Stand up for Congress Heights Tenants
Stop doing business with slumlords!

Our government should work for us, not to line corporate pockets

District agencies currently are involved in several questionable deals near the Congress Heights Metro to give away taxpayer money and critical units of affordable housing units. These developers are slumlords - they force out current tenants by making living conditions unhealthy, unsafe and unberable. Then they build luxury apartments and offices that don’t benefit the community.

The mayor must investigate this deal and the Council must demand answers from the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Why are we doing business with a landlord that lies to tenants, and lies to us?

Members of the Alabama Ave/13th St. Tenants Coalition testified in front of the D.C. Zoning Commission on Jan. 22, 2015, in opposition to the Planned United Development proposed by the developers that would tear down their home.

I have experienced problems with hot water, with heat and air conditioning, with rodent infestations (I jumped in bed once without turning on the lights and didn’t realize I was in bed with about 10 baby mice). The laundry facilities are a mess, there are leaking pipes in the basement, and the basement floods every time it rains. The smell is terrible, and there have been fly infestations because of the standing water. There is raw sewage often times in the basement when it floods.

Me and my neighbors had to take them to Housing Conditions Court just to get these basic things taken care of in our building. Sanford is treating me as a non-person.

- Robert Green, Tenant of 1331 Alabama Ave. SE

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I have lived here for 15 years. My neighbors and I have had many problems with the condition of the buildings and the apartments. There is water damage throughout my apartment causing chipping paint and my kitchen sink to sink into the floor. A few of us tenants in here never had a heating system. My neighbor uses his oven. I have never seen any landlord as inconsiderate as Sanford Capital.

- Michelle Mitchell, Alabama Ave/13th Street Tenants Coalition

I have been a tenant for 8 years. I have had continual problems with mice infestations and pests. The stoves don’t work half of the time. Sanford still has not finished fixing my air and it has been years. In the basement there is standing water, exposed electrical wires, leaky pipes, broken washers and dryers, and it is not secure. The basement is so bad that tenants can smell it from their units. There have been plenty of mornings I’ve woken up without hot water. Ever since Sanford Capital took over ownership of the building the housing conditions have gotten worse. This was the perfect place to live. Now it’s like hell. The maintenance man told me that Sanford doesn’t want to put a lot of money into these units. He told me that our housing problems can be fixed, but that Sanford doesn’t want to spend any money. The tenants who are home in the daytime are threatened by management, and many of my neighbors are scared of retaliation. Many tenants don’t know any better. They think they don’t have any rights and Sanford takes advantage of that and keeps it so that they are scared to speak out.

- Clarence Taylor, Resident of 1331 Alabame Ave. SE

I have lived on the property for 10 years, and since Sanford Capital has taken over I have had many issues. Some of the main problems are that the front door to the building is rarely secured and the building laundry room has and has a strong smell starting about a year ago. There are also not any security lights around the back of the building, which is part of a larger security problem we are having. The basement floods when it rains and there is standing water often for months that then becomes moldy. The conditions of our buildings have gone downhill since they took over.

Why can’t tenants like us be the ones to get the benefits? Why do we have to be relocated and possibly never get a chance to enjoy the benefits and enjoy that new environment?

- Lonise Meachum, Alabama Ave/13th Street Tenants Coalition