

Judge Rules Against Service Dog in School

Family had sued to compel school to allow hearing-impaired teen's service dog in classes.

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A hearing-impaired teenager in New York fighting for the right to have his service dog accompany him to classes at a high school has been dealt a legal setback by a federal judge.

On Feb. 27, U.S. District Court Judge Arthur D. Spatt ruled that 14-year-old John Cave, Jr., of Long Island, is not allowed to bring his service dog, Simba, to classes at W. Tresper Clarke High School in East Meadow.

The boy and his parents brought a lawsuit after the East Meadow School District would not allow the ninth grader to bring Simba to class. The lawsuit says the dog is less effective if not with the teenager all day.

The lawsuit in U.S. District Court said the school district's decision is keeping the teen from attending school and violates the Americans With Disabilities Act. The lawsuit also sought \$150 million in damages.

Spatt said he issued the ruling in part because the family didn't follow the school district's appeals process, and instead opted to sue.

School district officials have said the boy doesn't need the dog to access school resources. In the past, the district has provided Cave with a sign-language interpreter, a note-taker and other assistance while in class.