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8 Attorneys for Plaintiff,
9 Civil Rights Department

(Fee Exempt, Gov. Code, § 6103)

10
11 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
12 **IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

13
14 CIVIL RIGHTS DEPARTMENT, an
15 agency of the State of California,

16 Plaintiff,

17 vs.

18 MYRTLE PROPERTIES, a limited
19 liability corporation,

20 Defendant.

Case No. **26STCV15944**

**CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT FOR
INJUNCTIVE, DECLARATORY, AND
MONETARY RELIEF**

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

1 **I. INTRODUCTION**

2 1. Plaintiff, California Civil Rights Department (“CRD”), an agency of the State of
3 California, brings this enforcement action against Defendant Myrtle Properties to enforce state fair
4 housing and civil rights laws on behalf of the Real Party in Interest, Patrick Paige, a disabled veteran
5 who receives a HUD VASH (Veterans’ Affairs Supportive Housing) voucher. Defendant refused to
6 rent a unit to him because of his source of income, in violation of the Fair Employment and Housing
7 Act, Government Code section 12900 et seq., as well as the Unruh Civil Rights Act (“Unruh Act”),
8 Civil Code section 51.

9 2. CRD seeks to prevent future violations of these civil rights statutes by Defendant.
10 Accordingly, CRD seeks injunctive and declaratory relief to correct Defendant’s unlawful behavior
11 as well as compensatory damages on behalf of individuals in California who were denied housing
12 opportunities because of Defendant’s discriminatory practices.

13 **II. PARTIES**

14 3. Plaintiff CRD is an agency of the state tasked with investigating and prosecuting
15 civil rights actions. (Gov. Code, § 12930 subd. (f)(1)-(5).) Government Code section 12930 confers
16 on CRD authority to bring litigation on behalf of itself in the public interest pursuant to the
17 prohibitions on housing discrimination under FEHA and the Unruh Act. (*Id.*, § 12930, subds. (f)(2),
18 (h).)

19 4. California’s legislature exercised its police power in enacting the FEHA and
20 declaring that “the opportunity to seek, obtain, and hold housing without discrimination...is hereby
21 recognized as and declared to be a civil right.” (*Id.*, § 12921 subd. (b); see also *Dept. Fair Empl. &*
22 *Hous. v. Cathy’s Creations, Inc.* (2020) 54 Cal.App.5th 404, 410 [“CRD’s task is to represent the
23 interests of the state and to effectuate the declared public policy of the state to protect and safeguard
24 the rights and opportunities of all persons from unlawful discrimination.”].) In furtherance of these
25 goals, CRD has authority to initiate, conciliate, and prosecute complaints on behalf of itself in the
26 public interest and persons alleged to be aggrieved by discriminatory housing practices made
27 unlawful under FEHA and the Unruh Act. (Gov. Code, §§ 12930, 12965, 12980, Civil Code § 51.)

28 5. CRD acts as a public prosecutor when it pursues civil litigation under the FEHA

1 (*State Personnel Bd. v. Fair Empl. & Hous. Com.* (1985) 39 Cal.3d 422, 444), and it may seek
2 remedies to “‘vindicate’ what it considers to be in ‘the public interest in preventing
3 ...discrimination.’” (*Dept. Fair Empl. & Hous. v. Law Sch. Admission Council, Inc.* (2013) 941
4 F.Supp.2d 1159, 1172). (*Dept. Fair Empl. & Hous. v. Superior Ct. of Kern Cty.* (2020) 54
5 Cal.App.5th 356, 373.)

6 6. Plaintiff CRD brings this action on behalf of Real Party In Interest, Patrick Paige,
7 who is now and was at all times relevant to this complaint a resident of Los Angeles County.

8 7. Defendant Myrtle Properties, LLC is and at all relevant times was the owner of the
9 rental property located at 803 Edgewood Street, Inglewood CA 90302 (“Subject Property”). Horace
10 Mellon is and at all times relevant was the owner of Myrtle Properties, LLC. Maygan Orr is Mr.
11 Mellon’s daughter and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Subject Property. Ms.
12 Orr provides information to prospective tenants and applicants regarding policies, practices, and
13 procedures at the Subject Property and determines eligibility for renting a unit at the Subject
14 Property.

15 8. Defendant is and at all relevant times was a “business establishment” under the
16 Unruh Act. (Civ. Code, § 51; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 12005, subd. (f).)

17 9. Defendant is and was at all relevant times an “owner” of “housing accommodations”
18 and/or a “person” under the FEHA. (Gov. Code, § 12925, subd. (d); § 12927, subs. (d), (e); Cal.
19 Code Regs., tit. 2, § 12005, subs. (v), (w).)

