



SENATOR
JOE SCHIAVONI
MINORITY LEADER
33RD DISTRICT

Senate Government Oversight and Reform
Sponsor Testimony-Senate Bill 62
March 18, 2015

Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Seitz, Ranking Member Yuko, and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on Senate Bill 62. Chairman Coley, this legislation deals with an issue that is extremely time sensitive and I appreciate your willingness to hear my testimony so quickly. The premise of this bill is very simple, it would trigger a comprehensive review process when the Governor makes a decision to close, sell, or privatize an institution operated by a State Agency .

This legislation comes in lieu of the Administration's decision to shut down the Youngstown Developmental Center, and the Montgomery Developmental Center by June 30, 2017. This decision, affects 180 residents and their families, as well as 400 employees and their families. The residents at this facility require around the clock, highly skilled, individual specific care. For many patients, a consistent routine has been established and that is so crucial to ensure the safety of residents and staff. It is the intention of both Senator Cafaro and I to amend this bill in order to subject the closure of the two facilities (Youngstown and Dayton) in question to the suggested process prescribed in the bill.

We have worked closely with the Director Martin from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and although we appreciate the outreach efforts he and his staff have made to our office during this process, the decision is unacceptable. This decision has left many residents, their families, and current employees with unanswered questions regarding their futures. Although community based and private group home care can be a successful alternative for some, it is the consensus of the families and residents affected by this recent decision that other types of care do not meet their needs based on their disabilities.

Senate Bill 62 would create the State Facilities Closure Review Commission when the Governor proposes to close a State Institutional Facility. Once a request for a closure is submitted by the Governor, a Commission consisting of 13 members tailored specifically to review the closing, will convene to make recommendations regarding the closure or any other changes to institutional facilities based upon specified criteria in 30 days. This Commission will prohibit the Governor from ordering the closure of an institutional facility except in accordance with the

bill's procedures and requires the Governor to close facilities only in accordance with the recommendation of a Facilities Closure Commission. If there is a significant change in circumstances rendering a recommendation of a Facilities Closure Commission unworkable, the Governor can convene a new commission for a new report.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing Senate Bill 62 to be heard today. I believe this is a necessary improvement for an objective, open review process. Additional hearings on this bill as well as the companion House Bill 73 (Hagan Gerberry) will allow communities most affected by the closures and have a claimed interest in their institutional facility, the opportunity to have their voices heard. I would be happy to answer any questions committee members may have at this time.