

October 2008

A female tenant, who worked part-time for the property owner to help pay rent, alleged after she rejected the owner's sexual advances and offer to exchange rent for sex, she was given no more work to do and later served with eviction papers for non-payment of rent. Before beginning the investigation, Commission staff offered the parties an opportunity to mediate the complaint, to negotiate acceptable terms of settlement. Mediation failed because the parties could not agree on terms for moving expenses or emotional distress damages. The property owner offered \$750 and the tenant held firm at \$10,000. After mediation failed, Commission staff began the investigation by interviewing the parties and reviewing tenant files. Immediately following his in-person interview, the property owner asked if mediation were still possible. Commission staff explained mediation was possible at any time during the investigative process. The owner then presented a new, enhanced offer of settlement. He offered to give title to a vehicle valued at \$2,500, two months free rent, and waive all claims to back rent. The tenant accepted the 'vehicle' and 'waiver' terms, but requested an additional month of free rent and again pressed for moving expenses. After going back and forth a couple of times, the parties eventually agreed to the 'vehicle' and 'waiver' terms, along with three months free rent and \$2,000 in moving expenses. Total value of settlement: \$9,050.