

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
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## **Court Rules District Has Complied with Requirements to End 40-Year-Old *Evans* Litigation**

*Lawsuit Challenged District's Care for Persons with Disabilities*

**WASHINGTON, D. C.** – District officials today welcomed news that a federal judge has found the District to be in compliance with requirements to end a 40-year-old class-action lawsuit over the city's care for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. U.S. District Court Judge Ellen Huvelle issued a Memorandum Opinion and Order indicating that the District of Columbia and its Department on Disability Services have achieved compliance with the Court-ordered benchmarks established in the *Evans* litigation. The Court has set a final hearing in the case for January 10, 2017, 2 pm at the U.S. District Court.

"Judge Huvelle's order confirms the significant strides our government has made in developing a high-quality support services delivery system for D.C. residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities," said Mayor Bowser. "My Administration will continue to press forward with a bold agenda that improves the lives of every District resident, and ensures those with developmental disabilities are not left behind."

Attorney General Karl A. Racine said the ruling is good news for D.C. residents. ***"The District has come a very long way indeed from the days of Forest Haven, and I'm pleased that our agencies can now focus entirely on providing high-quality services to people who live with disabilities,"*** he said. ***"Over the last 40 years, dozens of attorneys in the Office of the Attorney General have done outstanding work representing the government's progress, and I want to thank them."***

The class-action lawsuit currently known as *Evans v. Bowser* was filed 40 years ago in 1976 to remedy the constitutionally deficient level of care, treatment, education, and training provided to residents of Forest Haven, the District's former institution for people with developmental disabilities. The *Evans* case is the longest standing class-action lawsuit of its kind in U.S. history. Forest Haven closed in 1991 as a result of the

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litigation, and the District government was charged with developing a quality support services delivery system for D.C. residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Established as a District government agency in 2007, the Department on Disability Services laid the foundation and developed the framework to successfully manage the Plan for Compliance and Conclusion of *Evans v. Bowser*. The Plan for Compliance and Conclusion identified 70 outcome criteria aligned with five goals designed to improve the quality of life for D.C. residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The goals focused on providing residents with comprehensive residential and health services; opportunities to become active members of their communities; safeguards against neglect and harm; and opportunities to lead self-directed lives.

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