

**PREDETERMINATION SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

CP# 11-17-71237  
HUD# 07-18-7927-8

**PARTIES TO THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

**RESPONDENTS**

LEAH S. HILL  
7946 Coyote Court  
Dubuque, Iowa 52003

RENTHILLS, LLC  
7946 Coyote Court  
Dubuque, Iowa 52003

**COMPLAINANT**

ANGELA JACKSON  
Commissioner  
Iowa Civil Rights Commission  
400 East 14th Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

and

IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION  
400 East 14th Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

**Description of the Parties:** Complainant is a member of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Commission). As a member, Complainant has the authority to file a complaint alleging a discriminatory practice in violation of the “Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965,” Iowa Code Chapter 216. Complainant alleges discrimination in the area of housing on the basis of disability. Complainant alleged Respondents failed to provide a reasonable accommodation by refusing to waive their “no pets” policy for an assistance animal and this resulted in different terms, conditions or privileges of rental, and a denial of rental housing based on disability. Respondents own or manage the subject property, a four-unit apartment complex located at 612 South Grandview Avenue, Dubuque, Iowa 52003.

Respondent has recently settled a case with similar allegations, CP# 04-17-70378/HUD# 07-17-6790-8. The allegations in this testing complaint resulted from a fair housing test that occurred on February 14, 2017. The allegations settled in CP# 04-17-70378/HUD# 07-17-6790-8 occurred on

March 14, 2017. This complaint, resulting from the testing call on February 14, 2017, was not filed until November 16, 2017. Respondents adopted new policies and participated in fair housing training prior to the filing of this complaint.

A complaint having been filed by Complainant against Respondents with the Commission under Iowa Code Chapter 216 and there having been a preliminary inquiry, the parties do hereby agree and settle the above-captioned matter in the following extent and manner:

### **Acknowledgment of Fair Housing Laws**

1. Respondents agree there shall be no discrimination, harassment, or retaliation of any kind against Complainant or any other person for filing a charge under the “Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965” (ICRA); or because of giving testimony or assistance, or participating in any manner in any investigation, proceeding or hearing under the ICRA; or because of lawful opposition to any practice forbidden by the ICRA. Iowa Code § 216.11(2).
2. Respondents acknowledge the ICRA makes it unlawful to discriminate in the terms, conditions or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling or in the provision of services or facilities in connection with the dwelling because of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, disability, or familial status. Iowa Code § 216.8(1)(b).
3. Respondents acknowledge the Fair Housing Act (FHA) and ICRA make it unlawful to refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services, when the accommodations are necessary to afford the person equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling and to the extent that the accommodation does not cause undue financial or administrative burden or fundamentally alter the nature of the provider’s operations. 42 U.S.C. 3604(f)(3)(b) (§ 804(f)(3)(b) of the Fair Housing Act); Iowa Code § 216.8A(3)(c)(2).
4. Respondents acknowledge the FHA and ICRA make it unlawful to discriminate against another person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling or in the provision of services or facilities in connection with the dwelling because of a disability. 42 U.S.C. 3604(f)(2)(a) (§ 804(f)(2)(a) of the Fair Housing Act); Iowa Code § 216.8A(3)(b)(1).
5. Respondents acknowledge their obligation under the FHA and ICRA to allow assistance animals as a reasonable accommodation when necessary to permit an individual with a disability equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling.

Assistance animals are often referred to as service animals, emotional support animals, therapy animals, companion animals or support animals. Under the FHA and ICRA, an assistance animal is “not a pet. It is an animal that works, provides assistance, or performs tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, or provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Assistance animals perform many disability-related functions, including but not limited to, guiding individuals who are blind or have low vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to sounds, providing protection or rescue assistance, pulling a wheelchair, fetching items, alerting persons to impending seizures, or providing emotional support to persons

with disabilities who have a disability-related need for such support.” *Service Animals and Assistance Animals for People with Disabilities in Housing and HUD-Funded Programs*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, FHEO Notice: FHEO-2013-01, April 25, 2013, at 2.

After receiving a request, housing providers must consider the following:

- (1) Does the person seeking to use and live with the animal have a disability (a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities)?
- (2) Does the person making the request have a disability-related need for an assistance animal? (afford a person with disabilities an equal opportunity to use or enjoy the dwelling).

A request for accommodation can be denied if the accommodation would impose an undue financial and administrative burden or if it would fundamentally alter the essential nature of the housing provider's services. “The determination of undue financial and administrative burden must be made on a case-by-case basis involving various factors, such as the cost of the requested accommodation, the financial resources of the provider, the benefits that the accommodation would provide to the requester, and the availability of alternative accommodations that would effectively meet the requester's disability-related needs.” Joint Statement of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice, *Reasonable Accommodations Under The Fair Housing Act*, May 17, 2004, at 7.

