



### **Serena Smuckers, 59, Dallas (housing)**

You know when you're receiving anywhere between \$1,500 and \$2,000 a month, and that's the cap, that you can receive on disability, a \$1,200-a-month apartment isn't an option. It would be lovely to have, but that leaves me \$300 a month. My car insurance is \$120, my life insurance policy is \$54, health insurance by the grace of God is taken care of through Medicare. But you know by the time you do that you end up with \$30 for groceries.

There's a number of people who have large homes who may need help paying property taxes, who may need additional help with utility bills that are renting out rooms, which is basically was the situation when I met Wendy. In lieu of paying rent, I take care of her dog, I do her laundry, I buy her groceries, I prepare her meals. Up until recently when she got home health care I was actually helping to bathe her, plan her trips, doctor's appointments, mow her yard, trim her bushes.

If I was going to change something specifically in the housing industry, I wouldn't make it completely based on ability to pay, a person's financial background. Make it based on whether or not they would add value to the community, rather than just coming up with the rent.

Would renting this apartment to Serena Smuckers make our apartment community better or worse? That should be the underlying question. Not whether or not she's trans, not whether or not she has a deep voice, not whether or not she originally was raised in Nebraska not Texas. We all are reflections of our neighbors.

We all do things that affect other people, so keep that in mind.