

**PRESS CONFERENCE AND PRESS RELEASE**

**Disabled Aviation Security Student and his Brother Denied Access to Flight Simulators at the Air & Space Museum  
Federal Disability Discrimination Lawsuit Filed Against Smithsonian Institution and Pulseworks, LLC**

**For Release After Conference Call Press Conference:** August 15, 2013, 10:30 a.m. EST.

Max and Jake Gold, along with SJLC attorneys Shawn Heller and Joshua Glickman, filed a federal discrimination lawsuit today in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia against the Smithsonian Institution and Pulseworks, LLC, for denying Max access to the flight simulators at the Air & Space Museum. Max suffers from a rare vascular anomaly birth defect that caused his right leg to be amputated as a child, and has left him dependent on a wheelchair.

Last summer, Max and his brother, Jake, traveled from Merrick, NY, to Washington, D.C., to visit the Smithsonian's many museums. Their first stop was at the Air & Space Museum – particularly the museum's flight simulator exhibit – as Max is a self-described “aeronautical fanatic,” and is currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Aviation Security Systems from the State University of New York at Farmingdale.

That excitement soon ended, however, as Max was denied the ability to use any of the flight simulators, even after being told he could do so. Instead of a day spent enjoying our nation's capital, Max and his brother were insulted and berated by the operators of the simulator exhibit, who absurdly insisted that they see Max stand up from his wheelchair and walk up several stairs. Completely uninterested in the nature or extent of Max's disability, the operators directed their comments and questions to Max's brother, and refused to even acknowledge Max as a crowd of patrons looked on, leaving Max and his brother angry and humiliated.

Jake has been lifting Max out of his wheelchair for almost his entire life, and by doing so, has enabled Max to enjoy equal access to activities that he would otherwise not be able to participate in. “We were just trying to do what we normally do,” said Max when discussing what happened. “It is shameful that such a thing could happen at the Smithsonian,” added Jake, “I couldn't believe that the supervisor wouldn't even give my brother the respect of directing her comments and questions to him.” Despite his treatment, Max is determined to see this lawsuit through, noting that “I will keep fighting to make sure others with disabilities are not discriminated against, like I was.”

Max and Jake have advanced claims for injunctive relief and damages under the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the District of Columbia Human Rights Act. These laws require that places of public accommodation, executive agencies, and recipients of federal funds make reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities. Despite these laws, the Defendants refused to accommodate Max, thereby denying him equal access and subjecting him and his brother to humiliation and ridicule.

For further information please contact SJLC attorneys Shawn Heller or Joshua Glickman at 202-709-5744 or [media@sjlawcollective.com](mailto:media@sjlawcollective.com). The Complaint and pictures which may be used by the media will be available for download an hour before the press conference at [sjlawcollective.blogspot.com](http://sjlawcollective.blogspot.com)

**Conference Call-In Information:**

Dial-in Number: (712) 432-3066  
Media Participant Conference Code: 789617

Media participants will have the opportunity to ask questions during the moderated press conference by pressing 5\*

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