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**JURY AWARDS BLIND WAR VET $160,000 FOR DISCRIMINATION BY CREDIT UNION**

**Jury finds NuVision Credit Union denied disabled vet loan**

**because he did not have a driver’s license.**

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif., October 25, 2013– A Federal jury awarded Army Sgt. Major Jesse Acosta $160,000 in a legal victory finding that Huntington Beach-based NuVision Credit Union violated the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and the Unruh Act by denying Jesse Acosta a loan because he could not produce a valid driver’s license. In 2006, Sgt. Major Acosta was blinded and suffered severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) while serving in Iraq.

The jury found that NuVision discriminated against Sgt. Major Acosta when it refused to fund a $20,000 loan that had been approved, but not funded when NuVision found out he was blind at the signing of the loan documents. Sgt. Major Acosta received a phone call from the bank informing him, “you didn’t tell us you were blind, that’s a problem.”  “I told them it was wrong to cancel my approved loan because I was blind, I felt humiliated and very angry,” stated Sgt. Major Acosta, who advocates on behalf of veterans and wants his win to help others fight disability discrimination.

The jury found that the ADA prohibited NuVision from requiring a blind person to produce a driver’s license to qualify for a loan, without a legitimate business interest. Instead of modifying the discriminatory policy, NuVision’s required Sgt. Major Acosta to look for a co-borrower with a driver’s license, and submit a new loan application.

“The $160,000 damages included exemplary damages because it was intentional discrimination,” explained civil rights attorney Patricia Barbosa.

Sgt. Major Acosta, sought legal help following his experience as he battled depression, anger and severe episodes of PTSD that caused him great physical and mental anguish, as he relived the helplessness he felt in dealing with NuVision’s denial of his loan.  "It was never about the money," said Sgt. Major Acosta, “it was to make sure NuVision never did treated another disabled person like they treated me.”

Civil rights attorney Patricia Barbosa, the founder of Barbosa Group, who has more than 20 years of experience enforcing civil rights.  “I'm very happy that the jury vindicated Mr. Acosta, and will end NuVision’s discrimination," said attorney Barbosa.  "Their policy—that blind customers must have valid driver’s licenses—is reminiscent of past bank practices requiring women have their husbands co-sign a loans, because women could not be trusted with business decisions" she continued.  "The ADA became the law of the land 23 years ago. It is long-past time for NuVision and other businesses to recognize that persons with disabilities are entitled to full and equal access to all aspects of our society."

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For more information, or to schedule an interview with Sgt. Major Acosta, please call Patricia Barbosa at **949/370-9942** or email PBarbosa@Barbosagrp.com