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Maryland Legal Aid Wins Summary Judgment, and Sanctions in Unlicensed Property Lawsuit in Somerset County

Somerset County, Md., (March 26, 2024) – Maryland Legal Aid celebrates a significant legal victory as the Court grants summary judgment and sanctions against Mt Vernon Group, LLC (MVG) and Eric Sessoms in a lawsuit pertaining to unlicensed property rental activities.

In a decisive ruling, the Court awarded Maryland Legal Aid \$5,504 in legal fees after MVG and Mr. Sessoms failed to comply with court-ordered document requests. [The lawsuit, initiated by Ms. Truitt and Ms. Vance, revolves around properties in Princess Anne and Crisfield rented by Mr. Sessoms and MVG without proper rental licenses.](#)

The properties in question were found to have numerous safety and code violations, rendering them ineligible for rental licensing. The Court determined MVG and/or Mr. Sessoms responsible for violating four out of the five counts outlined in Ms. Truitt and Ms. Vance's Complaint.

This outcome underscores Maryland Legal Aid's commitment to upholding property rights and ensuring the safety and well-being of tenants in the state. By holding accountable those who disregard licensing regulations and neglect property standards, Maryland Legal Aid continues to advocate for fair and lawful housing practices.

The Court found MVG and/or Mr. Sessoms responsible for violating four counts in Ms. Truitt and Ms. Vance's Complaint.

1. MVG charged both Ms. Truitt and Ms. Vance an illegal security deposit.
2. MVG did not give a lawful receipt for the security deposit, which must be included in the lease and inform the tenants of certain rights they have.
3. MVG was found to have violated the Maryland Consumer Protection Act by engaging in unfair and deceptive trade practices relating to false/misleading statements made to Ms. Truitt and Ms. Vance in renting out the unlicensed rentals. The Court also found Mr. Sessoms personally liable for these acts.
4. MVG was found to have violated the Maryland Consumer Debt Collection Act by filing failure to pay rent actions against Ms. Truitt and Ms. Vance, in an attempt to collect a

debt knowing that no debt existed. The Court also found Mr. Sessoms responsible for his involvement in these violations.

A two-day jury trial is scheduled to begin on May 9, 2024 and a jury will get to decide how much to award Ms. Truitt and Ms. Vance for MVG and Mr. Sessoms' violations as outlined above.

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About Maryland Legal Aid

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) is a statewide private, nonprofit law firm that provides free, civil legal services to low-income and vulnerable people to address their most fundamental legal problems. From its 12 offices around the state and through its many community-based clinics, we help our clients preserve and access safe and affordable housing, maintain custody of their children, and be safe from domestic violence. MLA increases our clients' economic security by defending against consumer debt, including foreclosures and tax sales, removing barriers to employment, and accessing critical income supports such as unemployment, food stamps and other vital public benefits. Through special projects, we represent seniors, nursing home residents, children in alleged abuse and neglect cases, migrant farmworkers, and those in mental health institutions. In its advocacy, MLA seeks systemic change through impact litigation, policy advocacy, and storytelling.

