

DFEH News Brief

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NAPA LANDLORDS, ACCUSED OF EVICTING WOMAN FOR HAVING TOO MANY CHILDREN, AGREE TO PAY \$18,000 SETTLEMENT

ELK GROVE, CA -- The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) today announced the settlement of a housing discrimination case, in which two landlords of a four-bedroom house in Napa, CA, had been accused of evicting a female tenant because they felt she had too many children.

The landlords have agreed to pay an \$18,000 settlement to the tenant, with no admission of liability.

"All Californians have the right to pursue appropriate housing without fearing discrimination. I commend the Department of Fair Employment and Housing for enforcing the California Fair Employment & Housing Act (FEHA) so that every protected class knows their rights are being safeguarded," said Governor Schwarzenegger's Secretary of State & Consumer Services, Rosario Marin.

Last September, the DFEH filed an accusation with the California Fair Employment & Housing Commission against the two landlords, Arlene Dennett and Dottie Rentschler, on behalf of the evicted tenant, Sonia Navarrete. The DFEH's accusation alleged that two years after renting the Sequoia Street house to Navarrete, the landlords served an eviction notice on her, because she had given birth to a third child and was pregnant with a fourth. The landlords claimed the size of Ms. Navarrete's family violated a City of Napa Housing Authority contract, which had limited the number of occupants. The DFEH said it found no evidence to support that claim.

"As is evidenced by this case, the FEHA is an important tool in protecting California families and it recognizes society's vital need to have enough decent housing available for families with children," said DFEH Director Phyllis Cheng.

In addition to the \$18,000 payment to the former tenant, the settlement also requires the landlords to undergo fair housing training and to implement non-discrimination policies for all their rental properties in California.

A local civil rights agency, Fair Housing Napa Valley, assisted the DFEH in the investigation.

As the nation's largest state civil rights agency, it is the mission of the DFEH to protect Californians from employment, housing and public accommodation discrimination and hate violence. For more information, visit the department's Website at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

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