

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
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## **Office of the Attorney General Negotiates Abatement Plan to Improve Living Conditions in Congress Heights Buildings**

*Plan Includes Regular Status Reports to Ensure Compliance*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, Attorney General Karl A. Racine announced that the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) and the owners of four buildings in Congress Heights have agreed to a court-monitored plan that will ensure tenants in the building can live in safe, habitable conditions. The case will remain open, with quarterly status reports to the Court to ensure that conditions do not deteriorate and that the owners continue to comply with all aspects of the abatement plan.

**“Our goal has always been to seek justice for the tenants, who have been forced to live in deplorable and unacceptable living conditions as a result of willful neglect,”** Attorney General RaScine said. **“The abatement plan the Court approved yesterday holds the owners of the buildings accountable to maintain livable conditions and improve the quality of life for residents.”**

In January OAG [sued Sanford Capital and related businesses, the owners of the buildings in Ward 8](#). The suit alleged multiple violations of the District’s housing laws at the complex, which is slated to be the site of a future mixed-use development. Superior Court Judge Frederick Weisberg praised OAG attorneys for working together with counsel for the owners to produce the joint abatement plan, saying that it was a model of cooperation and efficiency. Provisions of the plan include:

- Establishing a hotline for residents to submit complaints for emergency repairs, which will be responded to within 24 hours;
- Vacant apartment units at the complex will inspected every 30 days;
- Common areas at the buildings will inspected daily for cleanliness and security;

- An armed security guard will be on duty every evening, and will perform regular interior and exterior security checks;
- An on-site unit will be designated as a staffed management office. It will also serve as a meeting space for the tenants; and
- Routine exterminations will occur every 90 days in occupied units and common areas to prevent rodent and pest infestation.

**“I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to the OAG attorneys and staff who worked tirelessly to get justice for these tenants. In particular, I would like to recognize Acting Neighborhood and Victim Services Section Chief Ebony Robinson and Assistant Attorney General Argatonia Weatherington for assembling and arguing a strong case, and Deputy Attorney General for Public Safety Tamar Meekins for ensuring these excellent attorneys had the support they needed to ensure a measure of justice for the tenants of these apartment buildings,”** Attorney General Racine said.

Will Merrifield, a Staff Attorney with the Washington Legal Clinic’s Affordable Housing Initiative who has worked on the tenants’ behalf to improve conditions, praised OAG’s work in the case. “At Congress Heights, the Office of the Attorney General has accomplished two very important things,” he said. “First, they have ensured that the tenants’ units are safe and habitable. Second, they have prevented Sanford Capital from constructively evicting the tenants and have ensured that, moving forward, the tenants will have the opportunity to exercise their rights under the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act.”

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