

Commission on Human Rights

Kentucky Human Rights Commission issues April 2014 Rulings on discrimination complaints

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Thursday, April 17, 2014, Cumberland, Kentucky USA – The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights Board of Commissioners met today to rule on discrimination complaints for the people of Kentucky.

The meeting was held at the Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College Cumberland Campus, which is located at 700 College Road, in Cumberland, Ky. Periodically, the commission board is able to meet outside its Louisville, Ky., headquarters, in order to raise awareness of civil rights laws and protections for people in the state.

Today, the commission ruled to approve two conciliation agreements, four case withdrawals resolved with private settlements, seven case withdrawals giving complainants the right to file private suits, and dismiss nine complaints with findings of no probable cause to evidence that discrimination occurred.

Conciliations are similar to settlement agreements and are negotiated by the commission agency. Respondents participating in the agreements deny any allegations of unlawful discrimination and violations of civil rights law. Following is a summary of the conciliation agreements approved at today's meeting:

Kenya Lyles v. Roberta Criss, in Fort Thomas, Ky.: Lyles of Cincinnati, Ohio, complained to the commission on March 15, 2012, that she was discriminated against by Criss based on familial status (Lyles is a mother with four children under the age of 18) in the area of housing. This would be a violation of the U.S. and Kentucky Civil Rights acts and their respective Fair Housing acts. Lyles claimed she called about a Northern Kentucky property for rent listed on the Craig's List internet site, that she called Criss to ask about renting the property, and that she was told by Criss that the 1,000 ft., 3-bedroom house was not large enough for an adult and four children. Criss asserted the advertisement mistakenly listed the rental property as a 3-bedroom rather than a 2-bedroom house. After investigation, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights made a probable cause determination, which asserts evidence exists to believe discrimination

may have occurred. Afterward, the parties chose to resolve the complaint with a conciliation agreement. Criss denied any violation of the law. Criss agreed to compensate Lyles in the amount of \$7,000 and to undergo fair housing law compliance training and three years of commission compliance monitoring.

Paul Douglas v. Persimmon Ridge Partners LLC., in Owensboro, Ky.: Douglas alleged to the commission that he was discriminated against by Persimmon Ridge Partners based on race, (He is African American) in the area of housing. This would be a violation of the U.S. and Kentucky Civil Rights acts and their respective Fair Housing acts. He claimed that he was a tenant at the company's property at 2954 Veach Road, in Owensboro, and that he was the victim of racial slurs and a hostile environment due to his race. After receiving an eviction notice from the company and after moving out, he filed a complaint with the commission in December 2013. Persimmon Ridge Partners denied any violation of the law. Before the commission issued any determination, the parties chose to resolve the complaint with a conciliation agreement. The respondent agreed to compensate Douglas in the amount of \$800, to undergo fair housing law compliance training and three years of commission civil rights compliance monitoring.

The Kentucky Civil Rights Act makes it illegal to discriminate against people in the areas of employment, financial transactions, housing and public accommodations. Discrimination is prohibited based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, and disability. In employment, discrimination is further prohibited on the basis of age (40-years and over) and tobacco-smoking status. In housing, discrimination is further prohibited based on familial status, which protects people with children in the household under the age of 18-years old and protects women who are pregnant.

For more information, contact the commission at 1.800.292.5566. For details about civil rights and commission activities, visit the website at kchr.ky.gov. For news about civil rights and information pertaining to protected classes, visit the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights Facebook and Twitter sites.