

Indiana Tenant Awarded Over \$800,000 in Substandard Housing Case

South Bend, Indiana Mar 15, 2024 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - In a significant legal victory for tenant rights, the St Joseph County Circuit Court in South Bend, Indiana has issued a default judgment awarding over \$866,000 to a tenant in a rental habitability lawsuit against a negligent landlord. This ruling underscores the need to uphold housing standards and ensure accountability for landlords who fail to provide safe and habitable living conditions.

The lawsuit was filed by a 25-year-old single mother from South Bend against the property owner, South Bend Homes LLC, and the management company, Western Rentals 2 LLC, citing multiple violations of rental habitability standards at a property located in South Bend, Indiana.

The property was cited in August 2023 for multiple critical violations of the city housing code by the City of South Bend for, among other things, lack of heating, large holes in the ceiling exposing wiring, water leaking into the basement, and lack of smoke detectors.

In July 2023, the Plaintiff was severely injured when her foot went through a defective staircase resulting in a shattered ankle and broken leg at the property she was leasing from the management company which had been negligently maintained.

Due to the landlord's failure to respond to the lawsuit, the court issued a default judgment in favor of the tenant, awarding over \$866,000 in damages. This compensation encompasses the tenant's suffering, inconvenience, and economic losses resulting from the landlord's negligence.

This case highlights the systemic issue of absent property owners in Indiana. South Bend Homes LLC is a Washington Company which is owned by Longview Capital Holdings LLC, which is owned by internet entrepreneur James F Lu. These absent owners often do not know the condition of their properties and are reliant on third-party property management companies to maintain the properties. Unfortunately, the management companies have little to no liability and often do not have insurance to cover their negligence.

"This default judgment sends a clear message that landlords cannot evade accountability for neglecting their legal obligations to provide habitable living conditions," said Attorney Joe Burger, spokesperson for the tenant. "We are satisfied that justice has been served and hope this verdict will prompt landlords across Indiana to prioritize the well-being of their tenants."

The legal team at Burger Law, LLC commends the Plaintiff for her courage in pursuing legal action and emphasizes the importance of holding landlords accountable for maintaining safe and habitable rental properties. Burger Law would also like to remind others that there is help available if you are living in substandard conditions.

For tenants who are experiencing housing issues, there are resources available. Pro Bono Indiana offers free legal services to those experiencing housing issues including habitability. More information can be found on Pro Bono Indiana's website at probonoindiana.org.

Burger Law, LLC is a law firm based in Frankfort, Indiana. Burger Law, LLC operates throughout the State of Indiana, focusing on Landlord/Tenant Law, Adoptions, Personal Injury, and Criminal Defense.

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