Charges Dropped in Nick Rhoades Iowa Criminalization Case

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Prosecutors in Black Hawk County, Iowa, have asked a judge to drop HIV criminalization charges against Nick Rhoades, according to the Des Moines Register.

Rhoades, who is HIV positive, was arrested in 2008 after a one-night stand in which he did not disclose his status. His viral load was undetectable, he used a condom, and HIV was not transmitted. Nonetheless, he was sentenced to 25 years in prison. He appealed the case and was eventually given probation for five years. This spring, the State Supreme Court overturned Rhoades's conviction, placing it in a lower court where prosecutors had until October 1 to come up with new evidence to charge him. Instead, the county prosecutors asked to have the charges dropped.

"We can safely say [Rhoades] will not be a felon, he will not be a sex offender, and he can sleep soundly knowing that," said Joseph Glazebrook, an attorney representing Rhoades.

Since 2008, the Rhoades case became a flashpoint regarding HIV criminalization. Earlier this year, Iowa legislators voted to overhaul the state's HIV laws, and advocates from across the nation held a criminalization conference.

For more details, read POZ's October feature story "HIV Is Not a Crime: The Aftermath of HIV Criminalization Advocacy in Iowa."

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