Fwd: Short-Term Rental News

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Short-Term Rental News

Discrimination

Airbnb User Seeks High Court Review In Race Bias Suit
Law360 | 7/25/17

An African-American man asked the U.S. Supreme Court to consider if he can proceed with his proposed race bias class action against Airbnb Inc., saying that a lower court's decision to compel arbitration gives the rental website "a sustained license to self-police its discriminatory conduct." Gregory Selden argued in his July 11 petition that the D.C. Circuit's denial of en banc review after a lower court compelled him to arbitrate with Airbnb in November 2016 prevents him from pursuing his rights under the Civil Rights Act. Selden alleges that an Airbnb host denied him housing in Philadelphia in March 2015 - only to accept requests from Selden after he changed his profile to seem as if he were a white man.

Faced with complaints of discrimination, Airbnb partners with NAACP to recruit black hosts
Washington Post | 7/26/17

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People announced on Wednesday that it has teamed up with Airbnb, the home-sharing company beleaguered by discrimination complaints, to expand the service to more minority communities. The century-old civil rights organization touted the move as a "landmark partnership" that it hopes will spread the economic benefits of tourism. Airbnb has committed to sharing 20 percent of its earnings from the community outreach efforts with the NAACP.

Airbnb, NAACP partnership met with skepticism
New York Post | 7/27/17

The NAACP is partnering with Airbnb to get people in "communities of color" to rent out their extra rooms - in exchange for the civil-rights organization getting a 20 percent cut of the fees, the short-term rental service said Wednesday. The move is supposed to help Airbnb clean up its image following reports of racist Airbnb hosts denying their homes to black guests, but critics say the NAACP is simply getting into the gentrification business... Another political Airbnb critic, Brooklyn Councilman Jumaane Williams, who chairs the Committee on Housing, called the partnership a distraction. "They're doing all this stuff so they can say, Don't look at the man behind the curtain,'" Williams said. "If I was the NAACP, I don't know if I would be involved in this."

Prostitution

Oakland Man Busted For Allegedly Running Brothel In Airbnb
SFist | 7/20/17

A crackdown on hourly rentals in Tennessee hotels has apparently sent sex workers into area Airbnbs, with one Oakland man allegedly traveling south to cash in on the brave new brothel world. ABC 7 reports that 23-year-old Oakland, California resident Travis Young was arrested in Memphis, Tennessee Monday, after a neighbor tipped police off regarding an alleged pop-up brothel being run from the home.

Crime & Safety

DC roommates' home trashed, property stolen after Airbnb rental
Fox 5 | 7/26/17

Four D.C. roommates said they had their property taken, their home trashed and drugs used inside after con artists rented their place through Airbnb. "They had trashed the place," said Aaron Myer. "There were ten people inside. Initially we thought there would be four or five people." What was supposed to be just another Airbnb rental turned into a luxury trap house. "He invited people to the party and smoking weed in the house," said Myer. "Broken property. Stole thousands of dollars in clothing, jewelry, two laptops." A trail left behind on social media shows three men posing inside the home with sneakers that belonged to these roommates. Also missing from their Northwest D.C. home was a personal check that was quickly cashed in for more than $1,200.

Inside the 'death trap' Airbnb rental with faulty locks, toxic tiles and a fire extinguisher that hadn't been tested in 15 years
The Sun | 7/26/17

A LANDLADY let out a "death trap" property on Airbnb with toxic tiles, faulty locks and a fire extinguisher that hadn't been tested for over FIFTEEN years. Jean Hendy, 64, ignored council warnings over the state of the three-storey home in Plymouth, Devon, while offering its upper floors for rent to up to nine people at a time. Hendy also failed to provide emergency lighting, some doors had the wrong locks on them and there was an dangerous storage of bedding and other combustible materials at the base of the single staircase.

'Dangerous' Beach Hostel Run by Controversial Owner Shuttered by City
DNA Info | 7/25/17

The city shut down a "dangerous" illegal hostel run by a controversial operator who advertised the home as an airy getaway close to the beach - which hosted as many as 22 people at a time without proper exits or fire alarms, officials said. Drifter Inn, at 427 Beach 69th Street, put up to eight people in a room inside the two-family Victorian home, renting bunk beds out at $35 a night on weekdays and $50 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The hostel was operated by Laura Jones, who has now been permanently banned from Airbnb, a company spokesman said.

City & State Action

Short-term vacation rental policy needed ASAP in San Diego
San Diego Union Tribune | 7/26/17

The City Council expects to review city staff proposals to regulate short-term vacation rentals in October. As The San Diego Union-Tribune Editorial Board has said for some time: It's past time to resolve the policy questions snarling the issue, only starting with City Attorney Mara Elliott's view that short-term vacation rentals are not allowed in residential or commercial areas under city zoning rules.

Legal battle heightens over Del Mar vacation rentals
Del Mar Times | 7/27/17

Del Mar's legal battle over short-term rentals (STRs) is becoming more pitched thanks to a new round of filings and accusations that have deepened the litigious divide. The latest developments include the city's first response to the lawsuit initiated by a group of disgruntled residents nearly two months ago, and a splinter case in which that group's lawyer has accused city officials of dragging their feet in meeting a wide-ranging information request for all communications by all city councilmembers going back seven years.

Misc

'Airbnb Ruined Our Summer Vacation'
NBC Los Angeles | 7/21/17

Last February, Rozas and her wife Sue Davis booked a beach house in Rhode Island for a July vacation with their 8-year-old twins, and received a message saying their "reservation is confirmed." But four months later, in June, the couple heard from the host of the house, who called himself Alan, that the rental was no longer available the week they booked it. They found he had rented it to another family for twice the price, a violation of Airbnb policy. "It was clear from the start that this guy wanted more money and that Airbnb was going to support him," Lisa Rozas told the I-Team.

Airbnb users who leave accommodation early given right to leave bad reviews
The Telegraph | 7/27/17

Airbnb customers who leave early or refuse to stay in accommodation after finding it is unacceptable, will for the first time be able to leave bad reviews, competition watchdogs have ruled. Previously its online reviews system does not allow guests to rate accommodation which they have chosen not to stay at or left early. Reviews could only be left with the assistance of Airbnb's customer services department.

Our coalition represents workers, neighbors, tenants, lodging associations, employers and affordable housing advocates. We stand united behind responsible and appropriate regulation of the short-term rental (STR) industry in Los Angeles.