



Department of Justice

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**JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SUES LOS ANGELES LANDLORD
FOR ENGAGING IN DISCRIMINATION ON THE
BASIS OF RACE, NATIONAL ORIGIN, AND FAMILIAL STATUS**

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department announced today that it has filed a lawsuit against Donald T. Sterling, Rochelle Sterling, the Sterling Family Trust, and the Korean Land Company L.L.C. (the Sterling Defendants) alleging housing discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, and family status.

The complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California in Los Angeles, alleges that the Sterling Defendants refused to rent to non-Korean prospective tenants, misrepresented the availability of apartment units to non-Korean prospective tenants, and provided inferior treatment to non-Korean tenants in the Koreatown section of Los Angeles. The complaint also alleges that the Sterling Defendants refused to rent to African-American prospective tenants and misrepresented the availability of apartment units to African-American prospective tenants in the Beverly Hills section of Los Angeles.

“Aggressively enforcing the laws that protect the civil liberties of all Americans is a top priority of the Justice Department,” said Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales. “Through Operation Home Sweet Home and our continued enforcement efforts, we remain committed to protecting the rights of our nation's citizens to obtain housing without fear of discrimination.”

“Equal access to housing is key to obtaining the American dream,” said Wan J. Kim, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. “The Justice Department is committed to investigating and prosecuting anyone who participates in such illegal and offensive discriminatory practices.”

The complaint also alleges that the Sterling Defendants refused to rent to families with children and misrepresented the availability of apartment units to families with

children throughout the buildings that they own or manage in Los Angeles County. It is further alleged that the Sterling Defendants made statements and published notices or advertisements in connection with the rental of apartment units that express a preference for Korean tenants in the Koreatown section of Los Angeles and express discrimination against African-Americans and families with children in Los Angeles County.

“Here in Los Angeles, where housing is already at a premium, it is imperative that no one be denied housing simply because of their skin color, ethnic background or because they have children,” said United States Attorney Debra Wong Yang. “The Justice Department is dedicated to ending all discriminatory housing practices, along with every other type of civil rights violation.”

The suit seeks monetary damages to compensate the victims, civil penalties, and a court order barring future discrimination.

Fighting illegal housing discrimination is a top priority of the Justice Department. In February, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales announced Operation Home Sweet Home, a concentrated initiative to expose and eliminate housing discrimination in America. This initiative was inspired by the plight of displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina who were suddenly forced to find new places to live. Operation Home Sweet Home is not limited to the areas hit by Hurricane Katrina and targets housing discrimination all over the country.

More information about Operation Home Sweet Home can be found on our Web site at <http://www.usdoj.gov/fairhousing>. Individuals who believe that they may have been victims of housing discrimination can call our Housing Discrimination Tip Line (1-800-896-7793), e-mail us at fairhousing@usdoj.gov, or contact the Department of Housing and Urban Development at 1-800-669-9777.

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin and disability. The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin and disability. Since Jan. 1, 2001, the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division has filed 198 cases to enforce the Fair Housing Act, including 59 based on race, 19 based on national origin, and 39 based on familial status. More information about the Civil Rights Division and the laws it enforces can be found at www.usdoj.gov/crt.

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