NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE USE

FROM: Tennessee Association of Guide Dog Users

DATE: July 18, 2016

TO: All Media

RE: Criminal Case Against Uber Driver

CONTACT:

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UBER DRIVER FACES CRIMINAL CHARGES

On April 28, 2016, James Boehm and his guide dog Shep were left stranded at an animal hospital in Murfreesboro, TN. An Uber driver defiantly squealed away, refusing to transport the guide dog team home.

“I was distraught and infuriated all at once!” stated Mr. Boehm, who filed a police report with the Rutherford County sheriff’s department. After an investigation, the state Attorney filed charges against Rolonda Douglas. The hearing is scheduled for August 9th, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. at the Rutherford County Judicial Building located at 20 North Public Square.

“This case is so important because it sets a precedent for all Uber, Lyft, or other taxi drivers,” says James Boehm. “If they discriminate against a service animal user, the violators will be prosecuted.”

Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Tennessee and their guide dogs, along with other service dog users from around the state plan to attend the hearing to support the cause. “Such incidents occur far too often and we want to present a strong,united front in support of this case,” says james Brown, president of the NFB of Tennessee. “We want to make a statement that such discrimination is not acceptable.

Not only does the Americans with Disabilities Act make it clear that disabled individuals have the right to be accompanied by a service dog, Tennessee statute 62.7.112 strengthens the ADA by providing criminal penalties for such discrimination. As a Class C misdemeanor, violating the civil rights of a disabled person accompanied by a service dog is punishable by up to 30 days in jail and/or a fine of up to $50. (The entire text of the Tennessee statute accompanies this release.)

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About the National Federation of the Blind

The National Federation of the Blind is the oldest and largest organization of the blind in the United States. The NFB knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations are the obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want! Blindness is not what holds you back. The Federation provides scholarships to blind students; support for those who are blind or losing their eyesight; advocacy for the blind facing discrimination; and educational programs for the general public on topics of blindness. The NFB is not an organization that speaks on behalf of the blind; we are the blind speaking for ourselves.

About NAGDU

The Tennessee Association of Guide Dog Users (TAGDU) is a strong and proud division of the National Association of Guide Dog Users. The National Association of Guide dog Users is the nation’s leading membership organization for blind people who use guide dogs. NAGDU is a strong and proud division of the National Federation of the Blind. NAGDU conducts public awareness campaigns on issues of guide dog use, provides advocacy support for guide dog handlers who face discrimination, supports sound policy and effective legislation to protect the rights of guide dog users, offers educational programs to school and civic organizations, and functions as an integral part of the National Federation of the Blind. For more information about the National Association of Guide Dog Users and to support their work, you can visit their website at

[HTTP://WWW.NAGDU.ORG](http://www.nagdu.org/)

Or send an email message to

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