

GREATER  
NEW ORLEANS



**FAIR  
HOUSING  
ACTION CENTER**

## NEWS RELEASE

### GREATER NEW ORLEANS FAIR HOUSING ACTION CENTER

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **FAIR HOUSING CENTER WINS LAWSUIT AGAINST ST. BERNARD PARISH; PARISH MUST RESCIND MULTI-FAMILY APARTMENT MORATORIUM**

On March 25, 2009, the Honorable Judge Helen G. Berrigan granted the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center's (GNOFHAC) motion seeking enforcement of a Consent Order entered on February 7, 2008 in Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center v. St. Bernard Parish et al, Case No. 06-7185, United States District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana.

The February 27, 2008 Consent Order resolved GNOFHAC's challenge to a multi-family moratorium St. Bernard enacted immediately after Hurricane Katrina, as well as an ordinance that restricted the rental of single-family residences in St. Bernard Parish to those related by blood to the owner of the property.

On September 16, 2008, the Parish enacted another moratorium on all multi-family developments with five or more units. After a hearing on GNOFHAC's motion to enforce the February 27, 2008 Consent Order, the Court concluded that the moratorium violated both the Fair Housing Act and the Consent Order the Parish had entered into to settle GNOFHAC's challenge to the "blood relative" ordinance. The Court found the similarity between the blood relative ordinance and the moratorium "striking" and noted that the September 2008 multi-family moratorium was identical to the November 2005 multi-family moratorium challenged in GNOFHAC's lawsuit against the Parish.

In her ruling, Judge Berrigan writes that "the Court concludes that the Parish and Council's intent in enacting and continuing the moratorium is and was racially discriminatory," and that "the evidence also supports a finding of discriminatory effect."

Judge Berrigan has ordered St. Bernard Parish and the St.

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Bernard Parish Council to "rescind Ordinance SBPC #905-09-98, its moratorium on all housing developments with five or more units." Further, she orders that the Parish and Parish Council are "immediately enjoined from enforcing the Ordinance until it is rescinded." Relman & Dane PLLC represented GNOFHAC in this matter.

James Perry, Executive Director of GNOFHAC, comments that "Even before Hurricane Katrina local municipalities sought to limit affordable rental opportunities. These limitations have both strangled our recovery and limited housing opportunities for people of color and people with disabilities. Judge Berrigan's ruling today sends a strong message to elected officials in our region: officials must allow the development of affordable rental housing in our region."

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*The Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC) is a private non-profit organization. The Center was established by a group of concerned New Orleanians in 1995 with the help of the National Fair Housing Alliance and a grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. GNOFHAC is dedicated to eliminating housing discrimination and furthering equal housing opportunities through education, outreach, advocacy, and enforcement of fair housing laws across the metro New Orleans and Baton Rouge areas. This is an independent agency based event/litigation. Therefore, it is not funded with Fair Housing Initiatives (FHIP) funds or sponsored/authorized by the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.*