



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Berkeley Rental Housing Coalition Calls on Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board to Do Its Job and Protect Renters**

***Due to Recent Details of the Board's Harassment and Discrimination Have Come to Light***

**Berkeley, Calif. – February 2, 2021** – The Berkeley Rental Housing Coalition (BRHC), a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting safe, affordable, and well-maintained residential rental housing in the City of Berkeley, issued a statement today following Berkeley's February 1, 2021 [publication of an article](#) detailing longstanding harassment allegations against the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board (BRSB) and its former executive director.

*"As an organization committed to Berkeley's rental community, we are disappointed – but not surprised – to learn more about the pattern of unacceptable behavior at the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board. Unfortunately, these revelations are not new to those of us in the business, as many current and former Rent Board employees have previously tried to raise awareness about the staff's conduct. It is time to stop protecting this unacceptable behavior. Our elected Rent Board commissioners have consistently proven they are not able to provide proper oversight of the Berkeley Rent Board."*

**– BRHC Executive Director Krista Gulbransen**

**Excerpts from the Berkeley February 1, 2021 article, [Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board pays \\$210K to former employee to settle retaliation charges](#), is below:**

"The Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board paid \$210,000 in October to settle a complaint filed by a former employee who alleged she experienced "inappropriate and harassing conduct" by a co-worker while working at the agency. After the employee formally complained to Berkeley's Human Resources Department about her treatment on Aug. 6, 2019, she alleged she "was retaliated against by Employer..."

"The payment appears to have put an end to a year-long investigation into the inner workings of the rent board, an investigation that prompted the nine elected commissioners to place the long-time executive director on administrative leave, led to his early retirement, and led to the expenditure of at least \$340,000 in legal fees and payments, which were indirectly funded by fees paid by 2,800 of Berkeley's property owners.

... Within a month of the filing of the complaint, Kelekian had recommended that the former employee's job be cut in half. By November 2019, three and a half months later, he had suggested the position be eliminated, according to rent board staff reports.

... While the findings of the investigation into the employee's complaint are confidential, the elimination of her position was flagged as an issue, the settlement agreement suggests.

To read the full article, visit: <https://www.berkeleyside.com/2021/02/01/berkeley-rent-board-pays-210k-to-settle-harassment-retaliation-charges>

**About Berkeley Rental Housing Coalition:**

The Berkeley Rental Housing Coalition is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting safe, affordable and well-maintained residential rental housing in the city of Berkeley. By representing the voice of rental housing providers through its political action committee and legal defense fund, BRHC works to restore fairness, efficiency and objectivity to Berkeley's rental housing policies. BRHC is an affiliate of the Berkeley Property Owners Association (BPOA) and the California Rental Housing Association (CalRHA).

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