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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: TENANT WINS EVICTION CASE AGAINST LANDLORD; JURY AWARDS TENANT DAMAGES FOR SEVERE HABITABILITY ISSUES.

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Kansas City, MO - On Friday, January 26th, a Jackson County jury found in favor of tenant Mary Smith on all counts in an eviction case brought against her by her landlords and awarded the tenant \$40,000. Ms. Smith was represented by the Safe Homes for All team at Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom, which seeks to hold landlords accountable for neglect and disrepair of rental housing.

This case sought to evict the tenant for rent owed. Ms. Smith filed two counterclaims against the plaintiff for violating Missouri's warranty of habitability and Merchandising Practices Act, which protects consumers against fraud and deception.

Ms. Smith had lived in the home located on the East side of Kansas City since 2017 and endured a litany of poor housing conditions at the hand of her landlord, who refused to make necessary repairs to the property while continuing to collect rent. These issues include but are not limited to: rodent infestation, sewage backup in the basement, unsafe and nonworking electrical wiring, structural damage, lack of smoke detectors, holes in walls and siding, and non-locking exterior doors.

"Rarely, if ever, do juries get to weigh in on eviction cases, so this was a historical moment," says Heartland attorney and executive director Gina Chiala. "The message is clear: landlords need to clean up their properties and ensure that tenants' homes are safe and healthy or the consequences could be heavy."

Tenant Mary Smith says, "I hope that my case helps all tenants win safe and healthy homes, no matter where they live, what race they are and how poor they are. We have a right to decent housing."

Founded in 2017, Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom is a non-profit legal center that enforces the rights of tenants and low-wage workers. For updates and information, please visit www.jobsandfreedom.org or follow on Instagram at [@jobsandfreedom](https://www.instagram.com/jobsandfreedom).