



Department of Justice

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SUES MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA PROPERTY MANAGER AND OWNERS FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

WASHINGTON - The Justice Department today filed a lawsuit against Jamarlo K. Gumbaytay, aka Laurence E. Lamar, d/b/a Elite Enterprises Consultant Group, the property manager of numerous rental properties in the Montgomery metropolitan area, alleging a pattern or practice of sexual harassment of female tenants. The suit also names as defendants the owners of these properties: Matthew Bahr, Brett Rosenbaum, Lori Williams, Sean McDonough, Woody D. Franklin, Woody D. Franklin Sr., James F. and Barbara Clark, Frank Cook, and the Estate of Donna Greene.

The complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, alleges that Gumbaytay engaged in a pattern or practice of discrimination or denied rights protected by the Fair Housing Act to a group of persons based on gender. Specifically, the complaint alleges that Gumbaytay subjected female tenants to unwanted verbal and physical sexual advances; granted and denied tangible housing benefits based on gender; and took adverse action against female tenants when they refused or objected to his advances.

This lawsuit arose from an investigation conducted after the Central Alabama Fair Housing Center alerted the Civil Rights Division to Gumbaytay's discriminatory activity.

"No woman should have to live in fear of sexual harassment in her home," said Grace Chung Becker, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "Landlords should be on notice that the Justice Department steadfastly enforces the Fair Housing Act throughout the United States to vindicate this basic right."

The suit seeks monetary damages to compensate the victims, civil penalties, and a court order barring future discrimination.

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability and familial status. Since Jan. 1, 2001, the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division has filed 254 cases to enforce the Fair Housing Act, including 17 cases alleging sexual harassment. More information about the Civil Rights Division and the laws it enforces is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt>. Individuals who believe that they may have been victims of housing discrimination can call the Housing Discrimination Tip Line at 1-800-896-7743, email the Justice Department at fairhousing@usdoj.gov, or contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at 1-800-669-9777.

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