



DISABILITY RIGHTS NEW YORK

New York's Protection & Advocacy System and Client Assistance Program

Contact: Forest Cotten
518-603-0684
Forest.Cotten@drny.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Landlord Threatens Eviction of Family with Service Animal

Brooklyn, NY - May 16, 2017 – DRNY filed a lawsuit to prevent landlords, Joseph Nikifor and Kathleen Nikifor (the Nikifors), from initiating an eviction proceeding against a family who has a service animal. The Nikifors refused to renew the family's lease without a pet deposit and threatened eviction if the deposit was not paid Monday. The family has a golden retriever service dog, named Jax. The service dog was prescribed for E.C. and O.C., two young boys with Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, by their physician to ameliorate the symptoms of their disabilities. Their mother, M.C. has spent the last three months trying to explain to the Nikifors that Jax is a service animal and not a pet.

"I told my landlord repeatedly that Jax is prescribed by the boys' doctor as a service animal and not a pet. My landlord insisted I pay a pet deposit or leave," said M.C. "Having to suddenly leave our home and uproot our family would be traumatic for my children."

"Landlords may not extort an extra fee from people who need a service animal," said DRNY Executive Director Timothy A. Clune.

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725 Broadway, Suite 450
Albany, New York 12207
(518) 427-6561 (fax)

25 Chapel Street, Suite 1005
Brooklyn, New York 11201
(718) 797-1161 (fax)

44 Exchange Blvd, Suite 110
Rochester, New York 14614
(585) 348-9823 (fax)

mail@DRNY.org • www.DRNY.org

(800) 993-8982 (toll free) • (518) 432-7861 (voice) • (518) 512-3448 (TTY)