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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 1/10/03**

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# **VICTORY FOR TRANSGENDER TEEN AGAINST FOSTER CARE SYSTEM:**

## **Judge Rules City Must Accommodate Teen's Gender Identity**

Tuesday, January 7. The Honorable Louise Gruner Gans decided in favor of Jean Doe, a 17 year old transgender girl. Doe was identified as male at birth, but has lived as a woman for several years.

Jean Doe sued the Administration of Children's Services of the City of New York (ACS) when her group home confiscated all of her feminine clothing and accessories. ACS also forbid her from wearing skirts and dresses. Doe, represented by attorneys from The Urban Justice Center and Debevoise & Plimpton, alleged the group home's policy discriminated against her on the basis of her transgender identity in violation of New York State's Human Rights Law.

Judge Gans' decision stated that ACS violated the law by failing to reasonably accommodate Doe's gender identity, and that Doe was "entitled to relief in the form of an exemption from the respondents' dress policy, to the extent it bars her from wearing skirts and dresses."

Dean Spade, a transgender attorney with the Urban Justice Center, stated: "This case is a great step towards eliminating the serious discrimination and abuse transgender youth face in New York's foster care system." Hopefully, Spade said, this case will lead to policy improvements for transgender youth in the City's care, who currently face physical abuse, inadequate medical care, harassment, and rampant discrimination.

This year, the City Council passed Int. 24, which made discrimination on the basis of gender identity illegal in New York City. This ordinance is part of a nationwide trend toward protecting transgender people in anti-discrimination law. Fifty-three jurisdictions currently have human rights laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity, including Rhode Island and Minnesota. Doe and her attorneys are thrilled to see the national trend toward recognition of transgender rights reaching the New York courts, and hope to continue to prevail in future cases establishing protection against gender identity discrimination.