

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

Andrew Blizzard, et al.

Plaintiffs,

v.

Hunter Warfield, Inc., et al.

Defendants.

Case No. 23-cv-3374

**ORDER GRANTING PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF NOTICE, SETTLEMENT
WITH DEFENDANTS AND SETTING A FINAL APPROVAL HEARING AND
OTHER DATES**

Upon consideration of the Plaintiffs' Consent Motion For Preliminary Approval of a Settlement Class, Appointing Plaintiffs as Class Representatives, Appointing Plaintiffs' Counsel as Class Counsel, Approving Notice to the Class and Setting of Final Approval Hearing (ECF No. 66), it is **ORDERED** that the motion is **GRANTED**.

The Court has reviewed the requirements under Rule 23(a) of the Fed. R. Civ. P. and finds that the proposed settlement class meets the requirement for certification under that section. The class is numerous, consisting of 294 households. There are common issues as to whether the Defendant's actions and inactions were in violation of state and federal laws when it filed lawsuits against the class members for failure to pay rent on unlicensed rental properties. The Plaintiffs' claims are typical and there is no dispute that they were not treated any differently in material respect by the Defendant.

Further, the Court finds that the Plaintiffs and their Counsel will adequately represent the Settlement Class. Plaintiffs have no interests adverse to the other class members. Therefore, the Court appoints Plaintiffs as Class Representatives.

Similarly, the Court finds their counsel, Ingmar Goldson and Joseph Mack, to be adequate as Class Counsel. In appointing Class Counsel, I have considered the factors set forth in Rule 23(g). These factors include the work counsel has done in identifying or investigating potential claims in the action, settling the similar *Assanah-Carroll* class, counsel's experience in handling other class actions, other complex litigation, and claims of the type asserted in the action, counsel's knowledge of the applicable law, and the resources counsel will commit to representing the class, all of which favor appointment of these class counsel.

Further, the Court finds that preliminary certification of a class action for settlement purposes under Rule 23(b)(3) is an appropriate and superior method to resolve the claims in this action. The claims relate to the filing of failure-to-pay-rent actions and pursuit of individual claims by class members is unlikely. The class action also sets forth common issues of fact that predominate over any other potential issues in this action.

Accordingly, the Court certifies the following class of persons under Rule 23(c)(1) for settlement purposes only:

All tenants of any Unlicensed Property who were sued in a failure-to-pay rent case or otherwise had collection efforts directed towards them with respect to Unlicensed Rent by Defendant Hunter Warfield, Inc. within one year of the filing of this lawsuit

The claims to be addressed by the class are:

all causes of action, suits, claims and demands, in law or in equity, for damages, statutory damages, expenses, costs, and counsel fees arising out of the practices alleged in the

Complaint (including MCDCA claims, MCPA claims, and FDCPA claims)¹

The Court further finds that the proposed Settlement of this action as reflected in the Class Action Settlement Agreement and Release is a fair and reasonable compromise of the disputed claims herein given, among other things, that liability is not certain and the relief obtained is substantial.

The Court approves the manner of notice and proposed notices to class of this Settlement; specifically the Notice of Class Action Settlement (the “Class Notice”) provided to the Court by the Plaintiffs. *See* ECF No. 69-1. The Class Notice shall be printed and mailed to the last known addresses of the class members for which addresses are known no later than 15 days after entry of this order and it shall contain the following dates and information:

Deadline for election to be excluded: 45 days from the day Notice is mailed

Deadline for objections to be filed: 45 days from the day Notice is mailed

A Final Fairness Hearing concerning this Settlement shall take place on **August 25, 2026** beginning at **10:00 a.m.** in Courtroom **7D** of the Baltimore federal courthouse.

Plaintiffs’ Motion for Final Approval of this Settlement, Petition for Class Counsel Compensation, together with affidavits regarding notice and elections, shall be filed with the Court at least seven (7) days prior to the final fairness hearing.

¹ The terms “Unlicensed Property” and “Unlicensed Rent” are defined in the complaint (ECF No. 1 ¶ 26).

The Court further preliminarily approves the Settlement Agreement provided to this Court by the parties. This Order is subject to further consideration based on any objection posed by the Class following the distribution of Notice of the Settlement.

BY THE COURT:

DATE: May 28, 2026

_____/s/_____
Adam B. Abelson
United States District Judge