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PRESS RELEASE

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RE: CLOSING JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN OHIO

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Today the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS) has announced its decision to close the Marion and Freedom Center correctional facilities.

The class action settlement in *S.H. v. Stickrath*, approved in May 2008 by District Judge Algenon Marbley directs Ohio to move toward regional, community-based treatment that research shows is more successful in helping troubled youth. The settlement states that, “The goal of the regional plan is to expand regional beds while downsizing or closing existing facilities.” Discontinuing the use of Marion and Freedom Center is consistent with that goal.

“Closing Marion and Freedom Center is a solid move that will help promote public safety and redirect taxpayers’ money to effective programming for Ohio’s youth,” said Al Gerhardstein, plaintiffs’ lead attorney. “Today’s announcement is right for the youth, their families, and the public.”

Nearly 44% of the ODYS population is rated as low and moderate risk. Research shows that locking low and moderate risk youth in prisons like Marion actually causes increased recidivism. The reforms required by the injunction will reserve the expensive, more secure facilities for the higher risk youth.

Documents relevant to the case may be viewed at www.gbfirm.com. Other attorneys representing the class include Kimberly Brooks Tandy, Children’s Law Center, Janet Moore, Angie Jackson, and Rob Wall, Ohio Justice & Policy Center, Jennifer M Kinsley Sirkin Pinales & Schwartz, and Maria F. Ramiu, Youth Law Center.