

Schneiderman to get tough on housing abuses

AG's new investigative units aim to root out abusive landlords and mortgage lenders

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New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman is staffing up in order to discipline abusive landlords and predatory mortgage lenders.

The AG plans to roll out several new investigative units to root out housing abuses such as tenant harassment and deceptive lending, the New York Daily News reported. "The new measures ... will ensure that we are using every legal tool at our disposal to best protect tenants and homeowners against abuse," Schneiderman told the paper.



Eric Schneiderman

Schneiderman's Real Estate Finance Bureau will investigate tenant harassment and other matters, supplementing Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Tenant Protection Unit. Brent Meltzer, formerly the assistant commissioner at the city's [Department of Housing Preservation and Development](#), will head the bureau.

In addition, there will be a new Real Estate Enforcement Unit to investigate criminal complaints like bank fraud and deed theft. Special Counsel John Spagna will head that initiative.

In May, the AG filed a lawsuit against landlord [Steve Croman](#) for allegedly pressuring his property managers and building superintendents to secure tenant buyouts by spying on and intimidating them. [He was charged](#) with grand larceny and falsifying filings with the Department of Buildings. (He's also facing at least one civil suit.)

On Wednesday, ProPublica published a report that was critical of the state for deliberately not informing tenants in J-51 buildings that they're often protected from big rent hikes. [\[NYDN\] – E.B. Solomont](#)