

NOTICE OF PROPOSED CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT IN LAWSUIT AGAINST MONTGOMERY COUNTY, ALABAMA SHERIFF

This notice was authorized by a federal court and is not a solicitation from a lawyer.

Have you ever been arrested or ticketed by the sheriff for panhandling in Montgomery, Alabama? If so, there is a lawsuit that might affect you. This notice explains your rights and the outcome of the lawsuit.

What is this notice about?

In 2019, three people in Montgomery filed a class action lawsuit against the Sheriff of Montgomery County, Alabama, the City of Montgomery, and the head of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency. They challenged two laws that criminalized their ability to ask for help—including food and money—in public places. The case is called *Singleton v. Taylor*, Case No. 2:20-cv-99-WKW (N.D. Al.). The people who filed the lawsuit have reached an agreement to settle this case with the Sheriff.

Who is included in this class-action lawsuit and settlement?

In a class action lawsuit, one or more people bring claims for themselves and for others in the same legal situation. This lawsuit was filed on behalf of a class of all individuals who may ask for help (aka “panhandle”) in the future. Everyone in these groups is a Class Member. The proposed settlement will affect all Class Members.

If the judge in the federal case thinks the proposed settlement is fair, the judge may approve the settlement. Before that happens, Class Members have a right to provide feedback on the proposed settlement. **If you think you are a class member, the following will apply to you.**

What rights do Class Members have regarding the proposed settlement?

You may comment on or object to the proposed settlement. The Court will decide whether to approve or reject the proposed settlement after a final hearing, scheduled for September 8, 2022. You should submit your comments before September 4, 2022, to the lawyers for Class Members by email at SingletonSettlement@splcenter.org, by text or phone at (334) 679-6551, or through regular mail at the below address:

The Southern Poverty Law Center
c/o Singleton Settlement
400 Washington Ave.
Montgomery, AL 36104

You may choose to do nothing. If you do nothing, you will still be a Class Member and the settlement will apply to you.

What does the proposed settlement say?

The Montgomery County, Alabama’s Sheriff’s Office can no longer arrest or ticket people in Montgomery County, Alabama under two state laws—Ala. Code § 32-5A-216(b) and Ala. Code § 13A-11-9(a)(1)—that make it a crime to ask for help in public spaces. This settlement is only about the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office. It does not address other law enforcement officers such as state or city police officers.

Will Class Members get any money as part of this case?

No. This lawsuit is to prevent future arrest or citations (or threat of arrest or citation) by the Montgomery County, Alabama’s Sheriff’s Office for asking for help.

What if I have been previously charged with a crime for asking for help?

This settlement does not address any prior charges or convictions for panhandling. It only prevents the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office from enforcing (or threatening to enforce) Ala. Code § 32-5A-216(b) and Ala. Code § 13A-11-9(a)(1) in the future.