

**DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT & HOUSING**

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DFEH Settles Sex and National Origin Discrimination Lawsuit Against Kern County Employer and Landlord

Defendants to pay \$450,000 to a former employee and tenant for discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

Sacramento – The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) reached a settlement in a combined employment and housing case involving allegations of sex and national origin discrimination, harassment, and retaliation at Pioneer Pines Mobile Home Park in Bakersfield, which is managed by Thomas Property Management, Inc. and owned by Randall Thomas and Pioneer Pines MHP, LLC.

A woman employee filed complaints with DFEH in March and April 2015 alleging that her former supervisor sexually harassed her when they worked at Pioneer Pines Mobile Home Park. She both lived and worked at the mobile home park. At work, she experienced unwanted touching, verbal harassment and ridicule for complaining.

The complaint alleged defendants were aware of the unwelcome conduct, and that managers often observed the sexual harassment but failed to stop it. Defendants also harassed the employee because of her national origin. Managers made offensive comments about people of Mexican ancestry including calling them “wetbacks” and “f’ing Mexicans.” After the employee complained about the harassment, defendants retaliated against her by reducing her hours and ultimately ending her employment.

After unsuccessful mandatory mediation, DFEH filed a lawsuit in Kern County Superior Court in March 2016. In settling the case, Defendants will pay a total of \$450,000, which includes attorney’s fees and costs to DFEH and the employee’s attorneys, California Rural Legal Assistance, and Housing Rights Center. Defendants will hire an independent monitor for a period of four years to oversee compliance with the settlement, including by reviewing policies and complaints, interviewing staff and residents, and submitting annual reports to DFEH. Defendants will also implement an anti-discrimination policy in both Spanish and English and attend anti-discrimination, harassment, and cultural sensitivity trainings.

“Unlawful harassment can be based on multiple intersectional grounds, including sex and national origin, and we encourage anyone experiencing harassment at work or in their home to file a complaint.” said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. “The appointment of independent monitors is an important tool for DFEH in ensuring that employers and housing providers take seriously their obligation to eliminate discrimination and harassment in their operations.”

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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.

