

St. Helens landlord sued over tenant's request for companion dog

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The federal government has sued a St. Helens landlord for allegedly denying the request of a mentally disabled tenant to obtain a companion dog.

[The civil action filed Monday](#) in Portland's U.S. District Court accuses Ronald A. Lucas and R.A. Lucas Developments LLC of violating the [Fair Housing Act](#).

According to the complaint, Marilyn Dirks, a tenant in the Old Portland Road Apartments, submitted letters to Lucas late last year from health care providers in support of her request for a dog. Dirks' lease includes a no-pets policy.

The animal was intended to act as therapy for Dirks' disabilities, which include depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, arthritis and fibromyalgia, according to the complaint. But Lucas told her she would be allowed to keep a dog in her apartment only if she were legally blind, although she was welcome to have a fish or bird, records show.

Dirks filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which investigated her allegations and found probable cause that Lucas and his company had violated the Fair Housing Act, the U.S. attorney's office reported today.

Attempts to reach Lucas by phone were unsuccessful.

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