Officer on "teenage boys." As for Complainant's minor child's disability, the evidence found that the property manager discriminated against the Complainant's disabled child by assuming that his disability required him to need additional supervision to function correctly in the community, which she stated during a recorded conference. The evidence also showed that it may also be an attempt to limit his movement throughout the community to times when he has additional supervision.

Parties will have twenty (20) days after receipt of the Determination and Charge of Discrimination to elect, in writing, one of the following three options: (1) request that the Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity file a petition with the Office of State Administrative Hearings (OSAH) for appointment of an Administrative Law Judge to conduct an administrative hearing on the issues raised in the Charge of Discrimination; (2) request that the Administrator refer this matter to the Attorney General's Office for purposes of bringing civil action in the name of the State of Georgia on behalf of the Complainant(s); or, (3) the Complainant(s) may elect to file a civil action on his/her/their own, in a Superior Court of proper venue, whether or not an election to the contrary has been made.

The Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity (GCEO) has approved a Settlement Agreement between both parties. Under the terms of the agreement, the apartment owner and the property management company will pay \$17,000 in damages made payable to the Complainant. "GCEO is very pleased that both parties agreed to resolve the matter. This settlement reflects GCEO's ongoing commitment to working with all housing providers to ensure that they comply with their obligations under the Georgia Fair Housing Law," said Allona Lane Cross, GCEO's Executive Director. [Read the agreement.](#)

Persons who believe they have experienced housing discrimination may file a Fair Housing complaint by contacting GCEO's Fair Housing Division at (800) 473-6736 or by visiting the GCEO website and utilizing our [Fair Housing Online Services](#). Materials and assistance are available for persons with limited English proficiency.

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The Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity's mission is to safeguard Georgians from discrimination in housing and employment. More information about GCEO is available at <https://gceo.georgia.gov/>

You can also connect with GCEO on social media via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

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