

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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Judge Gives Final Approval to Settlement Sharply Reducing Court Oversight in the District's Juvenile-Detention Facilities

WASHINGTON, D. C. – D.C. Superior Court Judge Hebert A. Dixon has given final approval to a settlement agreement that significantly reduces court oversight and monitoring in a three-decade-old class-action lawsuit on behalf of children confined in District of Columbia juvenile-detention facilities, Attorney General Karl A. Racine and Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) Director Clinton Lacey announced today. The case is *Jerry M., et al. v. District of Columbia, et al.*

Under the agreement, several subject goals in the “*Jerry M. Work Plan*,” approved by the court in 2007 as the exit plan for ending the litigation, are dismissed from the case entirely and will no longer be subject to court oversight and monitoring by a Special Arbiter appointed by the court. These goals include:

- Environmental health and safety;
- Outdoor recreation
- Individualized education at the District's Youth Services Center;
- Restraints; and
- Disciplinary actions.

Further, under the agreement, six additional areas are dismissed from the case and removed from the court's jurisdiction. With this second set of Work Plan Goals, DYRS must make one report to lawyers for plaintiffs in each of the affected areas during 2015. The second set of Work Plans goals consists of:

- Room confinement;
- Intake assessment and housing assignment;
- Planning and delivery of services and placements;
- The grievance process, and
- Staff training.

Five areas in the work plan remain subject to court oversight and monitoring by the Special Arbiter:

- Critical incidents and assaults;
- Supervision and staffing;

- Behavioral health services;
- Fire safety; and
- Health services.

“By granting final approval, the court is sending a clear signal to the public that the District is entering a new era in our juvenile-justice system in which comprehensive court oversight is no longer required,” Attorney General Racine said. **“I have confidence in Director Lacey and the leadership at DYRS to continue the successful reform efforts that have brought us to this point.”**

“The final approval of the settlement of this lawsuit represents tremendous progress in ensuring our youth are subject to humane, rehabilitative, therapeutic treatment in DYRS facilities,” said DYRS Director Lacey. “You have my word that I, and my staff, will ensure DYRS youth are provided with the best care possible.”

Attorney General Racine expressed his appreciation to Assistant Attorney General Chad Copeland, former Office of the Attorney General Equity Section Chief Grace Graham, and Deputy Attorney General Ellen Efros for their work on the settlement.

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