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Croman 'pattern of harassment' must end, pols say

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Attorney General Eric Schneiderman.

BY ZACH WILLIAMS | Local politicians joined the fray last week with a joint statement praising recent action by state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman's Office against the practices of landlord Steven Croman, who has been the subject of numerous tenant complaints over the years.

A representative of 9300 Realty — which oversees Croman properties in the East Village and Lower East Side — denied wrongdoing, saying that the company has actively tried to resolve disputes to no avail, and with no response from local housing advocacy group Good Old Lower East Side, or GOLES.

In a statement, the company said, "9300 Realty takes its obligations as a landlord very seriously. Our track record of providing safe and reliable housing for both market-rate and rent-stabilized tenants speaks for itself and should not be marred by a small but vocal group of individuals. We have reached out to GOLES on multiple occasions to

address any concerns they may have about the building or its management. Despite this good-faith effort, GOLES has so far been unresponsive to our requests to engage in a constructive dialogue on this issue. As a landlord, we take pride in having positive relationships with our tenants and we invite them to keep us informed of any issues in need of attention."

"The building" in question is 346 E. 18th St., where — as profiled in an article in last week's issue of The Villager — tenants charge they have faced harassment, as well as struggled to have outstanding building violations addressed, among other issues.

Wasim Lone, director of housing services at GOLES, confirmed that the organization chose not to respond to Croman representatives. He said that he, along with members of the Stop Croman Coalition, instead decided that providing their side of the story to the Attorney General's Office would be more "productive."

"Given the severity of the harassment taking place in multiple buildings, the coalition made the



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“You’ve got some tenants gaming the system — hoarding regulated units, even though they really live elsewhere. As long as there’s an upside to having a below-market tenant legally and lawfully evicted, so that rents can be raised, why wouldn’t an owner want to exercise that right?”

However, an investigation of Croman by Schneiderman seems like it would be more than a typical one, from the sound of it. And the fact that the A.G. has already ordered Falconite to cease and desist from alleged harassment of tenants isn’t exactly common, either.

Finally, the sheer volume of tenant complaints lodged against Croman, over so many years, in so many buildings, and in multiple neighborhoods — and the fact that a half dozen local politicians are now declaring that this “pattern of harassment” must end — doesn’t seem so common, either.


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