The Honorable Todd W. Blanche
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

September 3, 2026

Dear Attorney General Blanche:

For nearly four decades, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has embodied a fundamental national commitment that disability should not be a basis for exclusion or diminished opportunity. States have worked with local and federal government partners since 1990 to implement both the letter and spirit of this much-celebrated, bipartisan law. On June 18, 2026, the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel issued a legal opinion that questions the longstanding legal framework surrounding the rights of Americans with disabilities to live with dignity, independence, and full community participation. On July 20, 2026, the DOJ declared that it will not rely on its own longstanding *Olmstead* guidance, issued June 22, 2011.

As Governors, we are deeply concerned by the federal government's retreat from its longstanding role in protecting the right to community integration and that such actions signal changes to programs serving individuals with disabilities.

For more than 25 years, the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.* has built on the commitment of the ADA and reinforced the principle that people with disabilities should have the opportunity to live, work, receive services, and participate in

their communities rather than being unnecessarily segregated in institutional settings. This is a principle Americans are proud of and is a Northstar internationally for people with disabilities.

This principle has changed lives and transformed this country. Red and blue states have spent decades investing in home and community based services, developing supportive housing, expanding access to education and employment opportunities, and redesigning and strengthening community based services. These efforts reflect not only our progress under federal civil rights law, but our shared conviction that people with disabilities belong in their communities, whenever possible.

Recent actions have already created significant uncertainty for states and for the workforce of dedicated individuals who support people with disabilities throughout the country. More importantly, people with disabilities and their families are terrified about moving backwards - or worse - becoming institutionalized against their will - after decades of advocacy. We simply cannot risk reversing the progress this country has made in ensuring Americans with disabilities have meaningful choices about where and how they live their lives.

We strongly oppose any federal actions that would weaken protections against unnecessary segregation or diminish the right of people with disabilities to receive services in the most integrated settings appropriate to meet their needs, consistent with established *Olmstead* precedent. Community integration is not an abstract legal concept. It means having a home, being able to work, attend school, shop, worship, build relationships, and participate in an ordinary civic life.

This is not a partisan issue. The ADA was enacted with overwhelming bipartisan support and signed into law by President George H.W. Bush. The continued movement toward community-based services has progressed under Republican and Democratic administrations and in states led by Governors of both parties. States may differ in how we administer these services but we stand united around the basic principle that Americans with disabilities are full members of our communities and should not be forced into segregation to receive the services and support they need.

We stand ready to work with the Administration and Congress to strengthen community-based systems while preserving individual choice. We must ensure that our nation continues moving toward greater independence, inclusion, and opportunity for all Americans with disabilities. We urge you not to turn back the clock on generations of progress.

Sincerely,

Gov. Kathy Hochul, New York

CC:

Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Governor Kathy Hochul
State of New York

Governor Katie Hobbs
State of Arizona

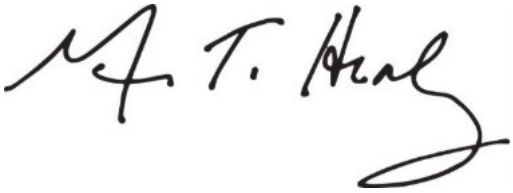
Governor Ned Lamont
State of Connecticut

Governor Matt Meyer
State of Delaware

Governor JB Pritzker
State of Illinois

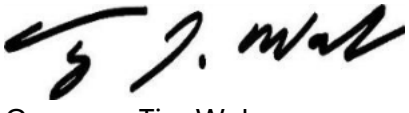
Governor Janet Mills
State of Maine

Governor Wes Moore
State of Maryland



Governor Maura Healey
State of Massachusetts

Governor Gretchen Whitmer
State of Michigan



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