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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 18, 2024

**AG Kaul Announces Settlement of Lawsuit Alleging Milwaukee Landlord
Joe Berrada Violated Wisconsin Landlord-Tenant Law**

MILWAUKEE, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul today announced the Wisconsin Department of Justice has negotiated an agreement with Milwaukee landlord Youssef (Joe) Berrada and his property management company, Berrada Properties Management, Inc., to resolve the landlord/tenant enforcement action the State filed on November 15, 2021. The agreement has been sent to the Wisconsin Legislature’s Joint Committee on Finance for approval.

“The protections that state law provides for tenants are in place for good reasons, and those protections are especially important when folks are faced with the possibility of being evicted,” said Attorney General Kaul. “I’m proud that we’ve reached this landmark proposed resolution.”

The agreement requires a monetary payment of over \$1,700,000, as well as significant injunctive provisions to address harm stemming from the conduct the State alleged violated the law. Included in the monetary payment is a civil forfeiture of \$986,455.92, attorney fees and costs of \$249,225, as well as other surcharges and fees provided by state statute.

As part of the agreement, Defendants have agreed to vacate and seal eviction judgments affected by late rent fees or attorney fees that the State alleged were illegally charged to tenants. In addition, Defendants have agreed to implement several important remediation programs. First, Defendants have agreed to run an income-based rental program for up to 300 of their tenants for a period of three to five years. Second, Defendants have agreed to participate in an eviction diversion program. Third, Berrada Properties Management has agreed to establish a

\$1,300,000 credit account to make rent assistance grants to Defendants' qualifying tenants. Fourth, Berrada Properties Management has agreed to offer up to \$400,000 in move-out assistance payments to Defendants' tenants facing eviction to help the tenant move before an eviction is filed. These remediation programs—income-based rent, eviction diversion, rent assistance, and move-out assistance—will be overseen by a third-party administrator, Community Advocates of Milwaukee.

The agreement also includes a restitution program that requires Berrada Properties Management to make payments to tenants who paid late rent or attorney fees that were not authorized, did not get full credit for their security deposit, had property confiscated, or were subjected to a self-help eviction. Tenants will not receive a payment if the balance of restitution owed is less than the balance of legally valid unpaid rent owed prior to the Court signing the consent judgment. Defendants have estimated that approximately \$850,000 in restitution will be paid under the program. Based on the State's allegations, Berrada Properties Management previously returned to tenants over \$1,000,000 in late rent payments.

Berrada controls more than 200 limited liability companies that combined own nearly 9,000 apartment units in Milwaukee and Racine. Joe Berrada is the sole owner of Berrada Properties Management, Inc., which manages all the apartment units.

By entering into this agreement, Defendants do not admit liability for any claim alleged in the State's lawsuit, or to any violation of law or wrongdoing alleged by the State. Defendants deny that they have violated any law, and the agreement does not constitute a finding by a Court that Defendants have engaged in any illegal practice.

The State's enforcement case was brought by the DOJ after referral from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), which investigated the alleged violations. Wisconsinites can file a landlord/tenant complaint by visiting DATCP's [File a Consumer Complaint](#) webpage.

Staff from the DOJ who worked on the case include Assistant Attorneys General Robert B. Bresette, Cameron D. Oliveira, and Gregory A. Myszkowski and Paralegal-Advanced Wendy Phifer of the Department of Justice Public Protection Unit; Assistant Attorneys General Colin T. Roth and Anthony D. Russomanno of the Department of Justice Special Litigation and Appeals Unit; and former Assistant Attorneys General R. Duane Harlow and Ezekiel J. Roth-Reynolds.