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**LDF Files Amicus Brief in Ohio Supreme Court Case Urging Relevance of Racial Prejudice
at Criminal Suppression Hearings**

Yesterday, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) and counsel Squire Patton Boggs filed an amicus brief in support of David Hansard, a Black man who was stopped and arrested in Ohio. The officer stopped Mr. Hansard, allegedly based on a minor traffic violation and, after searching Mr. Hansard, found a small amount of drugs. During legal proceedings, Mr. Hansard moved to suppress the drugs and introduced evidence to the court that the arresting officer had a history of disproportionately stopping, searching, and arresting of Black motorists, although he patrolled a majority-white county.

The trial and appellate courts held that, in a criminal suppression hearing, racial pretext is irrelevant. Under that approach, even when there is clear evidence that an officer illegally targeted a motorist because of his race, evidence seized pursuant to a stop would still be admissible at trial. LDF's brief urges the Ohio Supreme Court to overturn the lower courts' rulings and hold that evidence seized during a racially motivated stop must be suppressed to deter this kind of unconstitutional police misconduct and to protect the integrity of the rule of law. The brief also notes that multiple states recognize suppression as an essential remedy in cases where the defendant introduces evidence of pretext and racially selective enforcement of traffic laws and urges the Ohio Supreme Court to recognize the same rule under the Ohio State Constitution.

“Racially targeted traffic stops are unconstitutional, erode public confidence in the rule of law, and deny full citizenship to Black people and other people of color,” said LDF Director of Litigation Sam Spital. “Across the country, Black motorists are disproportionately subjected to police encounters based on de minimis violations of traffic laws. It is critical for courts to condemn the unconstitutional racial profiling of Black motorists while protecting those unfairly targeted by law enforcement by excluding evidence seized pursuant to such illegal searches.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. 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. 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 NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

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