



Fair Housing Center
for Rights & Research



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Civil Rights Organizations and Tenants Sue Senior Housing Provider for Disability Discrimination at 40 Properties

Five Fair Housing Organizations in Syracuse, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Buffalo, and Cincinnati, along with Three Residents, Charge Clover Senior Properties with Violating Fair Housing Laws

Syracuse, NY – Today, CNY Fair Housing in Syracuse, The Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh, the Fair Housing Center for Rights & Research of Cleveland, Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Buffalo, and Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Greater Cincinnati along with three residents of Camillus Pointe Senior Apartments in Central New York, filed a federal lawsuit in the Northern District of New York. The suit alleging widespread discrimination against tenants with disabilities at approximately forty senior housing properties including denials of reasonable accommodations, illegal fees, and discriminatory pricing schemes. Named defendants include Welltower, Inc., Clover Management, and related entities.

The lawsuit is based on an investigation that began when several residents of Camillus Pointe Senior Apartments outside of Syracuse notified CNY Fair Housing that they were being denied reasonable accommodations for assigned parking spaces they needed due to mobility impairments such as arthritis, pleurisy, and COPD. Despite advocacy from CNY Fair Housing on behalf of these residents, they continued to be denied their rights. The agency examined other Clover properties and coordinated undercover testing with the four other fair housing groups in two other states. Together, the groups identified similar denials of reasonable accommodations at other Clover properties and a pricing scheme that targeted seniors with disabilities by charging higher fees for more accessible units. The lack of accessibility at these properties has significantly impacted the daily lives of senior residents, who have skipped grocery shopping, foregone opportunities to visit friends and family or attend religious services, fallen and been injured in the parking lot, relied on their children to drive them around, and ultimately felt imprisoned in their own homes.

“For years, these companies have disregarded and profited from the needs of residents with disabilities, charging them for things like needing to park closer to their apartment or live closer to an elevator,” said CNY Fair Housing’s Executive Director, Sally Santangelo. “We’re filing this lawsuit to make sure that these discriminatory practices come to an end and the fair housing rights of these residents are respected.”

“Pennsylvania’s elderly population is amongst the highest in the United States and amongst disabilities, limited mobility is the most common physical disability. Up-charging unit locations and locking-in residents by disallowing accessible parking is not only cruel but is housing discrimination against seniors with limited mobility. Pennsylvania’s seniors deserve better,” said Megan Confer-Hammond, the Executive Director of the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh.

“Clover residents with disabilities should not have to pay more for housing that meets their needs than their peers without disabilities do, but that’s what Clover’s policies require. It’s like an extra tax on people with disabilities and it’s just plain wrong.” said Carrie Pleasants, Executive Director of the Fair Housing Center for Rights & Research.

“It is unfortunate and disheartening when any housing provider intentionally denies the fair housing rights of a tenant, but it is even more egregious when a provider as large as Clover – with so many units in various states - enacts discriminatory policies that are particularly harmful to vulnerable populations.” said DeAnna Eason, Executive Director at Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Buffalo.

“Seniors with disabilities have a right to enjoy their homes without fear of becoming shut ins.” said Jeniece Jones, Executive Director at Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Greater Cincinnati.

The plaintiffs are represented by the firm Relman Colfax PLLC and CNY Fair Housing Staff Attorneys Conor Kirchner and Casey Weissman-Vermeulen.

CNY Fair Housing is a nonprofit organization that works to eliminate housing discrimination, promote open communities, and ensure equal access to housing opportunity for all people in Central and Northern New York. More information can be found here: www.cnyfairhousing.org.

Founded in 1984, The Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh is a full-service fair housing nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring equal housing choice through education, fair housing analysis, enforcement, outreach and community organizing in western Pennsylvania. <http://www.fhp.org>

Fair Housing Center for Rights & Research is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect fair housing rights, eliminate housing discrimination, and promote integrated communities. thehousingcenter.org

Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Inc. Buffalo is a civil rights organization with a mission to promote the value of diversity and ensure all people an equal opportunity to live in housing and communities of their choice -- through education, advocacy, and the enforcement of fair housing laws. www.homeny.org

Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Greater Cincinnati is a nonprofit agency with the mission of eliminating illegal housing discrimination whether based on race/color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, or because of children in the household. Anyone who believes they may have experienced housing discrimination should call HOME at 513-721-4663. <https://homecincy.org/>

Relman Colfax PLLC is a civil rights, anti-discrimination law firm based in Washington, DC.

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