



MATTHEW J. PLATKIN

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*Township Used Zoning and Land Use Powers to Discriminate Against
Orthodox Jewish Residents*

For Immediate Release: August 28, 2023

Office of the Attorney General

– Matthew J. Platkin, *Attorney General*

Division on Civil Rights

– Sundeep Iyer, *Director*

Division of Law

– Michael T.G. Long, *Director*

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that discriminated against Orthodox Jewish residents. It also requires ongoing monitoring of the Township's compliance with the LAD.

The \$575,000 settlement includes \$275,000 in penalties, a \$150,000 restitution fund for individuals harmed by the Township's actions, and an additional \$150,000 in suspended penalties that will be assessed if the Township violates the consent order.

DCR's [complaint](#) against Jackson Township, [which was filed in 2021](#), alleged that the Township adopted discriminatory zoning and land use ordinances and enforcement practices that targeted the Township's growing Orthodox Jewish population.

"No one in New Jersey should face discrimination for their religious beliefs," **said Attorney General Platkin.** "We are firmly committed to eliminating discrimination and bias across our state, and we expect local leaders to comply with our robust antidiscrimination laws. The settlement announced today is a powerful testament to our commitment to protecting residents' right to religious freedom."

"Religious freedom is a bedrock principle of American democracy, and we are deeply committed to protecting it here in New Jersey," **said Sundeep Iyer, Director of the Division on Civil Rights.** "As hate and bias – including against the Jewish community – continue to rise, it is critical that we call out religious discrimination when we see it, and it is especially important that we hold public officials accountable when they treat people



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2017 that targeted and effectively banned the creation of eruvim, which are symbolic, boundary-defined areas in which observant Orthodox Jews are permitted to engage in certain activities otherwise prohibited on the Sabbath and during the holiday of Yom Kippur.

As part of the consent order announced today, Jackson Township agreed that all of the Township's powers, policies, laws, and practices affecting land use and zoning will comply with the LAD. Additionally, and pursuant to the consent order, the Township is permanently enjoined from discriminating against any residents or prospective residents of the Township on the basis of protected characteristics under the LAD.

Under the consent order, Jackson Township is also required to notify DCR of any decision, policy, practice, rulemaking, or vote that may affect religious land use within the Township or the free exercise of religion within the Township, including, but not limited to, sukkahs, schools, dormitories, eruvim, or the ability of Orthodox Jewish people to freely exercise their religious beliefs and practices. DCR will have the opportunity to object to any such decision, policy, practice, rulemaking, or vote.

Jackson Township also agreed to repeal zoning ordinances that were allegedly enacted to prevent Orthodox Jews from establishing religious schools and eruvim in the Township, as well as to publish a written description of the Township's permitting requirements and procedures for sukkahs.



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a public education campaign and organize community events to promote diversity and cultural and religious sensitivity. It will meet quarterly and provide reports to the Township and DCR.

- Jackson Township officials, including the mayor and elected members and staff of the Jackson Township Council, the Jackson Township Zoning Board of Adjustment, and the Jackson Township Planning Board, will undergo training on discrimination in land use and zoning. They will also attend DCR trainings annually during the three-year term of the consent order.

The matter was handled by Deputy Attorneys General Eve Weissman, Renee Greenberg, Marc Peralta and Loren Miller, and former Deputy Attorneys General Noemi Schor, Micauri Vargas, and Joanna Loomis of the Division of Law's Affirmative Civil Enforcement Practice Group, under the supervision of Assistant Attorneys General Mayur Saxena and David Leit, and Deputy Director Jason W. Rockwell, as well as DCR Legal Specialist Lubna Qazi-Chowdhry, under the supervision of Associate Director for Affirmative Enforcement Malcolm Peyton-Cook and Chief Advisor to the Director Aarin Williams.



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