



## Hastings, Minnesota, Landlord to Pay \$400,000 to Settle Justice Department Sexual Harassment Lawsuit

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WASHINGTON – The Justice Department today announced that a Hastings, Minn., landlord has agreed to pay \$400,000 to settle allegations that he sexually harassed female tenants.

The landlord, Ronald Bathrick, owned and managed rental properties in Hastings and St. Paul. The Justice Department alleged that Bathrick subjected female tenants to severe and unwelcome sexual harassment, including unwanted sexual advances and contact; conditioned the terms and conditions of women's tenancy on the granting of sexual favors; and entered the apartments of female tenants without permission or notice.

"No woman should be prevented from enjoying a safe and comfortable home because she is the victim of unwanted sexual advances by a landlord," said Wan J. Kim, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "The Department is committed to the vigorous enforcement of all of our nation's fair housing laws."

Pending approval by U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota, Bathrick will pay \$360,000 to the alleged victims, plus a \$40,000 civil penalty to the United States. He has also agreed to hire an independent management company to manage his rental properties.

Fighting illegal housing discrimination is a top priority of the Justice Department. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales announced Operation Home Sweet Home, a concentrated initiative to expose and eliminate housing discrimination in America. This initiative was inspired by the plight of displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina who were suddenly forced to find new places to live. Operation Home Sweet Home is not limited to the areas hit by Hurricane Katrina and targets housing discrimination all over the country. More information about Operation Home Sweet Home is available at the Justice Department Web site at <http://www.usdoj.gov/fairhousing>.

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability and familial status. During this Administration, the Civil Rights Division has increased by 36% the number of sexual harassment cases filed, as compared with the immediately preceding equivalent time period. And in FY 2006, the Civil Rights Division filed more sexual harassment cases than in any year in its history. In fact, during this Administration the Division has obtained judgments and settlements totaling more than \$3.6 million in monetary relief in cases alleging sexual harassment in housing. More information about the Civil Rights Division and the laws it enforces is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt>.

Individuals who believe that they may have been victims of housing discrimination can call the Housing Discrimination Tip Line (1-800-896-7743), email the Justice Department at [fairhousing@usdoj.gov](mailto:fairhousing@usdoj.gov), or contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at 1-800-669-9777.

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