



The
Legal Aid Society
of Cleveland
Since 1905

For Immediate Release

December 17, 2004

Contact: Melanie Shakarian
Director of Development
216-861-5217 (direct dial)
216-215-0074 (cell)
melanie.shakarian@lasclv.org

Court Rules Indefinite License Suspensions for Minors are Illegal

In a decision issued yesterday, the Eighth District Court of Appeals (Ohio) ruled that juvenile courts cannot continue to enforce indefinite license suspensions issued prior to 2002 once the juvenile has attained the age of 21. This decision will affect approximately 6681 adults in Cuyahoga County, who have been denied adult driver's licenses because of suspensions they received as minors.

The court stated "We see no compelling reason to create a judicial exception to the legislatively imposed limits on juvenile court jurisdiction... The damage to young adults unable to obtain a valid driver's license is well documented in both this record and in the community in general."

David B. Dawson, Deputy Director of The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, who argued the case before the Court of Appeals for the juvenile states, "the decision is an important step to removing barriers to employment for low-income people."

"The continued enforcement of illegal license suspensions of those who are now adults limits the opportunities of poor people to obtain employment, especially outside of Cleveland where most of the manufacturing jobs exist. The ability to drive is a matter of economic survival."

"It is our hope that the judges of the Juvenile Court of Cuyahoga County will recognize the impact that these suspensions have on thousands of residents of this county and issue the general order that we have submitted to them to terminate the indefinite suspensions of all juvenile traffic offenders who are now adults, twenty-one and older."

Mr. Dawson was assisted in this case by Legal Aid board member Edward Icove of the law firm of Smith and Condani. The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland provides high-quality free legal assistance to low income clients in five Northeast Ohio counties. Founded in 1905, Legal Aid attorneys handle 8,500 cases annually.

###

www.lasclv.org

Main Office

1223 West Sixth St · Fl 4
Cleveland, OH 44113

Phone: 216.687.1900
Fax: 216.575.6209

Ashtabula County

121 East Walnut Street
Jefferson, OH 44047

Phone: 866.873.9665
Fax: 440.576.3021

Lake & Geauga

8 North State St · Ste 300
Painesville, OH 44077

Phone: 888.808.2800
Fax: 440.352.0015

Lorain County

538 West Broad St · Ste 300
Elyria, OH 44035

Phone: 800.444.7348
Fax: 440.323.8526

