

# hud **MEDIA ADVISORY**

Department of Housing and Urban Development – Alphonso Jackson, Secretary  
Office of Public Affairs, Washington, DC 20410

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## **HUD CHARGES CALIF. LANDLORDS WITH REFUSING TO RENT TO HISPANICS**

*Owners charged with Fair Housing Act violation  
for allegedly favoring Vietnamese tenants over Hispanic tenants*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced today that it has charged the owners of an eight-unit apartment complex in Orange County, Calif., with violating the Fair Housing Act for allegedly refusing to rent renovated apartments to Hispanic families. Instead, the owners rented the apartments to Vietnamese families. The Fair Housing Act makes it illegal to discriminate against persons because of their national origin.

The [charge](#) alleges that Mary Ngo and Gary Luke, who between them own the two-building complex in Garden Grove, Calif., refused to allow Rafaela Alonso, Norberto Barranco, Graciela Barrera, Laura Castaneda, and Maria Castaneda and their families to move back into their old apartments after renovations were completed. The charge further alleges that the owners refused to allow a prospective new Hispanic tenant, Maria del Carmen Maldonado, to rent a vacant apartment at the complex.

HUD's investigation found that in October 2005, Luke and Ngo issued tenants a 60-day notice to vacate in order to repair and remodel the apartments. When the Hispanic families inquired about moving back into the remodeled apartments, all of them were either told that they could not return or were promised rental applications that were never provided. When Laura Castaneda and her family inquired about moving back into the complex, Luke allegedly told her, "No, I already got my people," and rented her and Barrera's units to Vietnamese Americans. After Maldonado asked about the status of her application for a vacant apartment, Luke allegedly told her his "partner has in mind only to rent to Vietnamese families." Luke's partner, Mary Ngo, is Vietnamese.

Housing discrimination charges heard before an administrative law judge carry a maximum civil penalty of \$11,000 for each violation for a first offense, in addition to actual damages for each complainant, injunctive or other equitable relief, and attorneys' fees. Sanctions can be more severe if a respondent has a history of housing discrimination. Parties also have the right to elect to have their cases heard in federal district court.

FHEO and its partners in the Fair Housing Assistance Program investigate approximately 9,000 housing discrimination complaints annually. People who believe they are the victims of housing discrimination should contact HUD at 1-800-669-9777 (voice), 800-927-9275 (TTY). Additional information is available at [www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing). Stay on top of the most up-to-date news regarding the Fair Housing Act by signing up for the FHEO RSS Feed at [www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/index.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/index.cfm).

**For more information call Shantae Goodloe at #202-708-0685.**

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