

Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A copy of the filed complaint is available upon request.

Fair Housing Disability Lawsuit Filed in Livingston County

Scott Lorms has filed a lawsuit based on disability discrimination under the Fair Housing Act. The lawsuit states that T & R Properties and Zahler Management denied him the right to rent an apartment with his emotional support animals (ESAs). Mr. Lorms has a disability as defined under the Fair Housing Act.

According to the complaint taken by the Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan (FHC), Mr. Lorms called T & R Properties on November 27, 2018, to inquire about a rental unit in Pinckney. Based on the size, location, and price of the duplex, Mr. Lorms thought the property was perfect for him and his family. The home was close enough to Ann Arbor to visit with friends and family and was a short commute to Mr. Lorms' job in South Lyon.

Mr. Lorms alleges that after he explained to the agent that he had emotional support dogs – which are not considered pets under the Fair Housing Act – the rental agent stated he would not show him the unit or discuss any accommodation for his emotional support animals. Mr. Lorms told the agent he had the required paperwork from a doctor regarding his disability, as well as training certificates for the animals if behavior was any concern. He asked for an application but the agent refused stating, “No dogs allowed”.

Mr. Lorms then called the Fair Housing Center and filed a complaint. Testing by the FHC supported the claim that T & R Properties refuses to rent to people with emotional support animals.

Because they were denied housing, Mr. Lorms and his family were forced to rent more expensive housing - 50% more than the desired home in Pinckney - and much further away from his work, friends, and family.

Under the Fair Housing Act, it is unlawful to discriminate in the sale or rental, or to otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any buyer or renter because of a disability of that buyer or renter. Discrimination is defined in the Act to include refusing “to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services” when necessary to afford such person with a disability an “equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling.”

Fair Housing Center Cooperating Attorney Francyne B. Stacey filed the fair housing complaint in U.S. Federal District Court on July 31, 2019. The case has been assigned to the Honorable Nancy G. Edmunds.

Photograph: Lorms with Curiz and Riley. Photograph provided by Scott Lorms. Higher resolution photos available upon request.



The Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan, founded in 1992, actively protects the civil rights of those who are discriminated against in the rental, sale, or financing of housing through investigation, education, advocacy, and legal action. The FHC takes an average of 160 complaints each year from its eight-county service area – Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Monroe, and Washtenaw.

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