



Student With HIV Settles Discrimination Case at Buffalo State

A SUNY Buffalo State student received a six-figure settlement after the college expelled her from campus because of her HIV status.

December 4, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

A woman living with HIV received \$115,000 in a legal settlement reached with Buffalo State University regarding HIV [discrimination](#). She filed a lawsuit against the Buffalo campus of the State University of New York after the college evicted her from student housing and expelled her from campus due to her positive [HIV](#) status, according to the [Legal Action Center](#) (LAC).

Represented jointly by LAC, Housing Works and attorney Anna Marie Richmond, the woman, identified as Betty Jones to protect her privacy, argued that Buffalo State's actions were discriminatory and based on outdated beliefs about HIV transmission.

In 2022, Jones contacted Buffalo State authorities after the person she was dating reacted aggressively when she disclosed she is HIV positive. Rather than offer support, Buffalo State suspended and removed Jones from campus. The school claims that she was involved in a "health and safety incidence that put [the] campus at risk."

Such a claim is not grounded in current medical evidence about HIV transmission. Unfortunately, many HIV laws and attitudes trace back to the early days of the epidemic, when fear and lack of scientific knowledge about the virus reigned. Fast-forward four decades, and today we know, for instance, that people with HIV who take their meds and maintain an [undetectable viral load](#) do not transmit the virus sexually, a fact referred to as [Undetectable Equals Untransmittable](#), or U=U.

Jones, who has been taking daily antiretroviral medication for years, has achieved such viral suppression, according to LAC.

"For me, college represented the culmination of so much hard work—overcoming financial instability at home, working through my academic challenges and learning how to live with HIV,"

Jones told LAC. “And then, just like that, everything I had worked for my whole life was gone in a flash. I was arrested in front of my classmates, evicted from my school housing, suspended and removed from campus. The university police walked me to a bus stop outside of campus and left me there, alone. It is difficult to express how devastating this was to every aspect of my life. My heart felt completely shattered,” Jones said. “But the pain and humiliation I endured as a result of my arrest and expulsion did not stop me from having hope and pursuing what I have worked so hard for. For me, this settlement is a win, and I hope it helps ensure no one has to go through what I did.”

In addition to paying Jones \$115,000 in compensation, Buffalo State was ordered to remove the disciplinary proceeding from her transcript and file.

“Hopefully, Ms. Jones’s case will inspire other institutions to proactively educate their staffs regarding HIV science and the rights of persons living with HIV,” Richmond said.

In recent years, some states have repealed outdated HIV laws, including those that unfairly criminalize people with HIV. Earlier this year, [Maryland became the fifth state](#) to repeal such laws HIV. This does not mean that people cannot be held accountable for intentionally transmitting HIV. Other laws on the books, such as those against reckless endangerment, can be used to prosecute such cases.

To learn more, click [#Discrimination](#) or [#Criminalization](#). There, you’ll see headlines such as “[Settlement in HIV Prison Lawsuit Leads to Policy Changes in Solitary Confinement](#),” “[Louisiana Upholds Its HIV Exposure Law as Other States Change or Repeal Theirs](#)” and “[Countries Must Urgently Step Up to Transform Their HIV Responses](#).”