

A white female tenant asked her landlord several times to repair the roof of the building housing her rental unit. She claimed whenever it rained, water would leak into one of the closets in her apartment. Consequently, she could never use the closet and she had a mess to clean up after every rain. She also asked her landlord more than once to disengage the radiators in her apartment because they ran too hot, could only be controlled by the tenant downstairs, and served only as a back-up heating source for her apartment.

The white tenant claimed while her landlord refused or ignored her requests to repair the roof and turn off the radiators, he responded quickly to the requests made by the tenant downstairs, a Latino family. She stated the landlord provided the Latino family with a new refrigerator, stove, and carpeting. She claimed it was unfair for the Latino family to receive these new items when her repair needs went unattended. She claimed the landlord treated the Latino family better than her because she is white and not Latino.

Upon filing her complaint with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission alleging discrimination in housing based on race and national origin in violation of the State's anti-discrimination law, the "Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965," Commission staff offered the parties an opportunity to resolve the complaint through mediation. Even though the landlord denied discrimination and cited legitimate, non-discriminatory reasons for his actions, he agreed to try mediation. And with the help of a Commission mediator, the parties negotiated terms of settlement. The tenant agreed to close her complaint and the landlord agreed to repair the roof and disengage the radiators, within specific, mutually agreed upon timetables.