



Department of Justice

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Justice Department Obtains Settlement from Kentucky Landlord and Rental Manager to Resolve Claims of Sexual Harassment Against Female Tenants

LEXINGTON, Ky.— The Justice Department today announced it has reached an agreement with defendants Gus and Penny Crank to resolve a Fair Housing Act lawsuit alleging that Gus Crank sexually harassed female tenants while managing a Dayton, Kentucky rental property owned by his wife, Penny Crank.

Under the consent order entered by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky, the Cranks must pay \$48,000 in damages to four female tenants harmed by Gus Crank's harassment and a \$2,000 civil penalty to the United States. The Cranks are also prohibited from being involved in property management of rental units in the future; Penny Crank recently sold the rental property where Gus Crank's harassment occurred.

The United States' lawsuit alleged that Gus Crank's harassment spanned a period of ten years. The allegations included that Gus Crank engaged in unwelcome sexual touching, offered to reduce monthly rental payments in exchange for sex, made unwelcome sexual comments and advances, made intrusive and unannounced visits to female tenants' homes to further his sexual advances and evicted or threatened to evict female tenants who objected to or refused his sexual advances.

"No woman should ever have to endure sexual harassment to secure housing for herself or her family," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "Sexual harassment is unacceptable and illegal, and the Justice Department will continue to vigorously enforce the Fair Housing Act to combat this type of discrimination and to obtain relief for victims."

"Sexual harassment in housing deprives its victims of the safety and security that their home is supposed to provide," said Acting U.S. Attorney Carlton S. Shier IV for the Eastern District of Kentucky. "That makes our convincing enforcement of the Fair Housing Act critical to ensuring that victims can gain relief from this disgraceful conduct and seek a safe and secure home for their families."

This case was jointly litigated by attorneys in the Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Kentucky. The Justice Department's [Sexual Harassment in Housing Initiative](#) is led by the Civil Rights Division, in coordination with U.S. Attorney's Offices across the country. The goal of the department's Initiative is to address and [raise awareness](#) about sexual harassment by landlords, property managers, maintenance workers, loan officers or other people who have control over housing. Since launching the Initiative in October



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2017, the Department of Justice has filed 22 lawsuits alleging sexual harassment in housing and recovered over \$4 million for victims of such harassment.

The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division enforces the Fair Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability and familial status. More information about the Civil Rights Division and the laws it enforces is available at <http://www.justice.gov/crt>. Individuals may report sexual harassment or other forms of housing discrimination by calling the Justice Department's Housing Discrimination Tip Line at 1-833-591-0291, or **submitting a report online**. Individuals may also report discrimination by contacting the Department of Housing and Urban Development at 1-800-669-9777 or by [filing a complaint online](#).