

Susman Godfrey Secures Victory for Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment in Fight to Protect Renters During Pandemic

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Susman Godfrey LLP is pleased to announce it has secured a victory on behalf of pro bono client Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment Action (ACCE), an intervenor defendant in a lawsuit brought against San Diego County and the County's Board of Supervisors by a rental housing trade association, challenging the County's eviction moratorium. Alongside the Legal Aid Society of San Diego and Western Center on Law and Poverty, who represented the defendants, the team has protected the important eviction moratorium that prevents tenants from being evicted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recognizing that many San Diego County residents would be unable to pay rent due to the impact of the COVID-19, and that evictions and homelessness would leave residents more vulnerable to COVID-19, the County passed the eviction moratorium on May 4, 2021, preventing landlords from evicting tenants due to the inability to pay rent. The COVID-19 pandemic came as San Diego County was already in the midst of an affordable housing crisis, where nearly half of all affordable housing units were already occupied by renters.

Through a preliminary injunction, the Southern California Rental Housing Association (SCRHA) sought to strike down the moratorium, stating that it has caused financial harm to landlords in the County.

On July 27, the United States District Court in the Southern District Court of California denied the motion for preliminary injunction, finding the moratorium "fills an important gap" in the protections offered by California legislature, which already prevents some evictions due to COVID-19, and serves the important purpose of keeping residents sheltered to slow down the spread of COVID-19.

"The pandemic made California's existing housing crisis far worse, and we strongly believe that these eviction protections were essential to helping Californians in San Diego County maintain shelter," said Rohit Nath, lead attorney on the Susman Godfrey team. "For many, this victory could be the difference between holding onto shelter or facing homelessness. We truly believe the Court made a decision that is in the best interest of San Diego residents and are proud to work on behalf of the ACCE on this effort."

The case is *Southern California Rental Housing Association v. County of San Diego*, Case No. 3:21cv912-L-DEB.

The Susman Godfrey team includes associates Rohit Nath and Glenn Bridgman and partners Krysta Pachman and Marc Seltzer. Rohit has been recognized with the Public Counsel Pro Bono Award for his work defending the City of Los Angeles in a similar lawsuit, brought by the Apartment Association of Los Angeles County.