



Civil Rights Department

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Civil Rights Department Takes Action to Combat Discriminatory Employment and Housing Advertisements

In first three weeks of April, CRD issues 66 compliance notices to correct violations of California's Fair Employment and Housing Act

SACRAMENTO – During National Second Chance Month and Fair Housing Month, the California Civil Rights Department (CRD) today highlighted ongoing, proactive efforts to identify and correct discriminatory employment and housing advertisements. The department regularly conducts reviews of online advertising to document and address statements that unlawfully attempt to screen out potential tenants or job candidates on the basis of protected categories such as criminal history information or the use of housing assistance programs. In just the first three weeks of April, CRD has issued 66 compliance notices to correct violations of California's Fair Employment and Housing Act.

"Discrimination is unacceptable in all its forms," **said CRD Director Kevin Kish**. "Ads saying 'No Section 8' or 'No Felons' are discriminatory and a relic of the past. They deny people an opportunity to have a fair chance at getting a job or finding housing. We're committed to using the tools at our disposal to protect the rights of our state's residents, including litigation and proactive sweeps of online advertisements. If you've encountered a discriminatory ad, report it and we'll do our part to get it taken down."

Under California law, employers and housing providers are prohibited from including discriminatory statements in job and housing advertisements, such as "No Felons" or "No Section 8." These types of statements seek to unlawfully dissuade potential tenants or job candidates from applying and exacerbate housing and employment inequities. Under the Fair Employment and Housing Act and its regulations, employers and housing providers cannot impose blanket bans on considering individuals who have previously been involved in the criminal legal system. Instead, they must make individualized assessments and may only reject an applicant if there is a direct and adverse relationship between the offense and the job requirements or housing circumstances. For instance, a grocery store may not reject a job applicant solely because of a past misdemeanor for excessive noise. In the housing context, California law prohibits housing providers from categorically rejecting applicants based solely on protected characteristics, including their use of housing assistance programs such as Section 8. Rejecting an applicant for their use of programs like Section 8 is also known as source of income discrimination.

As part of CRD's efforts to safeguard the civil rights of California's residents, the department regularly conducts proactive online reviews of advertisements, receives and reviews complaints of unlawful advertising, and issues compliance letters where appropriate to notify housing providers and employers of violations and their responsibilities under existing civil rights laws. Since 2022, CRD has reviewed more than 7,500 ads and issued more than 680 compliance letters to correct violations.

In addition to conducting online sweeps of discriminatory advertisements, CRD engages in a wide range of enforcement and outreach to combat criminal history and source of income discrimination. Earlier this month, the department [announced a \\$35,000 settlement](#) to end a Novato apartment complex's alleged ban on renting to people using Section 8. Last year, CRD filed a [first-of-its-kind lawsuit](#) against Ralphs over alleged violations of the Fair Chance Act, which resulted in the unlawful denial of employment opportunities to hundreds of job applicants. The department also [reached a \\$10,000 settlement](#) over an Inglewood apartment complex's alleged unlawful rejection of a prospective tenant on the basis of criminal history information. In October, CRD [launched a new monthly "Civil Rights 101" webinar series](#) to support increased awareness of state and federal civil rights protections, including with respect to criminal history and source of income discrimination. The department also recently developed an [online interactive guide](#) to help identify potential violations of the Fair Chance Act and maintains a toolkit to [help employers comply](#) with the law's requirements.

If a member of the public encounters a discriminatory ad, they can report it to CRD [here](#). In addition, individuals who have been the victim of discrimination can file a complaint with CRD. General information about CRD's complaint process and how to file a complaint is available [here](#). Information regarding California's protections against source of income discrimination and discrimination in housing in general is available [here](#) and [here](#). Information on criminal history discrimination is available [here](#) and [here](#).

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The California Civil Rights Department (CRD) is the state agency charged with enforcing California's civil rights laws. CRD's mission is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state-funded programs and activities, and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit calcivilrights.ca.gov.

