



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 6, 2009

Contact: Judith Sandalow
202-467-4900 ext. 511
Cell: 202-669-4605
jsandalow@childrenslawcenter.org

While Parties Negotiate, Thousands of Children in DC Suffer

Washington, DC – Today the judge in the *LaShawn A. v. Fenty* class action lawsuit set further court hearings tentatively for March 23, 2009 to hear a motion to hold the District in contempt.

“I am deeply concerned about the crisis facing DC’s children. Children cannot wait two more months for action. Today, children are shuffled from foster home to foster home, they languish without necessary mental health services. People wishing to adopt face serious obstacles,” said Judith Sandalow, Executive Director of the Children’s Law Center. “While the court process continues, we must make sure we don’t lose sight of the thousands of children whose safety and well-being is at stake,” Sandalow continued.

The Children’s Law Center represents more than 500 *LaShawn A. v. Fenty* class members – children in the DC child welfare system – and is keenly aware of their needs. Children’s Law Center also represents many foster, kinship and birth parents involved with the child welfare system.

In any future plans or court orders, Children’s Law Center urges the parties to focus on ensuring the delivery of effective, high-quality services for children and families. All children entering foster care are entitled to timely medical, dental and mental health treatment and appropriate educational services. Sadly, too many of our children are not having these basic needs met.

“After 20 years of court oversight in *LaShawn*, it’s time to finally ensure DC’s children get the services they deserve,” said Sandalow.

###

Children’s Law Center is the *largest legal services* provider in the District ... helping more than 1,000 children each year and the only organization that provides free legal representation specifically to children. The Children’s Law Center envisions a future for the District of Columbia in which every child has a safe home, a meaningful education and a healthy mind and body. We work to achieve this vision by providing legal services to at-risk children and their families and using the knowledge we gain from representing our individual clients to advocate for changes in the law and its implementation. For more information, visit www.childrenslawcenter.org.