

Without Social Security Numbers, Illegal Immigrants Face Eviction

By: Antonio Olivo, The Washington Post

The owners of a Northern Virginia mobile-home park are trying to evict about 15 residents who don't have Social Security numbers and are in the country illegally, an effort that attorneys for the families say violates federal and state fair housing laws.

The battles unfolding at individual court hearings hinge on whether the mobile-home park's owners can demand Social Security numbers as proof of identity. The cases illustrate the fragile foothold that low-wage workers, particularly immigrants, have in affluent Northern Virginia.



Lawyers with the Legal Aid Justice Center are fighting the eviction proceedings in Fairfax County's General District Court, arguing that Waples Mobile Home Park is discriminating against the residents by refusing to accept as proof of identity tax identification numbers that the Internal Revenue Service provides to non-U.S. citizens working in the country.

Waples is owned by a limited partnership headed by Albert J. Dwoskin, who did not return calls for comment. Dwoskin's property management company — A.J. Dwoskin & Associates — said it insists on Social Security numbers from all new tenants as a way to conduct background checks on those residents.

"Everyone has to have an ID, a Social Security card and provide pay stubs so they can qualify to live here," said Josephine Giambanco, who manages the Waples site. "We ask that for everybody. Everyone who is over the age of 18 years old."

Ivy Finkenstadt, a Legal Aid Justice Center lawyer representing the families, argued that her clients are being targeted because of their immigration status. Under Virginia's landlord-tenant law, landlords have the option of accepting the IRS tax identification numbers as proof of identity for new renters, which Finkenstadt said Waples has previously done for some residents. The tax ID numbers also can be used for background checks, but not as effectively as Social Security numbers.

For the families, the eviction proceedings threaten a rare source of affordable living in a region where housing within the budgets of low-income immigrants often means cramped, overcrowded apartments or illegally converted basements.

Dagoberto and Rosie Reyes said they jumped at the chance to move out of an Annandale apartment they shared with several other tenants and into Waples three years ago, after purchasing a mobile home for \$25,000. The mobile-home park, behind a shopping plaza off Lee Highway, is close to both their jobs; Dagoberto Reyes works as a house painter, and Rosie Reyes cleans houses.

Without Social Security Numbers, Illegal Immigrants Face Eviction (Cont'd)

“We saved and saved,” Rosie Reyes said, about the Salvadoran couple’s effort to buy their first home. “I worked three jobs at one point. My husband worked two. When I cleaned houses, I took my son with me, so we didn’t have to pay for a babysitter.”

The couple has received an eviction notice and is trying to figure out where to move next.



Waples is one of a handful of mobile-home parks in the Washington area that date to the middle of last century and increasingly are occupied by immigrants with low income. There is a tot lot for kids, a small soccer field and a picnic area. Monthly utilities and usage fees are about \$900.

“We all get along pretty good,” said Brad Fraser, who has lived there for seven years and has seen many Latinos move in.

In recent years, some immigrant families have doubled up inside the mobile homes, which include living rooms, kitchenettes and up to three bedrooms. Others took over mobile homes that had been bought and registered by friends or relatives, assuming responsibility for the monthly fees.

Last fall, the site’s property managers began asking residents who were not registered with the management office to provide Social Security numbers — a problem for those who are not U.S. citizens. Soon after, Waples managers sent eviction notices.

“The fact that the company changed what it would accept has an impact on who can rent there, and that effect is discriminatory,” said Finkenstadt, the Legal Aid lawyer.

Giambanco, the property manager, declined to comment on previous policies, and a Waples attorney did not return calls for comment.

Elba Navarro, who has lived at Waples with her husband and three children for 10 years, said the policy change has spread anxiety through a once-calm community.

“They told us ‘If you don’t have a Social, you’ll have to leave,’ ” said Navarro, whose household includes a mixture of family members with legal immigration status and others without. “It caused a lot of fear. One had to hide the clothes of whoever wasn’t registered.”

Michelle Krocker, director of the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance, said low-wage workers like those at Waples have few other options in a county where the median monthly rent is about \$1,600, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

“It’s close to work, and it’s all they can afford,” Krocker said. “As a local economy, we need those workers to be here.”

Without Social Security Numbers, Illegal Immigrants Face Eviction (Cont'd)

Maria Gonzalez, who is one of the people being targeted for eviction, said she worries about finding a new home close to her job as a housekeeper for a nearby hotel, currently a five-minute commute away.

“It’s very difficult,” she said.

Several Waples residents targeted for eviction said they have not yet paid off what they owe on their mobile homes. At the same time, many are resigned to leaving.

“We’d like at least enough time for the children to be out of school,” Guery Escobar said, sitting with a group of neighbors inside his narrow living room.

D.C. Moves to Make Lead Paint Laws Tougher on Owners By: Alex Rossello



The Flint water crisis renewed the national debate on protecting the public from lead exposure. Consequently, policymakers have made rental housing a target of regulation as a mechanism to protect America’s most vulnerable populations. In line with this trend, the DC Council is now considering whether to bolster its regulations to prevent lead exposure.

Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen has proposed a bill that requires apartment owners and operators to provide residents with evidence that a property or unit is free of lead paint or that exposure risks have been mitigated. The legislation requires owners to provide the applicant or resident with the information via a “clearance report” compiled by a certified inspector. The report must be distributed to residents when they sign their lease or at renewal. Additionally, owners and operators must submit these reports to District officials upon renewal of their rental license. The legislation remains pending and has not yet been scheduled for hearing.

When he introduced the bill, Allen referred to a recent Washington Post report citing the number of children with high blood lead levels in subsidized housing. “We need to give District residents, especially families, peace of mind and the protection of the law to know their home isn’t putting the health of their young children at risk.”

This proposed legislation appears to be duplicative of existing federal regulations that govern lead-based paint in affordable housing. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has strict lead-based paint regulations that apply to any properties receiving federal assistance. Such regulations require an investigation of the home and potential sources of lead exposure when a child residing in affordable housing is identified to have an



David Geier
MDU ACCOUNT MANAGER
COX DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

901 S George Washington Blvd
Wichita, KS 67211
(316) 260-7341 direct
(316) 285-4693 cell
David.Geier@cox.com
www.cox.com

D.C. Moves to Make Lead Paint Laws Tougher on Owners (Cont'd)

elevated blood lead level (defined as greater than 5 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood). If any lead hazards are found, the unit must be remediated. It should also be noted that higher lead levels in children in the District could be the result of inconsistent enforcement and not ineffective legislation.

In terms of private housing, this bill would impose burdensome requirements on DC property owners. The proposal goes far beyond applicable existing laws which require disclosure of any *known* lead hazards and any available records pertaining to it. Councilmember Allen's proposal would require property owners to prove their properties are lead free prior to the execution of any new lease or renewal. The required assessments and remediation would be both time consuming and a costly expense that would eventually be passed down to the consumer. Moreover, the bill forces owners to remove all molding and baseboards that contain lead paint regardless of condition, despite the fact that lead paint is not toxic to humans unless it is deteriorated or damaged.

In their discussions with policymakers, it is important for the NAA affiliate network to emphasize that lead is a naturally occurring element and has historically been used in a wide variety of products, including, pipes, plumbing materials, gasoline, airline fuel, automobile gasoline, old playground materials, and household items such as toys, jewelry, and cosmetics. As policymakers work on legislation, they should not place the onus solely on apartment owners and operators to solve the problem with testing and remediation requirements.



WELCOME TO LIFE ... WITHOUT PESTS!



AMERICAN PEST MANAGEMENT INC.

Peggy Avilez
Wichita Regional Manager
pavilez@americanpestonline.com
WICHITA, KANSAS

PHONE (800)748-8287 LOCAL (316)262-7378
WWW.AMERICANPESTONLINE.COM



FURNITURE OPTIONS
An Employee Owned Company

Renting furniture, housewares & electronics within one business day.
1336 E. Douglas | 316.263.5750 | FurnitureOptions.com

THANK YOU TO OUR NEWSLETTER SPONSORS:



FLAMINGOink

360 E William, Suite 101 | Wichita, KS 67202
T: 316-655-6544 | E: orders@flamingoink.co
flamingoink.co

Facebook Instagram Twitter

COPY & PRINT | FLIERS | BUSINESS CARDS | PRESENTATIONS | +MORE




METRO
APPLIANCES & MORE

BETTY WARES
ARD SALES

3545 N. Hillside
Wichita, KS 67219
316-941-4040
800-536-5030
Fax: 316-941-4050
Cell: 316-461-7472

b.wares@metroappliancesandmore.com
metroappliancesandmore.com

TULSA • OKLAHOMA CITY • EDMOND • WICHITA • JOPLIN
SPRINGFIELD • LITTLE ROCK • SPRINGDALE • JONESBORO



**WESTLAKE
COMMERCIAL**

Service Passion Respect Integrity Teamwork Excellence

David Pfaff
Business Development Manager
Wichita
dpfaff@westlakehardware.com 316.259.4876



ACT Putting your world back together!
Advance Catastrophe
Technologies, Inc.

Fire Water Storm Mold Trauma

www.ineedACT.com
24/7 Emergency Response >>> 316-262-9992



**CORNEJO
CONSTRUCTION**

CURSTIN JINKENS
ESTIMATOR
PAVING MAINTENANCE
curstin.jinkens@cornejocorp.com

2060 E. TULSA
WICHITA, KS 67216
316-522-5100 OFFICE
316-522-8187 FAX
316-617-4759 CELL



METRO
APPLIANCES & MORE

KIMBERLY ROBERTSON
ARD SALES

3545 N. Hillside
Wichita, KS 67219
316-941-4040
800-536-5030
Fax: 316-941-4050
Cell: 316-519-4383

k.robertson@metroappliancesandmore.com
www.MetroAppliancesAndMore.com

TULSA • OKLAHOMA CITY • EDMOND • WICHITA • JOPLIN
SPRINGFIELD • LITTLE ROCK • LOWELL • JONESBORO



REP REAL ESTATE PERSONNEL
Staffing the Finest Companies Since 1993

Ph: (316) 665-6575
Fax: (316) 223-1038
Esther@RealtyJobs.com
www.RealtyJobs.com
300 W. Douglas Ave. - Suite 122
Wichita, KS 67202

Esther Mills
General Manager

www.RealtyJobs.com