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GENERAL NEWS

HUD Charges Missouri Landlord with Sexual Harassment

In a [press release](#) last Friday, the Department of Housing and Urban Development ([HUD](#)) announced that it has charged the owner of multiple single-family residences in Missouri with discrimination for allegedly subjecting a female tenant to sexual harassment.

The [Fair Housing Act](#) prohibits harassment of tenants and other forms of housing discrimination because of race, sex, color, national origin, disability, religion, and familial status.

HUD's [charge](#), issued on behalf of the tenant, her children, and a HUD Fair Housing Initiative partner in Missouri, alleges that the owner made repeated unwelcome sexual advances toward the tenant and pressured her to provide sexual favors and explicit photos of herself when she fell behind on rent payments. The charge further alleges that the owner's actions included grabbing the tenant's body without permission, pressing his body against hers, offering to accept sexual favors in lieu of rent, making unwanted sexual comments, and sending lewd and inappropriate texts to her. The tenant and her children moved out after enduring months of sexual harassment from the owner.

HUD's charge will be heard by a United States administrative law judge unless any party elects to have the case heard in federal district court. If the administrative law judge finds after a hearing that discrimination has occurred, the judge may award damages to the complainant for harm caused by the discrimination. The judge may also order injunctive relief and other equitable relief, as well as payment of attorney fees. In addition, the judge may impose civil penalties to vindicate the public interest. If the matter is decided in federal court, the judge may also award punitive damages.



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Nan McKay & Associates, 1810 Gillespie Way, Suite 202, El Cajon, CA 92020, USA, 1-800-783-3100

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