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“Rent Strike” Losing Steam at Burlington Avenue Apartments in Westlake
**Two Tenants Say They Were Deceived by Tenant Activists,
Union Organizers, One Quits Strike and Pays Rent**

Los Angeles, Calif. (Aug. 16, 2018) —Two tenants have come forward in recent weeks at the Burlington Avenue Apartments, telling apartment managers they were deceived and misled by tenant union leaders and their attorneys about the “rent strike” at 131, 143, and 171 S. Burlington Ave.

One tenant paid their past rent to the office manager at the building and the management company agreed to drop all eviction and legal proceedings and allowed the tenant to keep his apartment.

“We never wanted to begin the eviction process against any of these residents,” said spokesman Robert Thaler of FML Management. “But when the attorney and tenant union directed residents to stop paying their rent in March we had no other option but to start the eviction proceedings.”

The spokesman released a letter from another tenant (name redacted) to the building managers that said, “The lawyers that came to talk to my wife misinformed her and didn’t tell her the truth...Until now, I see all the consequences that the lawyers never informed me about. We have never been bad tenants the past 7 years we have been living here. I am comfortable living here and I know it is probably too late to ask you if you will still rent me your apartment. Lastly, I am truly sorry for all the problems that this has caused.”

“The tenants who quit the rent strike were relieved that they got to stay in their homes and we were pleased to have them back,” Thaler said. “We hope that the other tenants who are still being directed by the tenant union ask tough questions of the attorneys and union leaders who are telling them not to pay their rent, so the tenants understand the consequences of that choice.”

He pointed out even if renters participating in the action prevail in their legal actions they still will have to pay all their back rent and the increases as well.

Background

There are approximately 80 units who have refused to pay rent in three buildings at 131, 143, and 171 S. Burlington Ave., Los Angeles, since March 2018. While most of the buildings’ 193 units are paying their rent, the property management company has taken legal action to remove the non-paying tenants.

Residents of the buildings had received little or no rent increase from the property since 2008 and were notified by property management of rent increases in February of this year. The increase brought the buildings’ rent to the HUD average 2018 rental rate and are below the market-rate for the area, according to FML.

This past week FML wrote a note to building residents and thanked them for paying their rent and sharing mutual respect. “We value you as residents here and appreciate your continued support. We are proud of our buildings and the maintenance and management staff who serve you,” the letter to residents noted.

The management company said false and misleading claims have been made by non-rent paying tenants about the condition of the building. The spokesperson said the “vast majority of residents are very pleased with the apartment buildings, their quality, upkeep and safety.”

The FML spokesperson said a building manager lives onsite and that property maintenance workers respond promptly to issues from residents.