20 **III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

21 10. This Court has jurisdiction under Article VI, section 10 of the California
22 Constitution and California Code of Civil Procedure section 410.10.

23 11. After Mr. Paige filed an administrative complaint with CRD pursuant to
24 Government Code section 12980, CRD conducted an investigation of his allegations.

25 12. At the conclusion of CRD’s investigation, CRD referred this matter to its Dispute
26 Resolution Division, consistent with Government Code sections 12965, subdivision (a)(2) and
27 12981, subdivision (a)(2), but the matter did not settle. All administrative procedures precedent to
28 the initiation of this lawsuit in Government Code sections 12965, 12980, and 12981 have been

1 fulfilled.

2 13. The amount of damages sought by this complaint exceeds the minimum
3 jurisdictional limits of this Court pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 116.221, subdivision
4 (a).

5 14. The Court also has jurisdiction over this unlimited civil case because CRD seeks
6 injunctive and declaratory relief. (Civ. Proc. Code, §§ 86, subd. (a), 88.)

7 15. This Complaint is timely pursuant to Government Code sections 12965,
8 subdivisions (a)(5)(A) and (D) and 12981, subdivision (a)(3).

9 16. Venue is proper in Los Angeles County under Government Code sections 12965,
10 subdivision (a)(4) and 12981, subdivision(a)(4) because the housing violations complained of
11 herein occurred within the County of Los Angeles.

12 **IV. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

13 17. Mr. Paige served in the Army and Army Reserves from 1984 to 1990. Due to an
14 assault during his service, he suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (“PTSD”) and is 100%
15 disabled by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Due to his PTSD, he has very specific requirements
16 for where he lives. The property must have limited units, to minimize the number of people, and
17 cannot allow dogs. It often takes Mr. Paige one to three months to find an acceptable apartment.

18 18. Mr. Paige is the recipient of a housing voucher from the federal Department of
19 Housing and Urban Development, known as a Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)
20 voucher or Section 8 Housing voucher for veterans. Along with rental assistance, recipients of a
21 VASH voucher also receive case management and clinical services. A VASH voucher is a source
22 of income protected under FEHA. (Gov. Code, § 12955, subd. (p)(1).)

23 19. Defendant Myrtle Properties owns Subject Property, a one-bedroom apartment in a
24 ten-unit complex in Inglewood, California.

25 20. Maygan Orr, the daughter of Horace Mellon who owns Myrtle Properties, manages
26 Subject Property and has done so since 2018. In or about October 2024, she listed an advertisement
27 for an available unit on the website Trulia.com. The advertisement stated, “No third party
28 payments/checks- do not ask.”

1 21. On or about October 28, 2024, Mr. Paige saw the posting on Trulia and called the
2 Subject Property to inquire about the available unit he saw advertised. He spoke with Maygan Orr.
3 During their conversation, Mr. Paige said he received the VASH voucher.

4 22. Orr responded that the unit was still available, but they do not accept third party
5 checks, apologized, and wished him luck on his search. When he responded that the voucher was
6 considered part of his income, Orr told him to look elsewhere.

7 23. As a result of Defendant's unlawful housing practices and despite actively looking
8 for apartments, Mr. Paige was unable to find housing and was homeless for nearly six months.
9 During that time, he lived in hotels and in his truck.

10 24. When he was unable to afford a hotel, he showered at the gym and used the restroom
11 at various restaurants. He also found himself spending more money on food, gas, and storage during
12 this time. He ended up having to ask family and his friends for loans just to be able to make ends
13 meet. Being homeless started to exacerbate the symptoms of his mental health disability. He lost
14 any sense of normalcy. He stopped being social because he did not want his friends to know he was
15 homeless. He also felt physical discomfort from sleeping in his car with his arthritis and from eating
16 out all the time.

17 25. Mr. Paige suffered significant emotional distress due to Defendant's conduct,
18 including anger, disappointment, and shame. This was the first time he experienced homelessness.
19 His emotional distress is ongoing.

20 26. Defendant's actions were willful, malicious, fraudulent, and oppressive, and were
21 committed with the wrongful intent to injure Mr. Paige and in conscious disregard of his rights.

22 27. An actual controversy exists between the parties regarding Defendant's duties under
23 FEHA, therefore, CRD is entitled to declaratory relief.

24 28. Unless enjoined, Defendant will continue to engage in similar unlawful acts and
25 deprive other current and prospective tenants of their rights not to be denied housing opportunities
26 based on disability.

