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BEFORE THE ALASKA STATE COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

ALASKA STATE COMMISSION FOR )  
HUMAN RIGHTS, PAULA M. HALEY, )  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, *ex rel.* )  
STEPHANIE DRYDEN )  
  
Complainant, )  
  
v. )  
  
MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE, )  
ANCHORAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT, )  
  
Respondent )

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ASCHR No. J-08-001

**ACCUSATION**

Paula M. Haley, Executive Director of the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, *ex rel.* Stephanie Dryden, hereby alleges the following against Respondent Municipality of Anchorage, Anchorage Police Department:

1. Respondent Municipality of Anchorage Police Department (“APD”) is a political subdivision of the state of Alaska.
2. On October 19, 2007, APD officers responded to a disturbance at a residence in Anchorage. Upon arrival, the APD officers encountered two adults, one of whom was Stephanie Dryden.
3. Stephanie Dryden suffers from bipolar disorder, panic attacks, and agoraphobia, and because of these conditions she is a person with a disability as that term is defined by Alaska law.

1           4.       Because Ms. Dryden has significant difficulties interacting appropriately with  
2 other people, Ms. Dryden's disability is obvious to others.

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4           5.       Ms. Dryden owns a service dog, a medium-sized Poodle-Terrier mix named  
5 Liberty Ann, that has been trained to perform tasks for the benefit of Ms. Dryden's  
6 disability.

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8           6.       Among other things, Liberty Ann has been trained to provide tactile  
9 stimulation to Ms. Dryden to disrupt Ms. Dryden's panic attacks.

10           7.       Liberty Ann has been certified as a service dog for Ms. Dryden by the  
11 American Canine Association.

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13           8.       On October 19, 2007, upon arrival at the residence to which APD officers had  
14 been dispatched, the officers noted that Ms. Dryden stood yelling "hysterical[ly]" from the  
15 house's stairway.

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17           9.       The APD officers' investigation revealed that prior to their arrival, Ms.  
18 Dryden had "scratched her [own] neck and tore her [own] shirt in an effort to relieve her  
19 anxiety," and that Ms. Dryden had attempted to obtain a knife with which she planned to  
20 harm herself.

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22           10.       Based on this information, the APD officers decided to take Ms. Dryden to  
23 Providence Alaska Medical Center's psychiatric, inpatient center for care.

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25           11.       When the APD officers advised Ms. Dryden of their plans to transport her to  
26 the hospital, Ms. Dryden requested that they also transport her service dog, Liberty Ann,  
27 which was in Ms. Dryden's vehicle parked outside the residence, so that the dog could  
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accompany her during her stay at Providence.

12. At least four times, Ms. Dryden advised the officers that her dog is a service dog, at one time stating that her dog is a “certified service dog, and I have the papers to prove it.”

13. One of the officers contacted Providence Medical Center by telephone and confirmed that it accepts service animals.

14. The APD officer also contacted a shift sergeant and asked whether the transporting officer should also take Ms. Dryden’s service animal. The shift sergeant told the transporting officer not to take Ms. Dryden’s dog to the hospital with her because the dog doesn’t “offer a physical need” or perform a physical service.

15. One of the officers told Ms. Dryden that APD would not transport her dog with her because “it’s a comfort dog, not a service dog,” and because the officer’s sergeant “said not to.” Ms. Dryden again asserted that her dog is a certified service dog.

16. Despite Ms. Dryden’s assertion, APD transported Ms. Dryden to Providence Medical Center without her service animal.

**CAUSE OF ACTION:  
DISCRIMINATION BECAUSE OF DISABILITY  
A VIOLATION OF AS 18.80.255(3)**

17. Paragraphs 1-16 above are realleged and incorporated herein.

18. The Municipality of Anchorage, Anchorage Police Department, is a political subdivision of the state of Alaska.

19. Stephanie Dryden is a person with a mental disability as that term is defined in

1 AS 18.80.300(14)(A) & (B).

2 20. Ms. Dryden owns a service dog that has been trained to perform tasks for the  
3 benefit of Ms. Dryden's disability.  
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5 21. On October 19, 2007, APD transported Ms. Dryden to Providence Medical  
6 Center in Anchorage after receiving a call regarding a disturbance at Ms. Dryden's  
7 residence.  
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9 22. APD knew that Ms. Dryden is a person with a disability because of its past  
10 interactions with her, because she told the APD officers that she has a mental illness, and  
11 because her mental disability is obvious.  
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13 23. Ms. Dryden clearly identified her dog as a service animal to the APD officers  
14 and asked them several times to transport her service dog with her to the hospital.  
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16 24. Despite Ms. Dryden's unequivocal and repeated requests, APD refused to  
17 transport Ms. Dryden's service animal with her to the hospital.  
18

19 25. APD's refusal to allow Ms. Dryden's service animal to travel with her  
20 constituted illegal discrimination against her because of her disability, in violation of AS  
21 18.80.255(3).  
22

### 23 PRAYER FOR RELIEF

24 Wherefore the Executive Director asks for the following relief:

25 1. That the Commission issue an order declaring that Respondent Municipality  
26 of Anchorage, Anchorage Police Department violated AS 18.80.255 by discriminating  
27 against Stephanie Dryden because of her disability.  
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*ASCHR, Paula M. Haley, Executive Director, ex rel. Stephanie Dryden v. Municipality of Anchorage, Anchorage Police Department, ASCHR No. J-08-001*

