

Joint Statement

The ADA, Olmstead, and the Civil Right to Community Living



Twenty-seven years ago, the Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.* affirmed a simple but powerful principle: people with disabilities have the right to live in their communities and receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.

Today, we are deeply concerned by a recent Department of Justice memorandum that calls into question the federal government's commitment to enforcing the ADA's community integration mandate and this fundamental civil right.

While the memorandum does not change the law, it signals a troubling shift away from decades of progress toward the full community inclusion envisioned by the ADA. Rights are most meaningful when governments are willing to uphold and enforce them.

For people with disabilities and their families, *Olmstead* is not an abstract legal principle. It is the reason people have been able to leave institutions, live in their own homes, build relationships, find employment, participate in community life, and exercise greater choice over their futures.



The promise of *Olmstead* is that disability should never be a reason to be isolated from community life.

Virginia has made important progress in expanding opportunities for people with disabilities to live and thrive in their communities. That progress has been driven by self-advocates, families, providers, policymakers, and community partners who share a commitment to inclusion and equal opportunity.

We cannot lose sight of that commitment.

Community living is not simply a service delivery model. It is a civil right.

We remain committed to working alongside self-advocates, families and lawmakers to protect the promise of *Olmstead* and advance a Virginia where all people with disabilities can live, work, learn, and thrive in the communities they choose.

