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Right to Travel

DESPITE ACTIONS OF POLICE AND LOCAL COURTS, HIGHER COURTS HAVE RULED THAT AMERICAN CITIZENS HAVE A RIGHT TO TRAVEL WITHOUT STATE PERMITS

By Jack McLamb (from Aid & Abet Newsletter)

For years professionals within the criminal justice system have acted on the belief that traveling by motor vehicle was a privilege that was given to a citizen only after approval by their state government in the form of a permit or license to drive. In other words, the individual must be granted the privilege before his use of the state highways was considered legal. Legislators, police officers, and court officials are becoming aware that there are court decisions that disprove the belief that driving is a privilege and therefore requires government approval in the form of a license. Presented here are some of these cases:

CASE #1: "The use of the highway for the purpose of travel and transportation is not a mere privilege, but a common fundamental right of which the public and individuals cannot rightfully be deprived." *Chicago Motor Coach v. Chicago*, 169 NE 221.

CASE #2: "The right of the citizen to travel upon the public highways and to transport his property thereon, either by carriage or by automobile, is not a mere privilege which a city may prohibit or permit at will, but a common law right which he has under the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." *Thompson v. Smith*, 154 SE 579.

It could not be stated more directly or conclusively that citizens of the states have a common law right to travel, without approval or restriction (license), and that this right is protected under the U.S Constitution.

CASE #3: "The right to travel is a part of the liberty of which the citizen cannot be deprived without due process of law under the Fifth Amendment." *Kent v. Dulles*, 357 US 116, 125.

CASE #4: "The right to travel is a well-established common right that does not owe its existence to the federal government. It is recognized by the courts as a natural right." *Schactman v. Dulles* 96 App DC 287, 225 F2d 938, at 941.