



Elana Eden
Director of Media, Outreach & Education
(213) 387-8400 ext. 1102
eeden@housingrightscenter.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOUSING RIGHTS CENTER DEFENDS RIGHT TO SERVICE DOG FOR TENANTS WITH DISABILITIES

TORRANCE, CA – MARCH 21, 2022 – The Housing Rights Center (HRC) has filed a lawsuit on behalf of a disabled veteran who was unjustly denied permission to adopt a service dog. HRC brings this complaint against Lian and Hanson Boyd, who own and manage several apartment complexes across the South Bay area of Los Angeles County.

Noah Mascarenas is a U.S. military veteran and longtime Torrance resident who was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In 2019, he was prescribed a service dog trained to help manage his physical and emotional symptoms. But despite his documented need for assistance, and in violation of his rights as a person with a disability, his landlords denied this simple request that would have allowed Mr. Mascarenas to continue living safely and comfortably in his home of 18 years. Instead, they began pressuring him to move out and raised his security deposit by \$1,000 in retaliation.

“Denial of assistance animals is one of the most frequent fair housing complaints we receive every year at the Housing Rights Center,” said Chancela Al-Mansour, Executive Director at HRC. “Landlords should consider every request for accommodations seriously and in good faith, or they could find themselves in violation of federal law.”

“It’s one thing to have a no-pets policy, but refusing to make exceptions for assistance animals is unlawful and frankly cruel,” said Elana Eden, HRC’s Director of Media, Outreach & Education. “Disability discrimination is widespread and insidious, and can make life immeasurably harder for tenants who may just need a simple accommodation to live independently.”

Disability has been a protected category under the Fair Housing Act since 1988. The law makes clear that tenants with mental and/or physical disabilities are entitled to accommodations, or changes to policies, that can be granted without reasonable burden. 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. As of 2019, California law also provides protection against discrimination for veterans and active military.

The Housing Rights Center, founded in 1968, is the nation's largest non-profit civil rights organization dedicated to securing and promoting fair housing. Its free services include landlord tenant counseling, outreach and education, and discrimination investigation.

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.



HOUSING RIGHTS CENTER

WORKING FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY IN HOUSING

###

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.

This material is based on work supported by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under FHIP Grant #FPEI20062. Any opinion, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of HUD.

3255 Wilshire Blvd | Suite 1150 | Los Angeles, CA 90010

800.477.5977 | TTY 213.201.0867 | FAX 213.381.8555

www.HousingRightsCenter.org