



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

UNITED STATES FILES SUIT AGAINST BROOKLYN COOPERATIVE APARTMENT BUILDING TRUMP VILLAGE FOR FAIR HOUSING ACT VIOLATIONS

Robert L. Capers, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, and Vanita Gupta, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, announced the filing today of a federal Fair Housing Act complaint against Coney Island, New York cooperative Trump Village Section IV Inc. and Igor Oberman, a former President of its Board of Directors, for violation of the Fair Housing Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 3604(f) and 3617. Trump Village Section IV Inc. is a 1,144-unit cooperative apartment complex in Brooklyn, New York. The owners of the complex are shareholders in the cooperative, and have proprietary leases for their residential units. The complaint alleges that between May 2012 and March 2015, defendants engaged in a pattern or practice of discrimination by denying Trump Village residents with disabilities emotional support animals.

According to the government's complaint, defendants refused to allow four residents of the cooperative to live with emotional support dogs and commenced eviction proceedings against three of them when they refused to give up their animals. As further set forth in the complaint, defendants took some of these actions even after they entered into a conciliation agreement with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in which they agreed that Trump Village would permit individuals to live with emotional support animals. The complaint seeks monetary damages for the victims of the discrimination as well as injunctive relief barring defendants from discriminating against individuals with disabilities.

"The law is clear that reasonable accommodations must be granted to individuals with disabilities when those accommodations are necessary to afford them the equal opportunity to use and enjoy their homes. This includes the right to live with an emotional support animal. Those responsible for refusing to grant such accommodations or retaliating against individuals with disabilities who try to enforce their rights under the Fair Housing Act will be held accountable," stated United States Attorney Capers. Mr. Capers extended his appreciation to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity for its assistance with the investigation.

“Emotional support animals provide critical care and therapeutic aid for people with disabilities,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Vanita Gupta, head of the Civil Rights Division. “The department will continue to enforce fair housing laws to ensure that housing providers make reasonable accommodations for individuals who rely on assistance animals in their homes.”

The government’s case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Melanie D. Hendry.

E.D.N.Y. Docket No: 15-cv-7306 (NGG)(PK)