



DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT & HOUSING

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DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING SETTLES COMPLAINTS AGAINST LANDLORD FOR ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MILITARY FAMILY

Landlord allegedly refused to rent to prospective tenant because her husband is a United States Marine who might deploy overseas

The Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) announced today that it has settled complaints that a landlord violated the state's civil rights laws when he refused to rent an Orange County condominium unit to Viridiana Mendez and her family because her husband, Albert Quintanilla, is a United States Marine.

The complaints alleged the landlord violated the Unruh Civil Rights Act, which prohibits businesses from discriminating on the basis of occupation or any other "arbitrary" basis, and the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), which prohibits owners of housing accommodations from discriminating on the basis of the source of a person's income.

Ms. Mendez inquired about renting the condominium unit in April 2016, intending to share it with her husband and their minor daughter. Ms. Mendez was questioned by the landlord and his wife. According to Ms. Mendez, the landlord expressed no reservations about renting to her until he learned that Mr. Quintanilla is a Marine and that the family might leave the unit before the end of the full lease term if he received orders to deploy overseas. He then allegedly told her he would not rent to her or even give her a rental application because of her husband's military service.

The settlement requires the landlord to pay Ms. Mendez \$4,500 and undergo training on fair housing laws.

"The sacrifices made by servicemembers, including their agreement to deploy overseas if duty calls, should not be compounded by refusing to rent to their families," said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. "Denying rental because of a family member's military service is the type of arbitrary discrimination that California's civil rights laws were designed to eliminate."

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