



The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law is the leading national legal advocate for people with mental disabilities. Using test-case litigation, federal policy advocacy, technical support for local advocates and public education, the Center works to advance the rights of adults with mental illnesses and children with serious emotional disorders and to promote their access to resources they need for a successful independent life in the community.

Since its formation in 1972 by public-interest attorneys and mental health professionals, the Bazelon Center has won landmark cases opening schoolhouse doors to children with disabilities, ending the institutional “warehousing” of people with mental illnesses or developmental disabilities, banning discrimination by landlords and property owners based on a tenant’s or resident’s mental disability, and mandating the provision of appropriate mental health and supportive services in the community. Its federal policy work has been influential in obtaining and preserving many critical resources for children and adults, including Medicaid coverage of rehabilitative, community-based mental health services and diversion programs for offenders with psychiatric disorders.

The Center played a leading role in the Supreme Court review of *L.C. v Olmstead*, which held that institutionalizing people with disabilities who can and want to be served in the community may be discriminatory. (For more information about the case, see www.bazelon.org/issues/disabilityrights/incourt/olmstead/index.htm).

The Bazelon Center has served as co-counsel with local lawyers in a number of cases challenging the unnecessary institutionalization of people with disabilities. One of the most recent is *Katie A. v. Bonta*, a class action on behalf of children in California’s child welfare system. In March 2006 the federal district court ordered the state to provide mental health services that will enable tens of thousands of foster children to avoid institutional care (see www.bazelon.org/incourt/docket/katieA.htm.)

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