



For Immediate Release
September 14, 2015

**Federal Lawsuit Filed Against After Investigation Confirms
Racial Discrimination at Aventura Apartments**

(North Miami Beach, FL) – A federal lawsuit was filed today by Housing Opportunities Project for Excellence, Inc. (“HOPE”), a private, not-for-profit fair housing organization, three African American testers, and African American housing seekers against the owners (Beverly Hills Club Apartments, LLC), property management company (United Property Management Group), property manager (Idladio Rivero), and a leasing agent (Katerina Garciga) of Aventura Harbor Apartments for discriminating against African Americans.

According to the lawsuit, HOPE’s investigation yielded evidence that African Americans who inquired about renting an apartment at Aventura Harbor Apartments were provided different information, service, and treatment based on their race in violation of fair housing laws. Examples of how African Americans making housing inquiries were treated less favorably than their White counterparts included being:

- told that no apartments were available to rent when in fact apartments were available;
- given the wrong price for apartments – one or two hundred dollars higher than the listing price – to dissuade them from renting;
- wrongly disqualify Black people from renting at Aventura Harbor Apartments after they left the leasing office; and
- erased from the visitors’ log that records all potential renters, preventing subsequent follow-up with them.

Keenya Robertson, HOPE President & CEO commented, “This case exposes devious and deceitful conduct intended to strategically exclude African Americans from rental opportunities. HOPE intends to vindicate the rights of prospective tenants and send a clear message that this type of discrimination will not be tolerated.”

This is the fourth time that Defendant United Property Management, Inc. has been sued for housing discrimination on the basis of race at the Aventura Harbor Apartments, formerly called the Beverly Hills Club Apartments. The prior three lawsuits for housing discrimination, two brought by the United States’ Department of Justice, and the other by HOPE, Inc. and private plaintiffs, resulted in consent decrees, injunctive relief, damages, fines, and attorneys’ fees.

The lawsuit was filed by Randall C. Berg, Jr., civil rights attorney at the Florida Justice Institute. Copies of the lawsuit are available.

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HOPE, a private fair housing enforcement agency funded in part by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, provides fair housing education, outreach, and investigations. HOPE operates a Housing Discrimination Help-Line at (305) 651-HOPE & (954) 567-0545.