

# Proskauer, ACLU of New Jersey and Disability Rights Advocates Secure Win on Behalf of Incarcerated Students with Disabilities

August 11, 2021

**Newark, New Jersey, August 11, 2021** – Proskauer, a leading international law firm, announced today that the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) will drastically improve the facilitation of special education services for its incarcerated population after the firm, in conjunction with the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey (ACLU-NJ) and Disability Rights Advocates (DRA), filed a lawsuit against the NJDOC and the New Jersey Department of Education for failing to provide education to youth with disabilities throughout the prison system, including to students held in solitary confinement.

The settlement agreement, preliminarily approved by the federal District Court for the District of New Jersey, comes more than four years after Proskauer, ACLU-NJ and DRA filed a class action complaint in January 2017. The agreement will overhaul special education services in New Jersey state prisons by mandating the implementation of newly created policies across the NJDOC and providing comprehensive monitoring by the NJDOE.

“We represent an incredibly vulnerable but too often ignored population: young people with disabilities being housed in adult prisons,” said Proskauer Partner Bill Silverman, who leads the firm’s global pro bono efforts. “As a result of this important and impactful case, we are pleased that NJDOC and NJDOE will take the necessary steps to provide appropriate special education and related services to class members. We will continue to partner with the ACLU of New Jersey and Disability Rights Advocates on this matter as well as other matters to help ensure equal access to justice.”

Proskauer served as co-counsel for plaintiffs ACLU-NJ, The Arc of New Jersey and three incarcerated students, who alleged that they have been denied special education services by NJDOC and, combined, spent more than 500 days in solitary confinement.

For more than 140 years, Proskauer has had an unwavering commitment to its communities through its support of public service initiatives that enable its lawyers, and staff, to make a broad impact through a variety of community oriented projects. In the past year, firm lawyers have dedicated more than 40,000 pro bono hours to racial justice issues.

### **About Proskauer for Good**

At Proskauer, ["for good"](#) means giving of ourselves and making a positive impact on the lives of those less fortunate.

Our pro bono work breaks boundaries. From high-impact litigation and complex transactions for nonprofit organizations, to matters for low-income individuals seeking equal access to justice – we are committed to driving businesses as well as society, forward.

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- **William C. Silverman**

Pro Bono Partner