

Email exchange between Harry Gural and Avis DuVall (Equity) re: rent "concessions"

From: **Harry Gural** <harrygural@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, Mar 13, 2016 at 9:57 PM

Subject: Equity Residential -- widespread practice of illegal rent increases -- falsified document attached

To: Avis Duvall <aduvall@eqr.com>, Jesse Jennell <jjennell@eqr.com>

Cc: Aaron Polkey <aaron.polkey@dc.gov>, Barry Weiss <Bweise@dccouncil.us>, Brian Moore <bmoore@dccouncil.us>, Joel Cohn <joel.cohn@dc.gov>, Johanna Shreve <johanna.shreve@dc.gov>, Jonathan Willingham <jwillingham@dccouncil.us>, Mary Cheh <mcheh@dccouncil.us>, Meghan Brown <mebrown@dccouncil.us>, Shirley Adelstein <3f02@anc.dc.gov>, John.Falcicchio@dc.gov

Avis,

I am writing to respond to your recent letter in which you demand of me a rental increase that is well above the legal limit. This is part of Equity's widespread practice of illegal increases in a rent controlled building. I have sent many emails to you about this issue over recent months.

The rent increase you demand is based on a fictitious "rent charged" that is almost \$300 above what I actually pay -- as you know, my monthly rent is \$1,830 but you fraudulently have reported it to the city as \$2,118. The form with the falsified figure is attached.

I have written to you many times about this practice when you have tried to use it with other residents. This is a predatory practice for which Equity Residential is legally liable.

I refuse to pay the amount demanded (\$2,192). The **maximum** amount you can charge me is $\$1,830 + \$65 = \$1,895$. In fact, I would like to meet with you to discuss even that increase, which I believe is high given market rates and the many recent problems with the building including the dangerous electrical situation that led to shocks to residents and the electrocution of a resident's dog. You cannot ask residents to pay more while you cannot adequately document that this safety issue has been addressed, as you refuse to install security measures to slow the high number of burglaries and fail to make badly needed building repairs.

However, the key issue here is that Equity has systematically broken the rent control laws of the District of Columbia. I would be happy to meet to discuss a fair rent but I won't pay an increase based on a base rent that deliberately was reported incorrectly to the city.

Harry

Harry Gural
President
Van Ness South Tenants Association

Email exchange between Harry Gural and Avis DuVall (Equity) re: rent "concessions"

cc: Office of the Tenant Advocate
Office of Councilmember Mary Cheh
Office of Councilmember Anita Bonds
Office of Councilmember Phil Mendelson
Office of Mayor Muriel Bowser
ANC Commissioner Shirley Adelstein
Members of the Van Ness South Tenants Association

Attachment: Rent increase notice – Harry Gural 2016

From: **Harry Gural** <harrygural@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 30, 2016 at 11:34 PM
Subject: Re: Equity Residential -- widespread practice of illegal rent increases -- falsified document attached
To: Avis Duvall <aduvall@eqr.com>
Cc: Barry Weiss <Bweise@dccouncil.us>, Brian Moore <bmoore@dccouncil.us>, Joel Cohn <joel.cohn@dc.gov>, Johanna Shreve <johanna.shreve@dc.gov>, Jonathan Willingham <jwillingham@dccouncil.us>, Mary Cheh <mcheh@dccouncil.us>, Meghan Brown <mebrown@dccouncil.us>, Shirley Adelstein <3f02@anc.dc.gov>, John.Falcicchio@dc.gov, Beth Harrison <bharrison@legalaiddc.org>, Jesse Jennell <jjennell@eqr.com>, "Taylor, Dennis (OTA)" <dennis.taylor@dc.gov>

Avis,

Thanks for meeting with me on March 18th to discuss my rent.

At the meeting, you restated your opinion that Equity has the right to raise my rent well beyond the amount defined in the DC rent control statute. My rent this past year has been \$1,830. The maximum allowable increase is 3.5% (2% plus the CPI), therefore rent beginning April 1st should be no more than \$1,895. I have already sent Equity a check for this amount.

Although my rent was \$1,830 last year, Equity **falsely** reported to the city that my rent was \$2,118 -- \$362 above my current. I know from experience working with tenants, you have sometimes reported to the city rent figures that are up to \$1,000 or more than the rent paid.

You demand from me \$2,192 in rent for the coming year. That is \$362 above my current rent -- an increase of almost **20%**. This is almost **six times** the maximum allowable increase of 3.5%.

Email exchange between Harry Gural and Avis DuVall (Equity) re: rent "concessions"

I am well acquainted with the law, and **I refuse to pay** the \$2,192 in rent you demand based on a figure you falsely reported to the city. I also refuse your request to sign a new lease -- as you know, under DC law renters in rent-controlled buildings are not required to sign a new lease after the first year.

Equity's actions against me and dozens of other tenants at 3003 Van Ness are **clearly illegal under DC law**. If Equity's attorneys disagree with my position, I invite them to sue me.

Harry Gural
President
Van Ness South Tenants Association

cc: Members of the Van Ness South Tenants Association
Office of the Tenant Advocate
Office of Councilmember Mary Cheh
Office of Councilmember Anita Bonds
Office of Councilmember Phil Mendelson
Office of Mayor Muriel Bowser
ANC Commissioner Shirley Adelstein

Attachment: Rent increase notice with falsified rent amount

From: **Avis Duvall** <aduvall@eqr.com>
Date: Fri, Apr 1, 2016 at 7:25 AM
Subject: Re: Equity Residential -- widespread practice of illegal rent increases -- falsified document attached
To: Harry Gural <harrygural@gmail.com>
Cc: Marco Cruz <mcruz2@eqr.com>

Hello Harry,

Thank you for meeting with me about your renewal options. I am confident that your renewal offer complies with local rent control laws and your previous legal rent of \$2,118.00 was properly registered with the DHCD. However, I understand your desire to receive a rent concession.

After applying the permitted increase your legal rent, as discussed, is \$2192.00. However, based on current market conditions, which have changed since our meeting, I am pleased to be able to offer you a concession in the amount of \$297.00 per month, for a 12 month term, so that you will effectively pay \$1895.00 each month.

Email exchange between Harry Gural and Avis DuVall (Equity) re: rent “concessions”

It will be my sincere pleasure to continue doing business with you. Please contact me about your renewal decision. We will do our utmost to provide great service focused on meeting your expectations. Please let me know if there is anything else I can assist you with.

Sincerely,

Avis DuVall
General Manager

3003 Van Ness
3003 Van Ness Street NW
Washington, DC 20008
202.244.7811 Office 202.244.1881 Fax

EquityApartments.com
Equity Residential – *how home should feel*

Our goal is to ensure that every resident is very satisfied.