



STATEMENT FROM DISABILITY RIGHTS DC ON THE DOJ OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL MEMORANDUM

This week marks the 27th anniversary of *Olmstead v. L.C.*, a landmark Supreme Court decision recognizing that unjustified segregation of people with disabilities is discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) integration mandate.

Disability Rights DC condemns the recent DOJ Office of Legal Counsel memorandum seeking to weaken the protections recognized in the *Olmstead* decision as well as long established precedent. By arguing that Title II of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act does not impose an integration mandate, the memorandum threatens decades of progress toward ensuring that people with disabilities can receive the services and supports they need to live meaningful lives in their communities rather than in segregated institutions.

Although this memorandum **does not** change the law, overrule *Olmstead*, or amend the ADA and its regulations, it is deeply concerning because civil rights protections are only as meaningful as their enforcement. By signaling that the Department of Justice will retreat from longstanding interpretations of the ADA's integration mandate and decades of disability rights enforcement, the opinion seeks to dismantle one of the most important safeguards against unnecessary institutionalization for people with disabilities.

Olmstead's promise is clear: people with disabilities have a right to the opportunity to live, work, and participate in community life alongside their nondisabled peers. As the Protection and Advocacy organization for the District of Columbia, Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services remains committed to defending the rights of District residents with disabilities and to advancing the full promise of *Olmstead*.

The recent DOJ memorandum mischaracterizes the purpose of longstanding civil rights protections for people with disabilities and would roll back significant progress. We must reject any effort to turn back from the advancement of equality, dignity, and full community inclusion.