

## **BAZELON CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH LAW OPPOSES SUPREME COURT NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (Feb. 1, 2017)** - The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, a national legal advocacy organization advancing the rights of people with mental disabilities, opposes President Trump's nomination of Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Bazelon Center believes appointing Judge Gorsuch to the high court would result in significant harm to the lives of people with disabilities.

"Judge Gorsuch has a poor record on civil rights, and would not appreciate or protect the rights of people with disabilities if he became a Supreme Court justice," said Jennifer Mathis, Director of Policy and Legal Advocacy at the Bazelon Center. "In his more than 10 years on the Court of Appeals, Judge Gorsuch has failed to demonstrate a sensitivity to and understanding of the legal rights of people with disabilities."

In the coming days, the Bazelon Center will prepare a more detailed report on Judge Gorsuch and his record of interpreting civil rights protections, including those for people with disabilities.

"A decision by a Supreme Court justice on a disability or civil rights issue can have a direct impact on literally millions of Americans with disabilities," Mathis said. "As part of its constitutionally mandated role to 'advise and consent,' the Senate must investigate Judge Gorsuch's views on issues of vital importance to the disability community and ensure that those views do not threaten the hard-won progress people with disabilities have made to ensure that their rights are protected."

"The importance of this nomination cannot be overstated. Whether it be the right to leave institutions and live in their own communities (*Olmstead v. L.C.*), the right to have access to our justice system (*Tennessee v. Lane*), the right to a free appropriate public education (the currently pending case of *Andrew F. v. Douglas County School District*), or other issues, the Supreme Court has a critical role in interpreting and enforcing civil rights protections for people with disabilities.

It is imperative that the Senate Judiciary Committee explore fully Judge Gorsuch's positions on the rights of people with disabilities, including the role of the Supreme Court in ensuring that civil rights laws are given the broad remedial effect intended by Congress."

### **About The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law**

The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law is a national legal advocacy organization protecting and advancing the rights of people with mental disabilities. The Center promotes laws and policies that enable people with mental disabilities to live independently in their own homes and communities, and to enjoy the same opportunities that everyone else does. For more information, visit [www.bazelon.org](http://www.bazelon.org).

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