



For Immediate Release

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American Classifieds Sued for Discriminating Against Families with Children

National Fair Housing Alliance Investigation Uncovers Advertisements Discriminating Against Families with Children, Other Protected Groups in 17 States

WASHINGTON, DC –July 9, 2009 – The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) and its member organization Fair Housing Council of Central California (FHCCC) today announced a housing discrimination lawsuit against the nation’s largest classified advertisement publisher, American Classifieds, LLC for publishing housing ads that state children are not allowed.

It is illegal to discriminate against families with children in housing. In their lawsuit, NFHA and FHCCC allege that American Classifieds published discriminatory housing advertisements in violation of the federal Fair Housing Act and California’s Fair Housing and Employment Act. NFHA filed the lawsuit after a year-long investigation that uncovered over 60 discriminatory advertisements in 17 of the states where American Classifieds does business.

Examples of these advertisements, which discriminate against home-seekers with children, include:

- 3BD 1 BA, house \$800. No kids allowed.
- Suitable for 1, possibly 2. \$500 monthly. Part-time animal care, \$110 off rent. Adults only.

To date, NFHA has found discriminatory advertisements in California, Idaho, Utah, New Mexico, Colorado, Missouri, Kentucky, Indiana, Texas, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The lawsuit, filed in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California, is also against Want Ads of Visalia in California. The investigation also uncovered ads that discriminate on the basis of gender and religion.

“This company’s behavior has damaged the cause of fair housing nationally,” said NFHA President and CEO Shanna Smith. “Thousands of home-seekers read ads that say ‘no kids’ or ‘adults only,’ which send the message that it is legal to deny housing to families with children. The millions of families with children that must now seek rental housing because they have lost their homes in foreclosure are being denied equal access. If American Classifieds had properly

screened their advertisements for discriminatory language and chosen to not publish them, families would be able to secure housing free from discrimination.”

Housing discrimination in the nation has spiked recently for two reasons: the worsening foreclosure crisis and internet advertising that violates fair housing laws, according to NFHA’s May 2009 Fair Housing Trends Report. In the last year, NFHA and its members have filed over 1,000 complaints based on internet advertising discrimination with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Since 1996, American Classifieds has resolved similar discrimination complaints in Boise, Idaho, Louisville, Kentucky, and Merritt Island, Florida for publishing illegal housing advertisements. Yet that has not stopped the company from continuing to print them.

“It is indefensible that American Classifieds continues to print illegal housing advertisements and limit housing opportunities for families with children,” Ms. Smith said. “American Classifieds must know that it is violating the law because it has been repeatedly penalized for similar behavior. American Classifieds and its subsidiaries have a history of callously and deliberately disregarding their obligations under the Fair Housing Act, and once again it will take court intervention to make them follow the law. ”

The Fair Housing Act prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status and disability. It covers all housing transactions and services, including advertising, rentals, sales, lending, and insurance, as well as harassment.

About the National Fair Housing Alliance (www.nationalfairhousing.org)

Founded in 1988, the National Fair Housing Alliance is a consortium of more than 220 private, non-profit fair housing organizations, state and local civil rights agencies, and individuals from throughout the United States. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the National Fair Housing Alliance, through comprehensive education, advocacy and enforcement programs, provides equal access to apartments, houses, mortgage loans and insurance policies for all residents of the nation.