Housing Discrimination Lawsuits Resolved

Los Angeles, CA – October 19, 2018 – The parties agreed to settle litigation brought by two non-profit organizations and several individual Plaintiffs claiming that the owners and managers of several apartment complexes in Koreatown violated fair housing laws. The agreement provides that Defendants, including Roxbury Ventures, LLC, will adopt additional policies and practices that it believes will strengthen its commitment to equal opportunity in housing including the set aside of several units for Section 8 Housing Choice voucher recipients, comprehensive training of its property managers and apartment managers and the adoption of extensive written non-discrimination policies.

Two non-profit organizations – Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) and Step Up on Second Street – and 13 individual tenants who live in buildings that are owned and operated, or were formerly owned and operated, by Defendants, including Roxbury Ventures, LLC, in the Koreatown neighborhood of Los Angeles brought suit in federal court in 2016 alleging that Defendants, including Roxbury Ventures, LLC, violated federal and state fair housing laws by discriminating based on national origin, family status and disability. Defendants denied all of Plaintiffs’ allegations and agreed to settle the case to avoid costly and protracted litigation.

“We appreciate Roxbury Ventures, LLC’s efforts to resolve this dispute. The Defendants have made important commitments to ensure fair housing policies and practices are in place for its Koreatown apartment buildings, and current and future residents will benefit from these commitments,” said Anne Richardson, Directing Attorney at Public Counsel.

“My clients are looking forward to continuing their commitment to fair housing practices, while implementing new policies to provide superior protections for residents,” said Thomas H. Citron, lead counsel for Defendants.

As part of the settlement, the parties agreed to the following terms:

- Defendants will pay SAJE and Step Up approximately $208,000 in damages, the thirteen individual plaintiffs a total of approximately $677,000 in damages, approximately $173,000 in litigation costs and a substantial monetary amount for attorneys’ fees.

- Defendants also agree to comply with the following terms:
  - Defendants believe that they have been in compliance with fair housing laws and agree to continue to comply with all fair housing laws;
  - Defendants agree to strengthen its training of residential corporate managers and its onsite managers and to have them complete more comprehensive training programs in property management and fair housing;
  - Defendants agree to repair any deficiencies in Plaintiffs’ apartments identified by city inspectors;
  - Defendants will demonstrate a bolstered commitment to providing affordable housing by agreeing to rent the next seven (7) apartment units that become vacant to applicants who receive Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers exclusively;
  - Defendants agree to adopt a written non-discrimination policy and a written policy for handling requests for reasonable accommodations or modifications consistent with federal guidance;
  - Defendants agree to ensure that advertisements for rental of apartments comply with federal government recommendations. Defendants will advertise in Spanish on
elclasificado.com and if Defendants advertise vacancies by posting signs, Defendants agree to post such signs in both Spanish and English;
  
- Defendants agree to post Spanish and English versions of federal and state fair housing posters and to provide residents the state fair housing pamphlet in both Spanish and English; and
- Defendants agree to ensure that their forms comply with the California Civil Code.

SAJE is a non-profit organization that builds community power and leadership for economic justice and Step Up on Second Street delivers compassionate support to people experiencing serious mental health issues, especially chronically homeless individuals, to help them recover, stabilize, and integrate into the community.

The Plaintiffs were represented by: Deepika Sharma and Anne Richardson of Public Counsel, the nation’s largest pro bono law firm – helping to build stronger communities through direct legal services, policy advocacy and civil rights litigation; Scott Chang and Azadeh Hosseinian of Housing Rights Center, the largest fair housing organization in California that works for justice and equality for all in housing; Public Advocates Inc., a non-profit law firm and advocacy organization that advances education, housing and transit equity in partnership with communities throughout California; Matthew Sloan, Emily Aviad, Richard Schwartz, Alyssa Clover, and Rachael Schiffman of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, a full service international law firm; and Brancart & Brancart, a private law firm that specializes in fair housing litigation and is based in Pescadero, California.

The Defendants were represented by Thomas H. Citron and Philip Treacy of The Law Offices of Citron & Citron, and Barry Reagan and Jeffrey Halfen from Slaughter, Reagan & Cole, LLP.

The six related cases, which were all before U.S. District Court Judge Stephen V. Wilson, are as follows: Martinez, et al., Case No. 2:17-cv-03581; Ramos, et al., Case No. 2:17-cv-03582; Escamilla, et al., Case No. 2:17-cv-03583; Allen, et al., Case No. 2:17-cv-03584; Rivera, et al., Case No. 2:17-cv-03585; and Guerrero, et al., Case No. 2:17-cv-03586.

Contact Information:

On behalf of the Plaintiffs:
Joshua Busch, Director of Communications—Public Counsel; (213) 385-2977
Scott Chang—Housing Rights Center; (800) 477-5977
Matthew Sloan—Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher and Flom, LLP; (213) 687-5000

On behalf of the Defendants:
Thomas H. Citron—The Law Offices of Citron & Citron; (310) 450-6695
Barry Reagan—Slaughter, Reagan & Cole LLP; (805) 658-7800