

Statement of Erick Little

Plaintiff in *Little et al., v. Washington Metro Area Transit Authority et al.*

I'm joining this lawsuit today for two reasons. The first is to tell WMATA that while I may have made mistakes in my past, that doesn't mean that I should be kept from being able to improve my family's lives and contributing to my community. My second purpose is to make it so that the young people in our community will live in a place where past mistakes can be overcome if you are willing to work hard to turn your life around.

Twenty-seven years ago, when I was nineteen, I was convicted of a felony. I'm not proud of the mistakes I have made. But I am proud that I turned my life around and have been able to find good work as a driver for various companies and Montgomery County. I'm also a proud father of 4 children and a caring member of my community. I spend several hours a week coaching little league sports in my community and serve as a mentor figure for my kids in a relationship that goes beyond the football field.

Last July, I applied for a job as a bus operator with WMATA. I told my interviewer about my criminal history when I applied for the job. The interviewer told me that they wouldn't hold the 27-year old conviction against me and I soon

received a conditional offer of employment. I was excited to get to work on bigger bus routes with better benefits in order to provide a better life for my family.

I couldn't believe it when WMATA told me a few weeks later that the offer was revoked because of the 1987 conviction. I felt ashamed and heartbroken that WMATA couldn't see past my nineteen-year-old self to the man I've worked to become today.

I'm joining this lawsuit today to send the message that it is never too late to make things right -- that if you work hard and do the right thing -- you deserve a chance to build a good life for yourself and family . . . and to be a contributing member of the community. WMATA sent me, and many others, the message that the first mistake you make is the only thing that matters. I haven't give up on young people who have made mistakes like myself, and I hope this lawsuit helps give other people a second chance for a better life.