



NEW YORK CITY LAW DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE CORPORATION COUNSEL

Michael A. Cardozo, Corporation Counsel

**Press Release**

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*For Immediate Release*

**FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT RULES THAT HRA MAY LIMIT ACCESS TO JOB CENTERS TO ONLY THOSE INVOLVED IN ITS OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

**Contact: Kate O'Brien Ahlers, Communications Director, (212) 788-0400, [kahlers@law.nyc.gov](mailto:kahlers@law.nyc.gov)**

New York, June 19, 2002 -- United States District Court Judge Allen Schwartz today issued a decision in *Sanchez v. Turner* in which he upheld the New York City Human Resources Administration's right to limit access in its Job Centers to the transaction of official business. In rejecting a challenge to HRA's access policy raised by Make the Road by Walking, Inc., a community-based organization, and two former recipients of public assistance benefits, the Court ruled that neither the First Amendment, due process nor equal protection required that HRA admit advocates into Job Centers when they were not there for the purpose of representing clients who had retained the advocates. The advocates had asked for the right to enter job centers not as representatives of an individual client but to set up informational tables in waiting areas.

In ruling for the HRA commissioner, the Court held that because HRA's policy was reasonable and viewpoint neutral, it did not violate the First Amendment or the equal protection clause. In addition, because due process did not require HRA to facilitate communications between public assistance claimants and potential advocate-representatives, due process did not require that HRA had to open its Job Center waiting rooms to unretained advocates. Finally, he left HRA's policy limiting use of Job Centers to the transaction of official business intact and severed the portion of the suit concerning the Commissioner's exercise of discretion because it did not provide guidelines.

"We are pleased that the Court recognized that the HRA has the right to control access to its Job Centers. Only those parties involved in its transaction of official business are admitted, which is a reasonable and viewpoint neutral way to control access," said New York City Corporation Counsel Michael A. Cardozo.

"Our goal is to provide good service to our clients and ensure they receive benefits to which they are entitled. They will continue to have the right to bring an advocate with them when they desire," said HRA Commissioner Verna Eggleston.

The New York City Law Department is one of the oldest, largest and most dynamic law offices in the world, ranking among the top three largest law offices in New York City and the top three largest public law offices in the country. Tracing its roots back to the 1600's, the Department's 650-plus lawyers handle more than 100,000 cases and transactions each year in 17 separate legal divisions. The Corporation Counsel heads the Law Department and acts as legal counsel for the Mayor, elected officials, the City and all its agencies. The Department's attorneys represent the City on a vast array of civil litigation, legislative and legal issues and in the criminal prosecution of juveniles. Its web site can be accessed through the City government home page at [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov) or via direct link at [www.nyc.gov/html/law/home.html](http://www.nyc.gov/html/law/home.html).

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