

PRESS RELEASE

# Wiley Rein and Washington Lawyers' Committee File Fifth Amendment Complaint on Behalf of Immigrants Detained in Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Center

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*Washington, DC*— Using the pseudonym John Doe, an unaccompanied immigrant minor who is confined to the Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Center filed a lawsuit today on behalf of himself and other detained immigrant children challenging the conditions in the Center. The complaint, filed by Wiley Rein LLP and the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs (WLC), describes the systemic and routine denial of necessary mental health care, racial and national origin discrimination by staff, excessive force, and the extreme and inappropriate use of restraints and seclusion. Filed in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia, the lawsuit seeks to remedy a range of violations of the United States Constitution and seeks an injunction from the federal court to reform the practices at the Center.

There are approximately 30 immigrant children confined to the Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Center in Staunton, Virginia. The Center is one of only two secure detention facilities for immigrant children in the country. Each of these young people entered the United States escaping violence in their home countries, predominantly in Mexico and Central America.

"These children should be treated with compassion," said Christine T. Dinan, a staff attorney at the WLC who is representing Doe in the case. "They are escaping violence and trauma at home and seeking the protection of United States, only to be placed in punitive and abusive conditions. This lawsuit seeks to address abuses in the Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Center that should never have been allowed to exist."

Pursuant to federal law, unaccompanied immigrant minors are placed in the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement of the Department of Health and Human Services. Despite federal law requiring that unaccompanied minors "be promptly placed in the least restrictive setting that is in the best interest of the child," these young people are being held in a facility designed for the punitive confinement of youths who are adjudicated delinquents.

"Especially given the increased level of ICE apprehensions of undocumented immigrants in general and young people in particular in recent days, it is critical for the courts to establish and enforce clear standards on the conditions in which detainees may be confined," said Wiley Rein Pro Bono Partner Theodore A. Howard. "We hope that this action will help set the tone in this regard."

To view a copy of the complaint, please [click here](#).

**ABOUT THE WASHINGTON LAWYERS' COMMITTEE:** *The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs was established in 1968 to provide pro bono legal services to address issues of discrimination and entrenched poverty. Since then, it has successfully handled thousands of civil rights cases on behalf of individuals and groups in the areas of fair housing, equal employment opportunity, public accommodations, immigrant rights, disability rights, public education, and prisoners' rights.*

**ABOUT WILEY REIN:** *Founded in 1983, Wiley Rein is a dominant presence in the nation's capital. With 240 lawyers, the firm has earned international prominence by representing clients in a wide range of industries in complex, high-stakes regulatory, litigation, and transactional matters. Many of Wiley Rein's lawyers and public policy advisors have held high-level positions in the White House and federal agencies and on Capitol Hill. The firm prides itself on a strong and rich tradition of service to the local and global community, and encourages its lawyers to participate in pro bono activities.*