

Baltimore Co. family gets \$70K for bed bug infestation at Kushner-owned property

By: Anamika Roy Daily Record Legal Affairs Writer August 11, 2017

Sarann Han moved a townhouse in Halethorpe with her two young children last summer. But she did not know the home's property management company had treated the unit with chemicals until the day before she moved in to address a problem with bed bugs.

In June, Han settled for \$70,000 her lawsuit against JK2 Westminster LLC, a New Jersey-based company that is a subsidiary of Kushner Companies, owned by Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump's son-in-law.

A pretrial conference had been scheduled for last week, and the case was dismissed July 27 in Prince George's County Circuit Court, according to online court records. (JK2 Westminster's Maryland operations are based in the jurisdiction.)

Within the first week of living in the Highland Village Townhomes in July 2016, Han and her sons had bites from bed bugs, indicating the infestation occurred before Han moved in, states the complaint, filed in September. Han alleged in her lawsuit she would never have signed the lease if she knew about the bed bugs.

The previous tenant, who moved out around June 1, 2016, told the property manager about a bed bug problem, according to Daniel Whitney Jr., Han's lawyer. Records also show the property manager unsuccessfully treated the apartment with chemicals six times, including the day before Han and her children moved in, added Whitney, of Whitney LLP in Towson.

"It's our view that the existence of bed bug treatments, especially multiple bed bug treatments before a new tenant moves in, is a material fact that a landlord should disclose to a potential tenant," said Whitney.

JK2 Westminster and its affiliated businesses own some 8,000 apartments and townhouses in Maryland, according to a May article in the New York Times Magazine detailing Kushner's real estate holdings.

The Times report identified Highland Village as one Kushner Companies' largest complexes in the area, located along the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

Days after moving into Highland Village, Han and her children began getting itchy skin lesions, the according to the complaint. Han's two-year-old son had to be treated at the hospital for a bite on genitals that made it difficult for him to walk, according to the complaint.

A few days later, Han found bed bugs in the townhouse. She reported the infestation to the leasing office the following day and moved into her parents' house in Virginia the following week, the complaint states.

Han had to get rid of all of her clothes, her children's clothes, toys, furniture and other personal property to avoid spreading the infestation, according to the complaint.

The lawsuit sought compensatory and punitive damages for negligence, violation of the Maryland Consumer Protection Act and fraudulent concealment.

Han and her children have fully recovered from the bites without permanent scarring, Whitney said, adding they still live with her parents.



Within the first week of living in the Highland Village Townhomes in Halethorpe last year, Sarann Han and her sons had bites from bed bugs. She reached a \$70,000 settlement in June with her property manager, subsidiary of a company owned by Jared Kushner.
(Centers for Disease Control)

Mark J. Strong of the Law Offices of Jonathan Stebenne in Baltimore, an attorney for JK2 Westminster and Highland Village, declined to comment on the settlement.

Got a verdict or settlement? Tell us about it.

Han v. Highland #689 LLC et al.

Court: Prince George's County Circuit

Case No.: CAL1636608

Proceeding: Settlement for \$70,000

Dates:

Incident: July 29, 2016

Suit filed: Sept. 29, 2016

Settlement: June 9, 2017

Plaintiff's Attorney: Daniel W. Whitney Jr. of Whitney, LLP in Towson

Defendant's Attorneys: Mark J. Strong of Law Offices of Jonathan Stebenne in Baltimore

Count: Negligence, violation of the Maryland Consumer Protection Act and fraudulent concealment

Tagged with: BED BUGS JARED KUSHNER SETTLEMENTS

To purchase a reprint of this article, contact reprints@thedailyrecord.com.