



Maine Human Rights Commission

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INVESTIGATOR'S REPORT

PA15-0472

March 27, 2017

Sean LaPlante (Glen, NH)

v.

Ramada Inn (Kittery, ME)

I. Summary of Case:

Complainant Sean LaPlante, a prospective guest of Respondent Ramada Inn ("Inn"), alleged that the Inn discriminated against him based on his disability when it refused to allow him to stay at the Inn with his service animal. The Inn denied discriminating against Complainant based on his disability and stated that Complainant was asked to leave after creating a disturbance for other guests. The Investigator conducted a preliminary investigation, which included reviewing all of the documents submitted by the parties and requesting additional information. Based upon all of this information, the Investigator recommends that the Commission find that there are **reasonable grounds** to believe that the Inn discriminated against Complainant based on his disability.

II. Jurisdictional Data:

- 1) Dates of alleged discrimination: November 8, 2014.
- 2) Date complaint filed with the Maine Human Rights Commission ("Commission"): August 26, 2015.
- 3) The Inn offers overnight accommodations to the public, and is a "public accommodation" subject to the Maine Human Rights Act ("MHRA") and state public accommodations regulations.
- 4) Complainant is represented by Kristin Aiello, Esq. The Inn is represented by Philip L. Pettis, Esq.

III. Development of Facts:

- 1) Complainant provided the following in support of his claims:

Complainant suffers from a disability and requires the use of a service animal. On November 8, 2014, Complainant called the Inn's corporate franchise ("Corporate") customer service phone line and an agent made a reservation for Complainant at the Inn. Minutes later, when Complainant arrived at the Inn with his service animal—which was wearing a harness marked "Service Dog" on both sides—an employee ("Employee") at the front desk asked Complainant to provide a license or certificate for the animal. Complainant explained that he did not have with him, or need to produce, documentary proof. Employee then told Complainant that his reservation was cancelled and there were no vacancies for him