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NEW ORLEANS



**FAIR
HOUSING
ACTION CENTER**

*Celebrating 10 years
of fighting housing
discrimination*

NEWS RELEASE GREATER NEW ORLEANS FAIR HOUSING ACTION CENTER

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FAIR HOUSING CENTER CALLS ON KENNER TO REVERSE ORDINANCE

The Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC), opposes Kenner, Louisiana's decision to ban the construction of multi-family housing. The ban prohibits the construction of any housing with five or more units. The ban will last for one year.

The Fair Housing Act ("the Act"), as amended, expressly prohibits discrimination in the rental or sale of a dwelling on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. The Act has been interpreted to prohibit municipalities from using their zoning powers in a manner that excludes housing for a group of people on the basis of a protected class under the Act. Seemingly neutral zoning policies that have a discriminatory effect on a particular protected class and cause harm to a community through the perpetuation of segregation violate the Act. Generally, families with children, people with disabilities, African-Americans and Latinos rely heavily on multi-family housing. As such, municipalities who have sought to ban the construction of multi-family housing have been held liable for engaging in illegal housing discrimination.

In addition to the legal implications, Kenner's actions severely exacerbate the existing shortage of affordable housing across the metropolitan area.

Kenner sought to pass a similar ordinance in June of 2007, but decided against it after GNOFHAC and other housing advocates argued against implementing such a restrictive zoning ordinance.

James Perry, GNOFHAC Executive Director comments, "Only weeks ago, more than one-thousand hard working citizens appeared at the Kenner Housing Authority seeking desperately need housing assistance. Through this ban on multi-family housing, the Kenner City Council turns a deaf ear to each of its citizens in need. We respectfully request that the council reverse this ban."

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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. GNOFHAC is dedicated to eliminating housing discrimination and furthering equal housing opportunities through education, outreach, advocacy, and enforcement of fair housing laws across metro New Orleans.

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