

Disabled Oregon woman wins \$11,000 settlement in service animal complaint
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United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Administrative Law Judge Robert Andretta approved a settlement in a fair housing disability complaint in July 1997. The settlement involved discrimination against a mentally disabled woman who was told that she must give up her service animal or face eviction.

Complex tried to make woman give up her service dog by threatening eviction

Diane Rowe, a woman who suffers from severe depression and agoraphobia, won \$11,000 from Vista Hills Arms Apartments in Portland, Oregon. Rowe asserted that the owners and managers at the complex discriminated against her by not making reasonable accommodations for her disability. Specifically, the management tried to force her to give up her service dog because it allegedly disturbed a neighbor in the apartment below hers.

In August 1993, Rowe received a notice from the complex managers that she needed to remove her dog from the apartment or she would be evicted. Within a week, Rowe got two letters from her physician and her therapist that explained that she needed her dog to help her control her mental disability.

Woman requested to move to ground-floor apartment several times but was ignored

Rowe did not want to disturb her neighbors and requested that she be allowed to transfer to a ground floor apartment as soon as one was available. The apartment complex's managers ignored her request and did not rescind the notice that she remove her dog or face eviction.

Rowe filed a complaint with HUD following the complex's refusal to allow her to keep her dog. HUD issued a Charge of Discrimination against the owners and managers of the complex in January 1997. Before a full hearing could take place in front of Administrative Law Judge Andretta, the respondents agreed to settle.

In addition to the \$11,000 paid to Rowe, the complex agreed to pay \$500 in civil penalties to HUD and to provide HUD-approved fair housing training to all employees at Vista Hills Arms.

HUD v. Vista Hills Arms Apartments

HUD ALJ Case No. 10-94-0441-8

Filed with HUD -- September 6, 1993

HUD Charge Issued -- January 9, 1997

ALJ Hearing -- May 6, 1997, Order -- July 3, 1997