



Student With HIV Settles Discrimination Case

Buffalo State University expelled her from campus because of her HIV status.

February 16, 2026 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identified as Betty Jones to protect her privacy, argued that Buffalo State's actions were discriminatory and based on outdated beliefs about HIV transmission.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 "health and safety incidents that put [the] campus at risk."

Such a claim is not grounded in current medical evidence about HIV transmission. 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.

"Everything I had worked for my whole life was gone in a flash. 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, her case will inspire other institutions to proactively educate their staffs regarding HIV science and the rights of persons living with HIV,” Richmond said.

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