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HIV advocates call for justice in Dearborn Police harassment incident

For Immediate Release

DEARBORN, Mich., Sept. 19, 2012 – The Dearborn Police Department’s own patrol car video system recently captured an officer blatantly engaging in discrimination against an HIV-positive person during a traffic stop.

Shalandra Jones and a companion were pulled over in the early evening of Aug. 3, 2012 in Dearborn. During the approximately 30-minute traffic stop, Officer David Lacey said he was issuing the pair tickets because he was “aggravated” that Jones had not disclosed her HIV-positive status before he searched the vehicle.

The tape captures the police officer repeatedly commenting on his fear of coming into contact with HIV. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has highly publicized its studies that conclude HIV is not transmitted through casual contact.

Detroit Legal Services is working to ensure that Jones is protected to the fullest extent of the law.

“The actions of Officer Lacey were shocking, outdated and illegal,” said Detroit Legal Services (DLS) President Joshua L. Moore. “Officers of the law are here to protect and serve, not harass and humiliate. The Dearborn Police Department must immediately commit to HIV education and sensitivity training for all its employees in order to even begin correcting this horrible wrong.”

DLS is a sought-after, nationwide expert in HIV/AIDS legal matters. Through its specialized national HIV/AIDS Project, DLS has successfully used its expertise and resources to provide personalized legal services for more than 300 clients to date who have found themselves

struggling within the system. The firm, headquartered in Detroit, proudly gives 10 percent of its earnings back to the community via donations to HIV/AIDS nonprofit organizations.

“There is no legal obligation to disclose an HIV status during a routine traffic stop,” Moore said. “This is a clear case of civil rights violations and discrimination due to ignorance.”

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To view the entire police video, see: <http://bit.ly/UqL4Iu>

Sign the Change.org petition: <http://chn.ge/OGpZJ>