



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT FILED AGAINST RE/MAX ALLIANCE/LEE GARLAND & RITA JENSEN TEAM AGENTS**

#### **National Fair Housing Alliance Investigation Reveals Race Discrimination in Jackson, Mississippi, Real Estate Market**

WASHINGTON – September 9, 2015 – Today, the National Fair Housing Alliance (“NFHA”) filed a housing discrimination complaint with the Department of Housing and Urban Development against Lorgroup, LLC and real estate agents in the RE/MAX Alliance/Lee Garland and Rita Jensen Team, including Lee Garland, Randy Inman, Lisa Bourgoyne, and Chase Belk, alleging violations of the Fair Housing Act.

NFHA conducted a series of fair housing tests of the Lee Garland and Rita Jensen Team of RE/MAX Alliance located in Brandon, Mississippi. During the roughly year-long investigation, white and black testers posed as home buyers and contacted the company to view homes in Jackson, Mississippi. The testers were similarly-qualified and had similar housing preferences.

According to the NFHA complaint, testing revealed that agents of the Lee Garland and Rita Jensen Team of RE/MAX Alliance discriminated on the basis of race. The agents steered the white home seekers away from interracial neighborhoods in Jackson, which is majority African American, and into majority white areas such as Pearl, Ridgeland, Richland, Clinton, Madison County, Rankin County, and Palahatchie. Conversely, the African American testers who inquired about properties in the Jackson area were often never called back and were generally provided very limited information.

During one test, both the white and black testers requested information about the same foreclosed property located in Jackson, Mississippi. The white tester was told that the house was under contract and was offered information about other properties. An agent showed the white tester multiple homes, mostly located in the predominantly white areas of Pearl and Richland, Mississippi. In contrast, the African American tester was not able to speak with an agent after leaving several messages at the agency’s primary contact number and ultimately was not afforded the opportunity to see homes in the area.

Under the federal Fair Housing Act it is illegal to discriminate in the housing market on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or familial status.

*Founded in 1988, the **National Fair Housing Alliance** ([www.nationalfairhousing.org](http://www.nationalfairhousing.org)) is a consortium of more than 220 private, non-profit fair housing organizations, state and local civil rights agencies, and individuals from throughout the United States. Headquartered in Washington, DC, the National Fair Housing Alliance, through comprehensive education, advocacy and enforcement programs, provides equal access to apartments, houses, mortgage loans and insurance policies for all residents of the nation.*