



PRESS RELEASE

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**U.S. ATTORNEY FILES FAIR HOUSING LAWSUIT AGAINST
ALBUQUERQUE RENTAL PROPERTY OWNER FOR
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST A DISABLED TENANT**

ALBUQUERQUE – U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales today filed a lawsuit against Michael Croom, the owner and manager of rental property in Albuquerque, N.M., for violating the Fair Housing Act by discriminating against a disabled tenant.

The civil complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico, was brought on behalf of a tenant who became disabled as a result of a medical condition more than two years after living in a house he and his family rented from Mr. Croom. It alleges that Mr. Croom engaged in discriminatory practices and retaliation based on the tenant's disability in violation of the Fair Housing Act.

According to the complaint, Mr. Croom unlawfully refused to permit the tenant to make reasonable modifications to the rented premises to accommodate the tenant's disability at the tenant's own expense and with the assurance that the tenant would restore the premises to its original condition. The complaint also alleges that Mr. Croom unlawfully retaliated against the tenant by evicting him after the tenant requested permission to make reasonable modifications to accommodate his disability.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in the sale or rental of a dwelling to a buyer or renter because of a disability. Discrimination includes the refusal to permit, at the expense of a person with a disability, reasonable accommodations of the premises where the renter agrees to restore the premises to their pre-existing condition.

The lawsuit seeks a court order prohibiting future discrimination by Mr. Croom, monetary damages for the tenant harmed by Mr. Croom's actions, and a civil penalty.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Ruth F. Keegan is litigating the case on behalf of the United States.

Fighting illegal discrimination in housing is a top priority of the Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office. The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in

housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin, and disability. More information about the laws enforced by the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Attorney's Office is available at www.justice.gov/crt. Individuals who believe they have been victims of housing discrimination or have information can call the Housing Discrimination Tip Line at 1-800-896-7743, or email the Department of Justice at www.fairhousing.usdoj.gov.

A civil complaint is an allegation of unlawful conduct which must be proven in federal court.

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