

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Office of the Attorney General Files Lawsuit against Owners of Buildings in Congress Heights for Violations of Housing Laws

Complaint Alleges Sanford Capital Created Deplorable Conditions in Buildings

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine today announced that the District has filed a complaint against the owners of a rent-controlled apartment complex in Congress Heights for multiple violations of the District’s housing laws. The buildings are slated to become a future mixed-use development.

“We believe the owners of these buildings have done a serious disservice to their residents and have violated the District’s housing laws through willful neglect,” Attorney General Racine said. **“Preserving affordable housing for all of the District’s residents and protecting public safety are two of our highest priorities at the Office of the Attorney General. The owners of these buildings have undermined both of those priorities, and we intend to hold them accountable.”**

The complaint alleges that Sanford Capital and related businesses, the owners of four properties adjacent to the Congress Heights Metro station at Alabama Avenue and 13th Street SE, have allowed the proliferation of unsafe and unsanitary conditions by failing to perform basic maintenance on the buildings. The suit outlines a “pattern of neglect” over long periods of time, leading to persistent problems with inoperable and missing smoke detectors, inoperable fire extinguishers, bedbugs, rodent infestations, unstable ceilings, lack of heat and hot water, and other issues. The owners of the building, the complaint alleges, have repeatedly declined to rectify the problems, either by wholly ignoring the repeated complaints or by performing only limited, superficial fixes.

Attorney General Racine praised the Office of the Attorney General staffers who have worked on the complaint. **“Deputy Attorney General for Public Safety Tamar Meekins and Acting Neighborhood and Victim Services Section Chief Ebony Robinson have teamed with the tenants and community advocates to investigate this important case,”** he said. **“I want to thank them for their devotion to fairness and justice.”**

A copy of the complaint as filed in D.C. Superior Court is attached.

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