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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HOUSING RIGHTS CENTER AND MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES ASSIST  
DISABLED TENANT DENIED HOUSING IN LOS ANGELES**

**LOS ANGELES, CA – NOVEMBER 7, 2022** — The Housing Rights Center (HRC) and Mental Health Advocacy Services (MHAS) have successfully settled a case to provide equal access to housing opportunity for people with disabilities.

In 2019, the owners of multiple apartment buildings in South Los Angeles denied a prospective tenant a second-floor unit after learning he had a vision disability. Although they confirmed he met all the application criteria, they later asked invasive questions about his medical background and discovered that he suffers from occasional episodes of reduced vision. Upon discovering more information about his disability, everything changed. Despite the applicant's reassurances that stairs were not an obstacle for him, the owners claimed that renting to him would be a liability for them if he were to trip and fall. They refused to consider his application and insisted that he instead consider first-floor units at other properties.

Under the U.S. Fair Housing Act, it is unlawful for property owners to deny or discourage prospective tenants based on disability or other protected characteristics. Attempting to restrict tenants to a specific section of a property, direct them to another building or neighborhood, or otherwise "steer" them away from housing they qualify for and can afford not only harms the tenant who was denied housing, but also undermines the critical effort to desegregate American cities.

In addition to paying damages to the tenant, the property owners agreed to adopt a written policy across their Los Angeles properties to ensure that people with disabilities are provided equal housing choice and the opportunity to make reasonable accommodation requests. Additionally, staff will be trained on fair housing protections and best practices, and inform current tenants of their rights under federal fair housing laws.

Disability has been a protected category under the Fair Housing Act since 1988. The law makes clear that housing opportunities may not be withheld from prospective or current tenants because they have mental and/or physical disabilities. Landlords may not refuse to rent to tenants because they may need a disability-related accommodation, nor may they penalize or retaliate against tenants for requesting accommodations.

If you believe you have experienced discrimination based on disability or any other protected class under federal or California law, please contact the Housing Rights Center at 1-800-477-5977 (TTY: 1-213-201-0867) or [info@housingrightscenter.org](mailto:info@housingrightscenter.org).

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*The Housing Rights Center is a non-profit organization established in 1968 to actively support and promote equal opportunity and freedom of residence to all persons without regard to their race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, familial status, disability, marital status, ancestry, age, source of income, or other characteristics protected by law. The Center engages in activities – including outreach/education, investigation/testing and legal advocacy – to identify barriers to fair housing in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties and to help counteract and eliminate discriminatory housing practices.*