



**COMMUNITY
LEGAL SERVICES**
IN EAST PALO ALTO

For Immediate Release

Media Contact:

Araceli Martínez-Olguín (650) 422-2880
amartinez-olguin@clsepa.org

Date: August 21, 2018

IMMIGRANT TENANT SUES LANDLORD FOR THREATENING TO CALL IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES TO EFFECT UNLAWFUL EVICTION

San Mateo County, CA—Today, Estela Cano is fighting back against her former landlord by filing suit in federal district court. Her lawsuit alleges that her landlord violated her civil rights by threatening to report Ms. Cano to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) in order to intimidate her and her family to flee from their home, and discriminating against her on the basis of her national origin.

“What happened to me is unjust and I want to prevent other immigrants from experiencing the same kind of harassment and discrimination,” said Estela Cano, the plaintiff in the lawsuit.

According to the complaint: Ms. Cano and her two children lived in the same Burlingame apartment complex for over five years, without incident. However, in early 2017, her landlord began insisting that the apartment was too small for their family and that they needed to move to a larger apartment, despite the lease stating that three occupants could live in the apartment. After raising their rent and denying an application for a larger apartment in the building, the landlord made efforts to unlawfully evict Ms. Cano from the building. As part of those efforts, the landlord subjected Ms. Cano and her family to several threats to call immigration authorities to remove them from the building, in the form of numerous harassing texts, calls, and voicemails. The landlord’s campaign ultimately caused Ms. Cano and her family to leave the apartment despite their legal right to remain.

The complaint also alleges that Ms. Cano’s former landlord discriminated against Ms. Cano’s family because Ms. Cano’s children lived with her, and that the landlord violated several provisions of state housing laws, including wrongfully withholding Ms. Cano’s security deposit and effectively evicting her.

“The Trump administration’s racist and anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric have some believing that discrimination like this is no longer unlawful. This case is a reminder that immigrants retain their civil rights, and that people like Ms. Cano will stand up to enforce them,” said Araceli Martínez-Olguín, Cano’s attorney.

Counsel for Cano are Martínez-Olguin of Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto and Liza Cristol-Deman of Brancart & Brancart.