



For Immediate Release
Thursday, March, 13 2025

LDF Media
media@naacpldf.org

LDF, Co-Counsel Reach Settlement on Behalf of Incarcerated Individuals in Arkansas

Recently, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF), alongside Disability Rights Arkansas, the ACLU of Arkansas, Professor Omavi Shukur of the University of Maryland, and counsel from Squire Patton Boggs, reached a settlement with the State of Arkansas in *Kent, et al. v. Graves*. LDF and co-counsel filed this lawsuit on behalf of individuals incarcerated in the Arkansas state prison system, who were subject to increased risk of infection, illness, and death as a result of the failures of Arkansas prison authorities to address and protect against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The lawsuit was originally against the State of Arkansas and Wellpath, Inc., its provider of correctional health services. At the time, Arkansas prisons had the highest death toll of any prison system in the nation. The lawsuit against Wellpath remains pending, but is stayed because Wellpath has filed for bankruptcy.

Over the years of this litigation, the State has significantly improved its practices. The settlement with the State of Arkansas commits the State to provide KN95 and disposable masks to incarcerated individuals for one additional year, to distribute a factsheet on the safety and efficacy of COVID vaccines and boosters, and to play a public service video to incarcerated individuals encouraging them to obtain COVID vaccinations.

“Every incarcerated person has the right to be protected and safeguarded from the threat of infection and death. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, people incarcerated in Arkansas state prisons instead faced unconscionable neglect and disregard from Arkansas prison authorities that imperiled countless lives,” said Victor Genecin, **Of Counsel at LDF**. “This settlement reflects continued progress to address those failures and the serious risks they posed to the health and safety of incarcerated persons in Arkansas.”

###

Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation's first civil rights law organization. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.