



Department of Fair Employment & Housing

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DFEH Settles Marital and Familial Status and Sexual Orientation Discrimination Lawsuit Against Ventura County Landlords

Landlords advertised only for single, straight tenants with no children

Sacramento – The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) has settled a housing discrimination case alleging that landlords, a married couple, refused to rent a guesthouse to another couple because they were married and expecting a child.

The couple who was seeking to rent filed complaints with DFEH in December 2017 alleging that when they responded to rental advertisements on Craigslist.com and Trulia.com, defendants refused to rent to them, stating the guesthouse was for only one person. Defendants rent three bedrooms in their home in Moorpark, CA, plus a guesthouse on the property divided into two units. Their online ads said the unit was for “ONE person ONLY, NO couples, only ONE person...” Defendants also posted a similar advertisement for the rental on Roommates.com, indicating that they preferred “Straight men, Straight women” as tenants, and no children.

After an unsuccessful mandatory mediation, DFEH filed a civil complaint in the Ventura County Superior Court (Case No. 56-2018-00521859-CU-CR-VTA) on December 18, 2018. The lawsuit alleged discrimination because of marital and familial status and sexual orientation.

“California’s fair housing laws apply to owner-occupied houses when the owners rent to multiple people in multiple units on the property,” said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. “And the law prohibits all discriminatory language in housing advertisements.”

In settling the case, defendants will pay a total of \$15,000, including damages to complainants and attorney’s fees and costs to DFEH. Additionally, defendants will implement an anti-discrimination policy, attend fair housing training, and submit annual compliance reports to the DFEH for three years.

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The DFEH is the state agency charged with enforcing California’s civil rights laws. The mission of the DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit the DFEH’s web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

