



COMMUNICATIONS

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November 9, 2009

U.S. District Judge Signs Joint Motion to Dismiss Southbury Training School Case

The Honorable Ellen Bree Burns, United States District Judge on October 30, 2009 signed the "Order Granting Joint Motion to Dismiss" the case of *United States of America vs. State of Connecticut*, in a case involving the Southbury Training School (STS) (Civ. No. N-86-252 (EBB)). The United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) and the Connecticut Attorney General's Office filed on October 29, 2009, a Joint Motion to dismiss the case which began in 1984 and focused on improving programs, services and conditions at STS. Over the years, there has been a Consent Decree (1986), a Special Master appointed and Remedial Plan ordered by Judge Burns. In 2006, after substantial progress was noted, the State was released from active judicial oversight. Since 2006, the USDOJ has monitored STS. Both parties are now in agreement that the State has fully and faithfully met its obligations and requested that the Court dismiss the Consent Decree.

"This action is a testament to the dedication and tireless efforts of many over the last 25 years to assure that the individuals who call STS their home have excellent services, supports and opportunities to lead a meaningful life," said Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara.

On March 24, 2006, Judge Burns issued an order purging the state from a 1996 contempt ruling ending active judicial oversight. In her ruling Judge Burns said, "Residents of STS are safer and benefit from a state-of-the-art model of institutional care ... and, in many instances [the state has] gone beyond the court-mandated requirements to provide 'best practices.'"

"The level of commitment and cooperation through the years has resulted in today's motion and special thanks is due the USDOJ, Judge Burns and her staff, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, the York Legal Group of Harrisburg, PA and the staff at STS who implemented the various orders," said O'Meara. "The support from Governor M. Jodi Rell and the Connecticut Legislature over the years to fund the improvements at STS has been remarkable. We are committed to sustain the progress and maintain our efforts to provide quality services."

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