



**NEWS** from the ACLU of Indiana

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# ACLU of Indiana Files Suit against Vigo Co. Sheriff

## *Jail chronically overcrowded*

### *“Extremely dirty, with insects and black mold”*

Indianapolis – Aaron Hos is one of hundreds of prisoners housed at the Vigo County Jail in harmful conditions that should have been remedied more than a decade ago. Now, Hos is part of a class action lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana against the Vigo County Sheriff and Commissioners to force the jail to comply with a settlement agreement reached in 2002.

ACLU of Indiana Legal Director Ken Falk said, “In 2002, the Sheriff and Commissioners agreed to limit the jail’s population to 268 people. They also agreed that prisoners would receive a minimum amount of recreation each week. These agreements have not been kept. As a result, the jail is extremely overcrowded and the conditions are not safe.”

In 2002, the Sheriff and Commissioners entered into an agreement to settle a federal class action lawsuit that had claimed overcrowded conditions in the jail violated the U.S. Constitution’s protections against cruel and unusual punishments. As part of the settlement, an annex to the jail was built and a formal settlement agreement was entered that is now binding as a contract on the Sheriff and Commissioners. An October 2012 Jail Inspection Report by the Indiana Department of Correction notes that the jail population totaled 293 and described it as “over populated.”

“Making sure those in charge of our state prisons and jails comply with orders to remedy abuses is part of the ACLU of Indiana’s work to reform our criminal justice system and end over-incarceration,” said Jane Henegar, ACLU of Indiana executive director. “Long sentences for minor offenses and harsh conditions with no rehabilitative services are counterproductive and deplete public resources.”

The case, *Hos, et al. v. Vigo Co. Sheriff, Vigo Co. Commissioners*, 84D01-1308-PL-07173 was filed in Vigo Superior Court on August 16, 2013.

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