



Department of Justice

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2006
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FACT SHEET: DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE **INITIATIVE TO COMBAT HOUSING DISCRIMINATION** **“OPERATION HOME SWEET HOME”**

“As a Nation, and as individuals, we must be vigilant in responding to discrimination wherever we find it and ensuring that minority families have access to housing.”

President George W. Bush, April 15, 2003

Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales today announced Operation Home Sweet Home, a concentrated initiative to expose and eliminate housing discrimination in America. This initiative will focus on improved targeting of discrimination tests, increased testing, and public awareness efforts.

The Department of Justice currently operates a testing program dedicated to proactively uncovering housing discrimination. The program is conducted primarily through paired tests, an event in which two individuals—one acting as the “control group” (e.g., white male) and the other as the “test group” (e.g., black male)—pose as prospective buyers or renters of real estate for the purpose of determining whether a housing provider is complying with the fair housing laws.

Key Components of Operation Home Sweet Home:

Improved Targeting

- Concentrated testing for housing discrimination in areas recovering from the effects of Hurricane Katrina and in areas where Katrina victims have been relocated. Hurricane Katrina has resulted in a large number of displaced persons, many of them minorities, who are seeking new housing.
- Concentrated testing in areas that, based on federal data, have experienced a significant volume of bias-related crimes like cross burnings or assaults on minorities.
- Outreach to local organizations to better target our testing to problematic areas.

Expanded Resources and Increased Testing

- Over the next two years, Operation Home Sweet Home will increase the number of paired test investigations, ensuring an all time high in testing since the testing program was created in 1991.

Public Education and Tiplines

- A new website devoted to fair housing enforcement will have an online mechanism for citizens to submit tips and complaints, as well as obtain information about what constitutes housing-based discrimination. The new site will be launched on March 1, 2006, and will be found at www.usdoj.gov/fairhousing.
- A toll-free tip line will be created for citizens who feel they have been a victim of housing discrimination.

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