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## LANDMARK SETTLEMENT FOR NYPD OFFICERS WITH HEARING LOSS

New York, NY – March 17, 2015 –, On the day a jury trial was scheduled to begin, Disability Rights Advocates and the Law Offices of Meenan and Associates entered into a landmark settlement with the NYPD in a case challenging the Department's discriminatory blanket policy banning the use of hearing aids by police officers. The settlement concludes after four and a half years of hard-fought legal advocacy.

Such blanket policies are prohibited by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the New York City Human Rights Law. The case has attracted national attention and a friend of the court brief opposing the NYPD's policy was filed by the Hearing Loss Association of America, AARP, and Veterans of Foreign Wars USA.

Under the settlement, the City will reinstate Plaintiff Daniel Carione—a 20 year exemplary veteran of the police force who suffered hearing loss in the line of duty and was forced to retire because he uses hearing aids.

"The settlement provides an opportunity for me to return to the profession and the Department (NYPD) I so dearly love," states Carione, "But much more importantly it opens wide the door of opportunity to millions of hearing-disabled Americans. Most notable are our returning war veterans, a great many of which have received combat induced hearing loss requiring the use of hearing aids. Many of these brave men and women are deserving of the opportunity to demonstrate they are willing, able, and otherwise capable of performing the essential duties of Police officer with the use of hearing aids."

Mr. Carione is one of many officers with hearing loss who will benefit from this week's settlement. The settlement requires the City to review its hearing aid policy and consider evaluating officers with hearing aids on a case-by-case basis while they are wearing their hearing aids.

While the policy review takes place, all officers who use hearing aids will have the opportunity to meet the NYPD's hearing standards while wearing hearing aids and be able to keep their jobs if they do.

Mr. Carione is joined in the settlement agreement by former NYPD sergeant Jim Phillips, currently a police officer in the Village of Brewster. Mr. Phillips stated, "I am glad I was able to be a part of this settlement, which opens the door for current officers who are afraid to come forward to get help for their hearing."

*the leading nonprofit disability rights legal centers in the nation. Its mission is to advance equal rights and opportunity for people with all types of disabilities nationwide. In the organization's 20+ year history, DRA has taken on more than 400 cases and won almost all—achieving dramatic improvements for people with disabilities seeking health care, employment, transportation, education, disaster preparedness planning, voting and housing. Most recently, DRA prevailed in a case that will make New York's taxi fleet the most wheelchair-accessible in the country.*

[www.drlegal.org](http://www.drlegal.org)

*Meenan & Associates is a small law firm located in New York City devoted to empowering its clients as they face civil rights issues which are often very challenging and demeaning. The firm has a well-established history of achieving positive results for individuals who have been adversely treated on the basis of their disabilities, gender, race, sexual orientation, age, or national origin, or because of complaining of unlawful workplace conduct or policies, or for exercising their rights to engage in protected speech. To find out more about Meenan & Associates, please visit: [www.meenanesqs.com](http://www.meenanesqs.com)*

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