“The request may also be denied if: (1) the specific assistance animal in question poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation, or (2) the specific assistance animal in question would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by another reasonable accommodation. Breed, size, and weight limitations may not be applied to an assistance animal. A determination that an assistance animal poses a direct threat of harm to others or would cause substantial physical damage to the property of others must be based on an individualized assessment that relies on objective evidence about the specific animal's actual conduct — not on mere speculation or fear about the types of harm or damage an animal may cause and not on evidence about harm or damage that other animals have caused. Conditions and restrictions that housing providers apply to pets may not be applied to assistance animals.” FHEO-2013-01 *at* 3.

Respondents acknowledge they will consider each tenant or prospective tenant’s situation and accommodation request individually to determine if the requested accommodation is reasonable. The parties acknowledge that if the disability is not known or obvious, Respondents may make a reasonable inquiry and request documentation from a health care provider that verifies the tenant/prospective tenant’s disability, without seeking or collecting information regarding the nature of the disability. In addition, Respondents may make reasonable inquiry and request documentation from a health care provider that verifies the tenant or prospective tenant’s need for the accommodation, i.e., the relationship between the person’s disability and the need for the requested accommodation.

Assistance animals cannot be subjected to monthly pet fees since they are not considered pets under the FHA and ICRA. Housing providers cannot require special tags, equipment, certification or special identification of assistance animals.

### **Voluntary and Full Settlement**

6. The parties acknowledge this Predetermination Settlement Agreement is a voluntary and full settlement of the disputed complaint. The parties affirm they have read and fully understand the terms set forth herein. No party has been coerced, intimidated, threatened or in any way forced to become a party to this Agreement.
7. The parties enter into this Agreement in a good faith effort to amicably resolve existing disputes. The execution of this Agreement is not an admission of any wrongdoing or violation of law. Nor is the execution of this Agreement an admission by Complainant that any claims asserted in her complaint are not fully meritorious.
8. The parties agree the execution of this Agreement may be accomplished by separate counterpart executions of this Agreement. The parties agree the original executed signature pages will be attached to the body of this Agreement to constitute one document.
9. Respondents agree the Commission may review compliance with this Agreement. And as part of such review, Respondents agree the Commission may examine witnesses, collect documents, or require written reports, all of which will be conducted in a reasonable manner by the Commission.

### **Disclosure**

10. Because, pursuant to Iowa Code §216.15A(2)(d), the Commission has not determined that disclosure is not necessary to further the purposes of the ICRA relating to unfair or discriminatory practices in housing or real estate, this Agreement is a public record and subject to public disclosure in accordance with Iowa's Public Records Law, Iowa Code Chapter 22. See Iowa Code §22.13.

### **Release**

11. Complainant hereby waives, releases, and covenants not to sue Respondents with respect to any matters which were, or might have been alleged as charges filed with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development, or any other anti-discrimination agency, subject to performance by Respondents of the promises and representations contained herein. Complainant agrees any complaint filed with any other anti-discrimination agency, including the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development, which involves the issues in this complaint, shall be closed as Satisfactorily Adjusted.

### **Fair Housing Training**

12. Respondents Leah Hill and each of Respondents' current employees or agents who are involved in the management or operation of residential rental properties received approved training on July 25, 2017 on the requirements of State and Federal Fair Housing Laws as a result of the settlement of CP# 04-17-70378/HUD# 07-17-6790-8.

**New Policy and Practice**

13. Respondents adopted and implemented specific, uniform, and objective written standards, procedures, and forms for receiving and handling requests made by people with disabilities for reasonable accommodation as part of the settlement of CP# 04-17-70378/HUD# 07-17-6790-8.

**Reporting and Record-Keeping**

15. Respondents have submitted documentation to the Commission objective evidence of the successful completion of fair housing training and acceptable information detailing Respondents' reasonable accommodation procedures with a copy of the reasonable accommodation policy and applicable request forms, as objective evidence that Respondents have adopted and implemented specific, uniform, and objective written standards, procedures and said forms for receiving and handling requests made by people with disabilities for reasonable accommodation.

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Leah S. Hill, RESPONDENT

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Date

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Renthills, LLC, RESPONDENT

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Date

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Angela Jackson, COMPLAINANT

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Date

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Kristin H. Johnson, DIRECTOR  
IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

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Date