

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Attorney General Racine Sues Sanford Capital for Violating District's Housing Laws at Second Complex in Ward 8

Complaint Seeks Abatement and Restitution for Tenants of Terrace Manor Apartments

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine today announced that the District has filed a lawsuit against the owners of an apartment complex in the Shipley Terrace neighborhood for multiple violations of the District's housing code and Consumer Protection Procedures Act. This is the second lawsuit that the Attorney General has brought against Sanford Capital and related businesses (Sanford) for allowing the proliferation of unsafe and unsanitary conditions at properties it owns in Ward 8.

The suit seeks not only to make Sanford live up to its basic legal obligations to ensure the properties are safe and livable, but also to recover restitution of rent payments tenants made to Sanford while the company failed to maintain the properties.

"The District is facing an affordable housing crisis, and tenants should not be forced to choose between living in unsafe and uninhabitable conditions or leaving their residences. Rather, tenants who pay rent to their landlords should get the safe and habitable housing that they are entitled to," Attorney General Racine said. **"The residents at Terrace Manor, including dozens of former residents who were forced to move out because of deplorable conditions, deserve relief and restitution. We hope that this lawsuit will encourage the landlord in this case, and others who behave similarly, to do what most landlords do -- provide decent, lawful housing to their tenants."**

Suit Notes More Than 120 Housing Code Violations, Superficial Fixes

The lawsuit against Sanford and related businesses, which own and manage 11 apartment buildings comprising 61 rental units on Savannah Street SE and 23rd Street SE, alleges Sanford failed to perform basic maintenance on its buildings even after inspectors found more than 120 housing code violations at the properties. The complaint outlines a "pattern of neglect" by the owners and managers over long periods of time, leading to persistent problems with inoperable and missing smoke detectors, inoperable fire

extinguishers, bedbugs, rodent infestations, 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 shoddy, superficial fixes. According to the complaint, the owners also continued to demand and collect full rent despite the presence of conditions that posed a serious threat to the health and safety of the tenants.

District Seeks Relief Including Receivership, Restitution for Current and Former Tenants

A copy of the District's complaint is attached. The Attorney General is seeking:

- The appointment of a receiver to develop a plan to rehabilitate the property;
- An injunction requiring the owners to make all necessary repairs and to stop the unlawful practices;
- Restitution to tenants who paid rent during the time period that the property was in violation of the District's housing code or was otherwise uninhabitable; and
- Costs and penalties payable to the District.

Earlier this year, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) [filed a separate suit against Sanford](#) alleging similar violations at four buildings adjacent to the Congress Heights Metro station. In April, the District and Sanford [agreed to a court-monitored abatement plan](#) to ensure tenants at that complex can live in safe, habitable conditions. The case remains 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.

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