

**DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT & HOUSING**

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DFEH Settles Housing Discrimination Lawsuit against Santa Cruz Landlords, Property Management Company, and Onsite Manager for Disability Discrimination

Tenants Recover \$100,000 After Facing Eviction Because They Required a Live-In Aide

Sacramento – The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) has reached a \$100,000 settlement in a lawsuit filed on behalf of a Santa Cruz family who alleged their landlord discriminated against them because of their disabilities.

Mother and daughter Alicia Lopez and Zaida Ramos live with disabilities that require the presence of a live-in aide. For more than a decade, family member Alberto Ramos has served as their In-Home Supportive Services aide. The lawsuit, filed against Seaside Apartment Associates, DKD Property Management Co., and on-site manager Rebekah Scott, alleged the property management company sought to evict Ms. Ramos and Ms. Lopez for having an “unauthorized occupant” in their apartment. In a previous court proceeding a judge dismissed the eviction action and held that the landlord’s refusal to allow the presence of an aide was discriminatory.

“The point of in-home supportive services is to allow people to remain safely in their own homes when they are not able to fully care for themselves,” said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. “Housing providers must accommodate the presence of an in-home aide if doing so will allow people with disabilities to remain in their homes and does not create an undue financial or administrative burden.”

DFEH’s civil action alleged that DKD Property Management’s conduct violated the state’s Fair Employment and Housing Act, as well as the Unruh Civil Rights Act. In addition to paying the complainants \$100,000, the firm will pay \$5,000 in attorneys’ fees to DFEH. The defendants have agreed to not discriminate against tenants with disabilities and to ensure on-site property managers attend a two-hour training with a fair housing organization. The company will also post fair housing posters in Spanish and English.

Senior staff counsel Melanie Proctor represented DFEH in this proceeding.

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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.

