



Class Action Settlement for Food Stamp Recipients

New York - September 5, 2003 - Yesterday the proposed settlement of federal class action lawsuit *Thompson v. Wing* was accepted by Magistrate Joan Azrick in the Eastern District of New York. In *Thompson*, the people sued the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), claiming these agencies violated federal laws and the due process rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution in the way that they have taken income tax refunds to pay debts allegedly owed for food stamp overpayments. The New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) and the Greater Upstate Law Project (GULP) represented the class.

Under the proposed settlement, people across New York State will either automatically receive a refund or will receive a second notice telling them that they can dispute, at a fair hearing, whether or not they did in fact receive a Food Stamp overpayment.

For more information, see press release "Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement; NYLAG, GULP Win Victory for Unnecessarily Penalized Food Stamp Recipients" at:

<http://releases.usnewswire.com/GetRelease.asp?id=118-08122003>

About NYLAG

Founded in 1990, the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) is a not-for-profit law office providing free civil legal services to low income New Yorkers. A full service agency, NYLAG offers comprehensive assistance to clients with more than one legal issue. NYLAG provides direct legal services, advocacy through impact litigation, consultation, and numerous volunteer and pro bono opportunities. Last year, NYLAG handled 19,993 cases and benefited additional thousands through successful impact litigation and community legal education. For more information on NYLAG, go to www.nylag.org.

About the Greater Upstate Law Project

Operational since 1973, GULP is a statewide multi-service, multi-issue support center for civil legal services in New York. GULP provides training in a host of poverty law areas, acts as an information clearinghouse, engages in legislative and administrative advocacy and undertakes impact litigation. For more information visit www.gulpny.org.

CONTACT INFORMATION

New York Legal Assistance Group: Mara Klein, 212-750-0800 x124, mklein@nylag.org

Greater Upstate Law Project: Anne Erickson, 518-462-6831