



SARTAC

Self Advocacy and Beyond

SARTAC Zoom Meetings

**A National Connection
for Self-Advocates**



<https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/>



Self Advocacy Resource and
Technical Assistance Center

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Meetings



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August 2nd

Civil Rights Lawsuit About Housing



Mary Jackson filed a lawsuit against the owners of her apartment complex.

It was for violating her civil rights.

Mary has cerebral palsy and her apartment complex discriminated against her.

A lawyer filed the suit in a U.S. District Court in her state.





Mary Jackson, who lives in the apartment, wants “punitive damages.” This means that Ms. Jackson wants the apartment owners to ***admit to violating her rights and not providing a reasonable accommodation.***

Ms. Jackson wants to make it easier
for other people with disabilities.

They should not have to go through a
lot of hoops to get an
accommodation they need.

Ms. Jackson is demanding a jury trial.



Here is the story from the beginning...

Mary uses a power wheelchair. She has limited use of her arms and she has no use of her legs. Mary is not able to open and close her apartment door.



If she leans to turn the handle she could fall out of her wheelchair. It is impossible for her to push and hold the door open with her wheelchair to enter her apartment.

Mary got in touch with the Fair Housing Center in her county to get help dealing with her accessibility issue. There are federal laws that help people with disabilities. They are called Fair Housing Act and the Federal Rehabilitation Act. The Center assisted Mary in filing a complaint.



This is a big safety concern. Mary is very worried about her wheelchair tipping over.





The board chair of the Fair Housing Center said, “Cases like Ms. Jackson’s demonstrate why the Fair Housing Center is a critical resource in our community. Without the Fair Housing Center’s assistance, Ms. Jackson would likely still not have her requested accommodations and modifications.”

Here are the steps that Mary took:

1. Before she moved into her apartment, Mary asked for an automatic door opener. This request is called a reasonable accommodation. The apartment owners said no. It took them 4 months to reply.

2. Mary requested again.
And it was denied again.



**DIFFERING
ABILITY**

3. Then Mary called her friend who works for the Fair Housing Center. She asked for their help. She signed a paper giving them permission to help her get her accommodations.



THE REVOLUTION WILL BE
WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE



#4 With help from the Fair Housing Center, Mary put in 3 more requests for an automatic door opener. Each time the owners of the apartment complex said "no." They kept giving different reasons for why they would not provide this needed accommodation.



Mary later found out that the owner of her apartment building had received lots of money to pay for accommodations.

They received \$750,000 from a Housing Trust Fund and \$380,000 in Low Income Housing Tax Credits as part of a Rental Assistance Program for people with disabilities.

5. The next step was to file an administrative complaint with the Human Relations Council in the county where Mary lived.



While Mary was waiting for an answer to her complaint, the owner agreed to buy and install a door opener for Mary's apartment. This was more than 16 months after Mary's first request.

The story is not over yet!

The Human Relations Council did an investigation.

They said disability discrimination occurred against Mary.

The logo for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is displayed on a dark red square background. The text is in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The word "ADA" is at the top, followed by "AMERICANS WITH" in a smaller font, "DISABILITIES" in a larger font, and "ACT" at the bottom in the largest font. Each word has a subtle drop shadow effect.

ADA
AMERICANS WITH
DISABILITIES
ACT

Mary has filed a lawsuit against the owners of her apartment building.

It says that the owners denials of Mary's request “were untrue and unreasonable.”

It says that the owners repeatedly failed to meet with Mary and find out what she needed and work on finding a solution.

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ADA
AMERICANS WITH
DISABILITIES
ACT