
AG sues NYC landlords for harassing rent-regulated tenants

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New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman has filed a lawsuit against a Manhattan property manager and a group of building owners. (DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES)

ALBANY — State officials are taking a Manhattan property manager to court for harassing rent-regulated tenants in Chinatown and the Lower East Side, the Daily News has learned.

State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman late Tuesday filed a lawsuit against Marolda Properties Inc. and a group of building owners charging they illegally tried to force tenants out of rent regulated units.

"Unfortunately, some landlords believe they can get away with using these tactics to coerce tenants out of their apartments so they can then raise the rent," Schneiderman said.

According to Schneiderman, Marolda officials served notices on tenants falsely claiming their units were not a primary residence and refused to renew tenants' legally-required leases.

The lawsuit also charged that Marolda and the building owners failed to make necessary repairs and "engaged in other harassing, deceptive and retaliatory behavior."

In addition to an order stopping the defendants from harassing tenants, Schneiderman is also seeking damages for the tenants.

The lawsuit stems from an investigation of Marolda that was launched by the state's Tenant Protection Unit in 2014. Marolda officials could not be reached for comment.

Schneiderman, meanwhile, is also expected to announce on Wednesday a \$1.6 million settlement with Queens-based American Hope Group Inc. to resolve claims the company operated a bogus mortgage rescue scheme.

The company, according to Schneiderman, collected millions of dollars in monthly fees but routinely failed to deliver on its promises to deliver relief from unaffordable mortgage payments.

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