

Testimony of Elizabeth Ladue

In Support of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center's Funding Request

Senator Harp, Rep. Geragosian, members of the Committee, thank you for your time.

And thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today about the Connecticut Fair Housing Center. My name is Elizabeth Ladue. I am the mother of Jacob Ladue, a young man with multiple disabilities. In the fall of 2009, I approached the Connecticut Fair Housing Center after my adult son had been refused housing because of his mental disability and his age. As a result of the work of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center on my son's behalf, my son is living in an affordable apartment close to me in Stafford, Connecticut. I ask that you approve \$227,500 in funding so that the Center can continue its important and necessary work.

In the summer of 2009, Jacob was homeless and living in a shelter. I am Jacob's Social Security Payee. Due to his disabilities my help in applying for appropriate housing is necessary. I applied for an apartment at the Stafford Housing Authority on my son's behalf. I was told there was an apartment available there that he could afford. After we submitted his application, I was told we needed to submit his medical records to the housing authority for them to review before his application could be considered. I was also told that I needed to obtain a letter from a doctor stating that Jacob could live independently. This seemed strange to me since I have applied for many apartments myself and have never been asked for this kind of documentation. I found out later that requesting this kind of information is illegal under the Connecticut and Federal Fair Housing Acts.

A few weeks later, I called the Stafford Housing Authority to obtain the status of Jacob's application. I was told that Jacob could not have the vacant unit because it was not in the other tenants' best interests to have someone like Jacob living in the complex. As a result, Jacob was

denied an apartment and continued to live in a shelter for 8 days. Living in a shelter was very difficult for Jacob because his disabilities make it very hard for him to accurately judge social settings and determine if they are dangerous or inappropriate. Due to this, Jacob witnessed several acts of violence that upset him greatly.

After filing a complaint at the Commission on Rights and Human Opportunities, I found the Connecticut Fair Housing Center and one of their attorneys helped me and my son. I was relieved and grateful to have someone representing us in the CHRO process that understood and could explain to us what was happening and what the next step was. Thanks to their help, Jacob has obtained an apartment with the Stafford Housing Authority and is no longer homeless. In addition, the Stafford Housing Authority has agreed not to ask housing applicants who are disabled for their medical records. I am relieved and grateful to know that my son is safe and that other people will not have to go through what he did.

Since moving into his own apartment, Jacob has become more confident and is very proud of his ability to live on his own.

Without the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, none of this would have happened. I had no one who understood the problems my son was encountering in his efforts to obtain safe and affordable housing. I can not adequately express my sense of relief and the peace this has brought me and my son. Please continue to fund the Connecticut Fair Housing Center so that they can continue to assist people like myself and my son. Thank you.