

PARTIES TO THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

CP# 10-18-72726
HUD# 07-19-0566-8

RESPONDENTS

LARRY HUGHES
208 East 1st Street
Ackworth, Iowa 50001

LARRY L. HUGHES REVOCABLE TRUST
208 East 1st Street
Ackworth, Iowa 50001

BETTYE J. HUGHES REVOCABLE TRUST
208 East 1st Street
Ackworth, Iowa 50001

COMPLAINANT

LEISA THOMAS

and

IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Description of the Parties: Complainant alleges discrimination in the area of housing on the basis of race (African American). Complainant alleges she reported her neighbor's race-based harassment to Respondents and they failed to take reasonable action to stop it and their inaction interfered with her right to discrimination-free housing. Respondents deny having discriminated against Complainant, but agree to settle this claim in the underlying action by entering into this Predetermination Settlement Agreement. The subject property is a two-unit conversion, located at 938 Herold Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50315.

Terms of Settlement: A complaint having been filed by Complainant against Respondents with the Commission under Iowa Code Chapter 216 and there having been a preliminary inquiry, the parties do hereby agree and settle the above-captioned matter in the following extent and manner:

Acknowledgment of Fair Housing Laws

1. Respondents agree there shall be no discrimination, harassment, or retaliation of any kind against Complainant or any other person for filing a charge under the “Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965” (ICRA); or because of giving testimony or assistance, or participating in any manner in any investigation, proceeding or hearing under the ICRA; or because of lawful opposition to any practice forbidden by the ICRA. Iowa Code § 216.11(2).
2. Respondents acknowledge the ICRA makes it unlawful to discriminate in the terms, conditions or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling or in the provision of services or facilities in connection with the dwelling because of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, disability, or familial status. Iowa Code § 216.8(1)(b).

Respondents acknowledge that the Federal Fair Housing Act, as amended, makes it unlawful to discriminate in the terms, conditions or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection therewith, because of the person’s race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, national origin, or disability. 42 U.S.C. 3604(b), 3604(f)(2) (§ 804 of the Fair Housing Act).

3. Respondents acknowledge the ICRA makes it unlawful to coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with any person in the exercise or enjoyment of, on account of the person having exercised or enjoyed, or on account of the person having aided or encouraged any other person in the exercise or enjoyment of, any right granted or protected by section 216.8, 216.8A, or 216.15A. Iowa Code § 216.11(A).

Respondents acknowledge the FHA makes it unlawful to coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with any person in the exercise or enjoyment of, or on account of his having exercised or enjoyed, or on account of his having aided or encouraged any other person in the exercise or enjoyment of, any right granted or protected by section 3603, 3604, 3605, or 3606 of this title. 42 U.S.C. 3617.

Voluntary and Full Settlement

4. The parties acknowledge this Predetermination Settlement Agreement is a voluntary and full settlement of the disputed complaint. The parties affirm they have read and fully understand the terms set forth herein. No party has been coerced, intimidated, threatened or in any way forced to become a party to this Agreement.
5. The parties enter into this Agreement in a good faith effort to amicably resolve existing disputes. The execution of this Agreement is not an admission of any wrongdoing or violation of law. Nor is the execution of this Agreement an admission by Complainant that any claims asserted in her complaint are not fully meritorious.
6. The parties agree the execution of this Agreement may be accomplished by separate counterpart executions of this Agreement. The parties agree the original executed signature pages will be attached to the body of this Agreement to constitute one document.

7. Respondents agree the Commission may review compliance with this Agreement. And as part of such review, Respondents agree the Commission may examine witnesses, collect documents, or require written reports, all of which will be conducted in a reasonable manner by the Commission.

Disclosure

8. Because, pursuant to Iowa Code § 216.15A(2)(d), the Commission has not determined that disclosure is not necessary to further the purposes of the ICRA relating to unfair or discriminatory practices in housing or real estate, this Agreement is a public record and subject to public disclosure in accordance with Iowa's Public Records Law, Iowa Code Chapter 22. See Iowa Code § 22.13.

Release

9. Complainant hereby waives, releases, and covenants not to sue Respondents with respect to any matters which were, or might have been alleged as charges filed with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development, or any other anti-discrimination agency, subject to performance by Respondents of the promises and representations contained herein. Complainant agrees any complaint filed with any other anti-discrimination agency, including the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development, which involves the issues in this complaint, shall be closed as Satisfactorily Adjusted.

