

**DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT & HOUSING**

DIRECTOR KEVIN KISH

2218 Kausen Drive | Suite 100 | Elk Grove | CA 95758-7115
(916) 478-7251 | TTY (800) 700-2320 | Fax (916) 478-7329
www.dfeh.ca.gov | email: contact.center@dfeh.ca.gov

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Contact: Fahizah Alim (916) 585-7076
Fahizah.Alim@dfeh.ca.gov

**DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING REACHES AGREEMENT WITH
FORMER AIRBNB HOST WHO CANCELLED RESERVATION TEXTING**
“One word says it all. Asian.”

*Former Airbnb Host issues apology and agrees to training, community service, and participation
in a community education panel*

Airbnb conducted prompt investigation and terminated Host's account.

The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing today announced that it has reached an Agreement with a former Airbnb Host who cancelled the reservation of an Airbnb Guest, texting the Guest “I wouldn’t rent to u if u were the last person on earth.” And “One word says it all. Asian.” The agreement includes a personal apology, an agreement to complete volunteer service with a civil rights organization, and an agreement to participate in a public education event. The agreement follows an investigation by the Department into the February 2017 cancellation of a California Airbnb reservation.

Today’s announcement is part of the Department’s ongoing effort to address racial discrimination on the Airbnb platform and to investigate and prosecute discrimination by Airbnb Hosts in California. The statutory minimum penalty under California’s civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in places of public accommodation is \$4,000 for each offense. The former Host will pay \$5,000 in damages as part of the agreement.

On February 17, 2017 while driving in a snowstorm to an Airbnb listing near Big Bear, California, Airbnb Guest Dyne Suh, a student at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law, communicated with the Airbnb Host via the Airbnb mobile app regarding her reservation. Despite having sent confirming text messages approving of additional guests, the Host denied that she had agreed to additional guests and cancelled Ms. Suh’s reservation. In a series of communications using the Airbnb mobile app, the Host stated, “I wouldn’t rent it to u if u were the last person on earth” and “One word says it all. Asian.”

As part of the agreement reached with DFEH, the Airbnb Host issued a personal apology to Ms. Suh and agreed to comply with anti-discrimination laws, to attend training, to take a college level course in Asian American studies, to participate in a community education panel, to perform volunteer service at a civil rights organization, and to report rental data to DFEH for a period of four years. The Host also agreed to pay monetary damages of \$5,000. DFEH Chief Counsel Jon Ichinaga made clear: “There is a monetary cost to discriminating in California: a \$4,000 minimum penalty for discrimination in places of public accommodation, which the Department will seek in all appropriate cases.”

“We commend Ms. Suh, who was motivated to file a complaint by a desire to encourage other victims of discrimination to step forward and stand against injustice,” said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. “We are also heartened by the Host’s willingness to embrace corrective measures that are forward-looking and restorative.”

“The real story is how a charged and painful encounter led to an opportunity for reconciliation between the people involved, and to an opportunity for them to enhance the public’s understanding of discrimination and civil rights in California,” Kish observed.

Earlier this year, the Department reached an agreement with Airbnb in which the company agreed to allow the DFEH to conduct fair housing testing of certain California Hosts, to advise all users with complaints of racial discrimination of their right to file a complaint with the Department, and to report to the Department on rates of Guest acceptances by Hosts by race of the Guest.

After Ms. Suh complained to Airbnb, the company conducted an investigation and permanently banned the Host from the online platform.

The DFEH is the state agency charged with enforcing California’s civil rights laws. The mission of the DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit the DFEH’s web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

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