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Feds: Closing driver's license offices in Ala. violates civil rights

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BY MELANIE ZANONA - 12/28/16 5:57 PM ET



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Federal transportation officials have concluded that proposed closures and service reductions at certain driver's license offices in Alabama would underserve the African-American community and violate the Civil Rights Act.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) and Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) have thus reached an agreement to ensure that all Alabama residents have access to

<https://thehill.com/policy/transportation/312055-feds-closing-driver-license-offices-in-alabama-violates-civil-rights/>

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21-cv-01531
11/12/2024 Trial
Plaintiffs Exhibit No. 287

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“DMVs play a critical role in the day-to-day functioning of the American people, including ensuring their ability to drive to work and other essential services and to get proper identification needed to vote or open a bank account,” Transportation Secretary [Anthony Foxx](#) said in a statement.

“No one should be prevented from accessing these services based on their race, color or national origin.”

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Alabama announced last year plans to close or reduce service at 31 driver's license offices throughout the state. But federal transportation authorities opened an investigation after a preliminary analysis suggested that the proposed closures would disproportionately impact African-American residents in the state's "Black Belt" region, a stretch of counties in southern Alabama from the Georgia to Mississippi borders.

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits entities that receive federal funding from discriminating on the basis of race, color or national origin in their programs and activities. Both the state of Alabama and its law enforcement agency receive federal assistance from the DOT.

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The probe found that African-Americans in the Black Belt region are disproportionately underserved by ALEA's driver's licensing services, causing "a disparate and adverse impact on the basis of race, in violation of Title VI."

Under the agreement announced Wednesday, the DOT and ALEA will form a working relationship to make sure that the state's driver's licensing services comply with civil rights.

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participation plan" within 90 days to ensure that communities are informed about service impacts.

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