



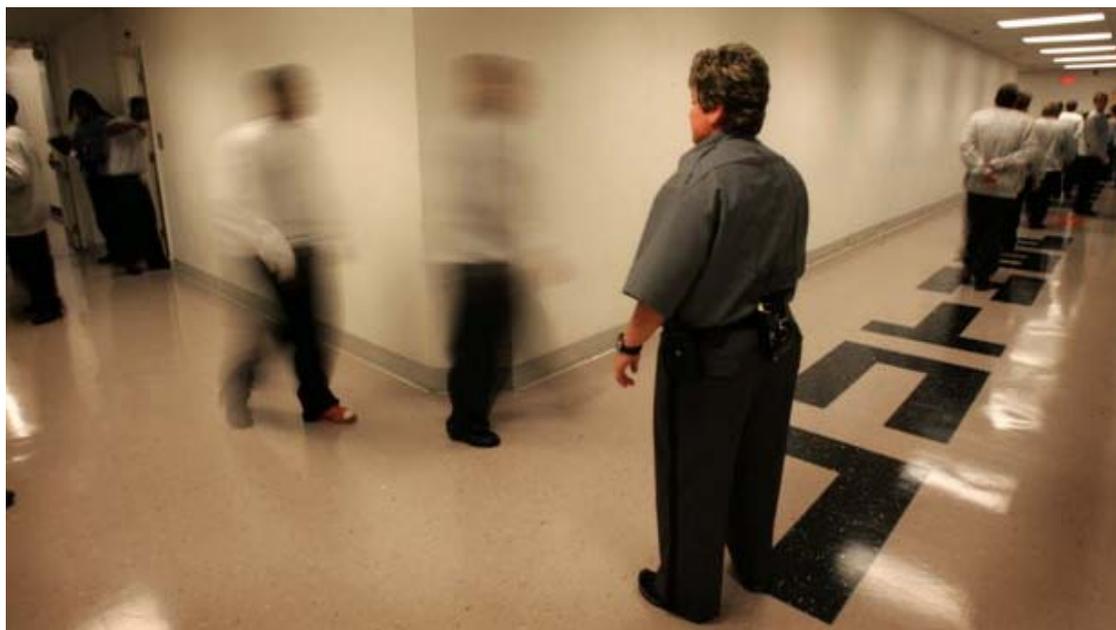
Set Weather ▾

 **cleveland.com**
COVERING NORTHEAST OHIO

 Sign In

 Search

Judge ends federal monitoring of Ohio's youth prison system



Guard Deborah Hoppert keeps watch as inmates go to class at Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility, one of four juvenile prisons operated by the Ohio Department of Youth Services. A federal judge on Tuesday ended court supervision over the department, imposed in 2008 in response to a class-action lawsuit alleging abuse and inhumane treatment. *(Dale Omori/The Plain Dealer)*



By [Jeremy Pelzer, cleveland.com](#)

[Email the author](#) | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on December 08, 2015 at 4:44 PM



COLUMBUS, Ohio—Seven years of federal court supervision over the Ohio Department of Youth Services literally ended with a group hug Tuesday, as all sides praised the agency's work to improve conditions for the state's youngest inmates.

The ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Algenon Marbley comes a decade after a class-action lawsuit alleged the system was tainted by, among other things, excessive use of force against children, improper seclusion of children, inadequate health-care and education services, and insufficient staff training.

The department agreed to be placed under court monitoring in 2008 as part of a settlement of the lawsuit. Marbley ended court monitoring over most of the department two years ago; Tuesday's ruling ends federal oversight over the department's mental health services, the last part of the system under supervision.

All sides in the case hailed the end of court monitoring, saying the department is now a national model for how a state juvenile prisons system should be run.

Since the lawsuit was filed in 2004, the department has closed four of its seven detention centers, reducing its juvenile population from about 1,800 to fewer than 500.

The state has also dramatically rolled back its use of solitary confinement – also called "seclusion." An infraction that brings 8 hours of seclusion now would have been punished with 600 hours of seclusion when the lawsuit was filed, according to Cynthia Coe, a U.S. Justice Department attorney involved with the case.

Will Harrell, the lead monitor appointed by the court to oversee the department, told Marbley that the department has "far exceeded what would be considered minimum constitutional standards" for treatment of young people behind bars.

"They've gone above and beyond," Harrell said.

Department of Youth Services Director Harvey Reed, who took office in 2011, said he and his staff have "really tried to change the culture" in his agency.

"We never will forget where we've been," he told reporters after Tuesday's court hearing. "We always will keep looking forward."

Reed said his agency will continue to monitor itself and will now push for additional education and job training for young inmates.

"We still have some work to do, but I think we're in a good place," he said.

The hearing ended with Harrell joining attorneys from all sides in the case in a group hug.

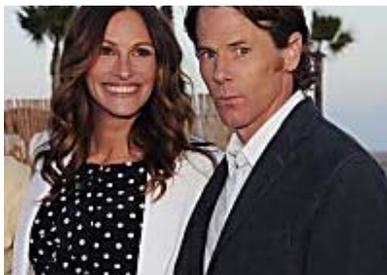
Marbley, visibly satisfied, said this was the rare case he's heard in which all sides leave his courtroom happy.

"This has been a model case, because everyone came together for one goal," the judge said, "and that is the best outcome for our youth."



Recommended for you





Stars Who Fell And Married "The Other Woman"

Viral Boom



Two charged in drive-by shooting of 5-month-old Cleveland girl

Cleveland.com



An incredible travel rewards credit card is now offering its customers an i...

NextAdvisor



Cleveland Cavaliers guard J.R. Smith doesn't plan on issuing apology to Boston ...

Cleveland.com



LeBron James Just Revealed His Stunning Mansion

Lonny

LeBron James' 94-foot shot at Boston's TD Garden most-viewed NBA Vine ever

Cleveland.com

Promoted Links by Taboola 

ACTIVE DISCUSSIONS

[See more comments »](#)

ADVANCE
DIGITAL

Registration on or use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)

© 2015 Northeast Ohio Media Group LLC. All rights reserved ([About Us](#)).

The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of Northeast Ohio Media Group LLC.

Community Rules apply to all content you upload or otherwise submit to this site. Contact [interactivity management](#).

 [Ad Choices](#)