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News Release

For Immediate Release

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Federal Lawsuit Challenging West LA College's Failure to Accommodate the Needs of Students with Disabilities Goes to Trial

(Los Angeles, CA – October 17, 2017) Last year, West Los Angeles College (WLAC) abruptly stopped providing a shuttle service that students with mobility disabilities depended on to get to class on the hillside campus.

Disability Rights California, along with the firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, represents three WLAC students with mobility disabilities. They have struggled to access their classes and school activities since WLAC terminated the shuttle service. WLAC is part of the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), the largest district in the country. LACCD has refused to restore the campus shuttle service or provide any other form of on-campus transportation service for students whose disabilities make it difficult for them to utilize campus pedestrian routes. The case goes to trial on Tuesday, October 17. For more information go to www.disabilityrightsca.org/advocacy/guerra_vs_west_la_college/index.htm.

One plaintiff is Army veteran Charles Guerra. He uses a walker due to a mobility disability that dates back to an injury he experienced during his military training. Without the campus shuttle, he has had great difficulty

getting to his WLAC classes safely. He has fallen multiple times on campus pedestrian routes in recent months, resulting in the need for emergency medical care on at least two occasions.

“Being back in the classroom gave me a new lease on life,” Guerra said. He is studying psychology and drug/alcohol abuse counseling at WLAC. “I want to get my degree so that I can give back to my community, helping veterans and other people who struggle with addiction. Students with disabilities like me should be able to safely and independently access school on-campus, just like anyone else.”

There are dozens of community colleges and universities in California that provide a shuttle service to students with disabilities.

“The school should step up here, so that students like Charles can focus on working to achieve their goals as college students, instead of worrying about how they will get to the classroom door,” said Aaron Fischer, Guerra’s attorney from Disability Rights California.

Disability Rights California is a non-profit organization founded in 1978. We protect the rights of people with disabilities. Visit us at disabilityrightsca.org.