Fair Housing Training

10. Respondent Larry Hughes and each of Respondents' current employees or agents who are involved in the management or operation of Respondents' residential rental properties will receive training on the requirements of State and Federal Fair Housing Laws within 90 days of their receipt of a Closing Letter from the Commission. The training will include an overview of fair housing laws, but will emphasize the laws prohibiting race-based harassment and different terms and conditions of rental based on race. The training shall be conducted by a qualified person, approved by the Commission or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Respondents also agree to send documentation to the Commission verifying the fair housing training has been completed within ten (10) days of completing the training.

Neutral Landlord Reference

11. Respondents agree they will provide a neutral landlord reference letter to Complainant for her use in response to all future landlord reference checks or inquiries regarding Complainant's tenancy at Respondents' property. Respondents agree to provide the same letter and information in response to any landlord reference inquiry. Respondents agree the letter will advise prospective landlords of the dates of Complainant's tenancy and that she paid her rent on time. Respondents agree they will not provide any negative information or

communicate any issue or concern regarding Complainant's tenancy, including the filing of this complaint.

Within 24-hours of receiving a Closing Letter from the Commission, Respondents agree to note in Complainant's tenant file information describing this promise and responsibility concerning a neutral reference.

Within 24-hours of the Respondents' receipt of a Closing Letter from the Commission, Respondents agree to send Complainant a neutral landlord reference letter as referenced above.

Within 24-hours of receiving a Closing Letter from the Commission, Respondents also agree to send a copy of the landlord reference letter to the Commission, and a copy of the note placed in Complainant's tenant file describing Respondents responsibility to provide verbal and written neutral landlord references for Complainant.

Relief for Complainant

12. Within 24-hours of receiving a Closing Letter from the Commission, Respondents agree to pay Complainant \$725.00 without any deductions. Respondents agree the Settlement Check will be made out to Leisa Thomas and delivered to Sylvia Owens, Iowa Civil Rights Commission, Grimes State Office Building, 400 East 14th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. The Commission will send the check to Complainant via certified mail or Complainant will pick up the Settlement Check at the Commission.
13. Respondents agree to release Complainant from the terms of her rental agreement effective December 15, 2018. Complainant agrees to remove all possessions from apartment 2 that she wishes to retain, on or before December 17, 2018. Respondents agree to consider Complainant's departure as a mutually agreed-upon termination of tenancy. Respondents agree not to seek any monies from Complainant for terminating the rental agreement before its expiration date. Respondents also agree not to seek any monies from Complainant for any alleged cleaning, utilities, pest control or property damage sustained as a result of Complainant's tenancy at Respondents' rental property.

Complainant agrees not to pursue recovery of her rental deposit in small claims court or in any other process or proceeding.

Respondents agree and acknowledge that upon executing this Agreement, Complainant's current account statement will reflect a \$0.00 balance.

Within seven days (7) days of receiving a Closing Letter from the Commission, Respondents will send a letter addressed to Complainant to the Commission verifying that Complainant's Tenant Ledger Report reflects a \$0.00 balance. The Commission will then send a copy of the letter to Complainant.

Reporting and Record-Keeping

- 14. Respondents shall forward to the Commission objective evidence of the successful completion of fair housing training in the form of a Certificate or a letter from the entity conducting the training within ten (10) days of the completion of the training, as evidence of compliance with Term 10 of this Agreement.
- 15. Within 24-hours of receiving a Closing Letter from the Commission, Respondents also agree to send a copy of the landlord reference letter to the Commission, and a copy of the note placed in Complainant’s tenant file describing Respondents responsibility to provide verbal and written neutral landlord references for Complainant. as evidence of compliance with Term 11 of this Agreement.

All required documentation of compliance must be submitted via email or U.S. Mail to:

Sylvia Owens
Iowa Civil Rights Commission
Grimes State Office Building
400 East 14th Street,
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
sylvia.owens@iowa.gov
Telephone: 515-281-6434

Larry Hughes, RESPONDENT

Date

Larry L. Hughes Revocable Trust, RESPONDENT

Date

Bettye J. Hughes Revocable Trust, RESPONDENT

Date

Leisa Thomas, COMPLAINANT

Date

Kristin H. Johnson, DIRECTOR
IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

Date