



For Immediate Release

December 21, 2018

Contacts: BPI Chicago: Hoy McConnell, Executive Director  
Office: 312-759-8259 Mobile: 312-718-0111

Chicago Housing Authority Office of Communications  
Molly Sullivan: 312-786-3344; mobile 312-399-2105 [msullivan@thecha.org](mailto:msullivan@thecha.org)  
Matthew Aguilar: 312-935-2646; [maguilar@thecha.org](mailto:maguilar@thecha.org)

**CHA, BPI ANNOUNCE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT IN LANDMARK  
GAUTREAUX HOUSING DISCRIMINATION CASE**

*Agreement Should End More Than 50 Years of Court-Supervised  
Public Housing Policy in Chicago*

CHICAGO (Dec. 21, 2018) – Parties in the landmark *Gautreaux v. Chicago Housing Authority* federal lawsuit, which sought to end systematic racial discrimination in Chicago’s public housing and which changed public housing policy for families of color across the nation, today announced a proposed settlement in the case.

The Chicago Housing Authority and BPI lawyers representing the plaintiffs in the *Gautreaux* desegregation litigation filed a motion in federal court today asking the Court to approve a “settlement agreement.” The proposed settlement creates a detailed road map for CHA to complete its *Gautreaux* obligations—which have required the agency to offset the impacts of racial segregation caused by its historic building and tenant assignment practices—by July 31, 2024. At this time, the *Gautreaux* case would end, bringing to a close one of the longest-running federal court cases in U.S. history and concluding a landmark chapter in the national civil rights movement.

“We believe this proposed settlement provides a victory for public housing residents who will gain substantial new opportunities under the agreement, while at the same time giving CHA management additional latitude to achieve the agreement’s goals over the next five years,” said BPI’s Alexander Polikoff, lead *Gautreaux* counsel, who has worked on the case for years with attorney Julie Elena Brown.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel praised CHA and BPI for the years of work on the case and for their commitment to seeing this case through to a possible end. “Today represents a major step forward in our mission to create fair and equitable affordable housing for all Chicagoans,” Mayor Emanuel said. “This landmark settlement is a fitting legacy to the years of hard work by CHA and BPI to reach an agreement that remedies past wrongs and ensures a strong foundation for future housing development strategies.”

Under terms of the proposed settlement, CHA is obligated to:

- Abide by a detailed schedule for planning and construction of its “Plan for Transformation” mixed-income communities currently underway or planned.
- Develop all housing for families in non-mixed income communities in opportunity areas until at least 50 percent of all non-mixed-income family units are in opportunity areas.
- Strengthen its voucher program to better enable families to live in opportunity areas, if they choose to do so.
- Create early learning childhood development programs at four public housing complexes, replicating a program currently in place at the Altgeld Gardens development.

“In the three years that I have had the privilege of leading CHA, I have been impressed with the partnerships formed by the CHA, BPI, community leaders and resident leaders and with the commitment of CHA staff to equitable access to decent and safe housing, good schools, community amenities, training, jobs and parks and recreation for all who depend on CHA for their housing,” said CHA CEO Eugene E. Jones, Jr.

The motion asks that U.S. District Judge Marvin Aspen to hold a “fairness hearing” on Jan. 17, 2019 at which current CHA residents and those on waiting lists for public housing be given an opportunity to testify on how they view the agreement. Final rulings and actions by Judge Aspen would then follow those hearings.

The agreement acknowledges that the CHA has accomplished much over the past 50 years under the Gautreaux case, including:

- Replacement of its large, 100 percent public housing projects such as Cabrini-Green, Stateway Gardens and the Robert Taylor Homes with new mixed-income communities;
- Development of substantial new or rehabilitated public housing apartments across the city; and
- Creation of a voucher program that currently provides subsidized housing opportunities in private market units in all 77 of Chicago’s community areas and which now serves the greatest number of families.

#### ADDENDUM FOR BACKGROUND

Filed in 1966 by attorney Alexander Polikoff on behalf of Dorothy Gautreaux and other public housing residents, the *Gautreaux* lawsuit put a spotlight on how the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) had engaged in a pattern of racial discrimination and segregation and violated the plaintiffs' civil rights by concentrating its subsidized apartments for low-income families solely in poor, minority neighborhoods. Polikoff later joined the non-profit advocacy group Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPP) which spearheaded the case for decades.

###