

As we previously reported, an updated settlement agreement was filed for Thompson v. HUD on 24 August. The highlights from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund summary of the Agreement (shown below) remind us of and emphasize two points:

1. The plaintiffs proved that **HUD violated the Fair Housing Act**. HUD had created “government-sponsored racial segregation”.
2. The remedy was to allow the plaintiffs (Public Housing residents) the opportunity to escape from high-poverty neighborhoods, in the City of Baltimore, by giving them **the opportunity to live throughout the 5-county Baltimore region, using Housing Choice Vouchers** and supported with mobility counseling.

After the **devastating loss that HUD suffered** in this case, it is baffling how they could order the City of Galveston and the GHA to implement a plan containing the **same blatant violations**, AND **refuse to even consider a regional approach**. Does anyone think that a judge will allow them to do that?

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*“BALTIMORE – Today, African-American families, including current and former residents of Baltimore public housing, filed a proposed settlement in the U.S. District Court of Maryland to resolve a long-running fair housing class action. Known as Thompson v. HUD, this case seeks to eradicate the legacy of nearly a century of **government-sponsored racial segregation in the Baltimore Region** that has left thousands of African-American families **perpetually locked in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty — in violation of the U.S. Constitution and federal civil rights laws.***

*The key element of the settlement is an agreement to continue the successful and nationally recognized Baltimore Housing Mobility Program, which was launched nearly a decade ago in an earlier phase of the Thompson case. Through this voluntary program, **families can choose to move to mixed-income neighborhoods throughout the Baltimore Region, with better access to employment and educational opportunities.**”*

“... Judge Garbis gave public housing residents a precedent-setting civil rights victory in 2005. He ruled that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) violated the Fair Housing Act by unfairly concentrating African-American public housing residents in the most impoverished, segregated areas of Baltimore City. Judge Garbis held that HUD must take a regional approach to promoting fair housing opportunities throughout the Baltimore Region.”

“At a trial in 2006, HUD’s own witnesses confirmed that the Baltimore Region’s public housing is, and always has been, racially segregated. Those witnesses also testified that, far from fulfilling HUD’s constitutional obligations to eliminate the vestiges of intentional discrimination, virtually none of the billions of dollars spent by HUD in the Baltimore Region went to offering Baltimore public housing families any meaningful opportunity to live in integrated communities.”

“Regional Housing Opportunities: Over the past decade, this program — which is currently administered by Metropolitan Baltimore Quadel, a nationally respected company — has assisted more than 1,800 families who have voluntarily chosen to move from public housing, and other areas of deep poverty in Baltimore City, to neighborhoods throughout Baltimore City and the surrounding region that are in low poverty areas and offer better educational and economic opportunities. Each family that chooses to participate receives a Housing Choice Voucher, high-quality housing and credit counseling, and support with the transition to the new neighborhood and schools.”

<http://www.naacpldf.org/press-release/baltimore-public-housing-families-win-settlement-fair-housing-lawsuit>