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1 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **Violation of FEHA: Discrimination Based on Source of Income**

3 **(Gov. Code, § 12955, subd. (a))**

4 29. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference all the preceding paragraphs of this
5 Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

6 30. Government Code section 12955, subdivision (a), makes it unlawful “[f]or the
7 owner of any housing accommodation to discriminate against any person because of the... source
8 of income... of that person.”

9 31. “[S]ource of income’ means lawful, verifiable income paid directly to a tenant, or
10 to a representative of a tenant, or paid to a housing owner or landlord on behalf of a tenant, including
11 federal, state, or local public assistance, and federal, state, or local housing subsidies, including,
12 but not limited to, federal housing assistance vouchers issued under Section 8 of the United States
13 Housing Act of 1937” and “includes a federal Department of Housing and Urban Development
14 Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing voucher.” (Gov. Code, § 12955, subd. (p)(1).)

15 32. Defendant discriminated against Mr. Paige based on his source of income in
16 violation of Government Code section 12955, subdivision (a) by turning him away and refusing to
17 rent an available unit to him because he sought to pay rent with his VASH voucher.

18 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

19 **Violation of FEHA: Discriminatory Statements Based of Source of Income**

20 **(Gov. Code, § 12955, subd. (c))**

21 33. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference all the preceding paragraphs of this
22 Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

23 34. Government Code section 12955, subdivision (c), makes it unlawful “[f]or any
24 person to make print, or publish, or cause to be made, printed, or published any notice, statement,
25 or advertisement, with respect to the sale or rental of a housing accommodation that indicates any
26 preference, limitation, or discrimination based on... source of income... or an intention to make
27 that preference, limitation, or discrimination.” (See also Cal. Code regs., tit. 2, § 12141, subd.
28 (a)(8).)

1 (Civ. Code, § 51)

2 42. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference all the preceding paragraphs of this
3 Complaint as if fully set forth herein.

4 43. Civil Code section 51, subdivision (b), provides: “All persons within the jurisdiction
5 of this state are free and equal, and... are entitled to full and equal accommodations, advantages,
6 facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of every kind whatsoever.”

7 44. The Unruh Act prohibits discrimination based on source of income, as it is arbitrary
8 and unreasonable. (*Koebke v. Bernardo Heights Country Club* (2005) 36 Cal.4th 824, 840;
9 *Sisemore v. Master Financial, Inc.* (2007) 151 Cal.App.4th 1386, 1407.)

10 45. Defendant is a business establishment within the meaning of the Unruh Act. The
11 Unruh Act “appl[ies] with full force to the business of renting housing accommodations.” (*Marina*
12 *Point, Ltd. v. Wolfson* (1982) 30 Cal.3d 721, 731.)

13 46. Defendant violated the Unruh Act by willfully denying Mr. Paige full and equal
14 “accommodations, advantages, facilities, [and] privileges” of their business establishment based on
15 his source of income.

16 47. Defendant’s denial based on Mr. Paige’s source of income was arbitrary and
17 unreasonable.

18 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

19 **Wherefore**, the Department prays that this Court enter judgement in its favor and order the
20 following relief:

- 21 1. Declare that Defendant violated the above-listed provisions of FEHA and the Unruh
22 Act;
- 23 2. Permanently enjoin all unlawful practices alleged in this complaint and impose
24 injunctive relief prohibiting Defendant, its partners, agents, employees, assignees, and
25 all persons acting in concert or participating with them, from violating the unlawful
26 practices alleged herein pursuant to Government Code sections 12965, subdivision (d)
27 and 12989.2 and Civil Code section 52;
- 28 3. Enter a permanent injunction directing Defendant and any directors, officers, agents,

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- and employees to take all affirmative steps necessary to remedy the effects of the illegal conduct described herein and to prevent similar occurrences in the future;
- 4. Award CRD actual/compensatory damages to the Real Party in Interest according to proof under Government Code sections 12965, subdivision (d) and 12989.2;
- 5. Award statutory damages under the Unruh Act, including damages of up to three times actual damages, but in no case less than \$4,000 for each and every violation of Civil Code section 51 by Defendant;
- 6. Grant reasonable attorneys’ fees, expenses, and costs of the suit to Plaintiff pursuant to Government Code sections 12965, subdivision (c)(6) and 12989.2;
- 7. Award interest on any monetary judgment; and
- 8. All such other relief as the Court deems just.

Dated: May 19, 2026

CALIFORNIA CIVIL RIGHTS DEPARTMENT



Irene Meyers
Staff Counsel
Attorney for California Civil Rights Department

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff CRD hereby demands a trial by jury on all claims.

Dated: May 19, 2026

CALIFORNIA CIVIL RIGHTS DEPARTMENT



Irene Meyers
Staff Counsel
Attorney for California Civil Rights Department