



City of Antioch
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Antioch community policing program vindicated again *Landlord who claimed harassment withdraws discredited claims*

ANTIOCH, CA -- Lawyers suing the City of Antioch for police discrimination received another serious setback as a key landlord witness withdrew his disproven claims against the city.

The landlord claimed Antioch police officers harassed him for renting homes to recipients of public aid and pressured him to evict all African-American tenants. The City of Antioch denied these allegations vigorously. This landlord has now dismissed his case (*Riaz Patras et al. v. Antioch et al.*).

“As soon as Mr. Patras’ story was subjected to examination and the introduction of GPS evidence, it began to unravel,” said James Fitzgerald, an attorney representing Antioch in the case. “Conversations he said took place never happened. Officers he claimed threatened him were proven nowhere near his home or not even employed by the city. The city’s evidence has been undisputed.”

No damages or attorneys’ fees will be paid in the dismissal of the case. Nominal court costs will be paid.

More important than Patras’ own lawsuit is the role he plays in a separate case against Antioch (*Williams et al v. Antioch*).

In 2008, lawyers from the ACLU and Impact Fund held a press conference to outline their claims that African American recipients of Section 8 housing assistance were the subject of an elaborate conspiracy between neighbors and the police. Mr. Patras and his story of police conspiracy played a key role in the press conference and featured prominently in subsequent news reports as well as in numerous court filings by the plaintiffs in *Williams*.

For the ACLU and Impact Fund, the news of Patras’ withdrawal represents the third severe setback in less than two weeks. On September 2, a federal jury in a case nearly identical to *Williams* handed down a verdict exonerating Antioch on all counts. This

failed case relied on the same baseless allegations, the same witnesses and the same “expert” testimony as that in *Williams*.

The same day, a separate federal court gutted the *Williams* plaintiffs’ attempt to convert the case into a cash-generating class action. The judge ruled that only four of 1,000 putative class members would be eligible to receive damages, should plaintiffs prevail.

Faced with evidence that stubbornly supports the city’s position, lawyers for the plaintiffs have attempted to open a variety of extra-judicial fronts for Antioch to defend, including an attempt to block federal funding to the City for services for poor children and battered women.

The withdrawal of the *Patras* case and disintegration of the plaintiffs’ case in *Williams* confirm what Antioch residents have known from the outset. The city’s partnership between police and neighborhoods was and is motivated only by the need to address crime and nuisance problems.

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