

Sir/Madam

My name is Sean Murphy and for almost 15 years I have worked at Youngstown Developmental Center. YDC is home to many Developmental Disabled individuals. My job is to help these individuals gain their independence and reach their ability to be self-reliant. Although I have been involved with the successful transformation of many of our individuals back into the community, I am saddened by the realization that the majority of our individuals will never gain the ability to be self-reliant for many different reasons. Ailments like Autism, PICA, birth defects, or neurological damage, or they may be self-abusive, these are just a few of the reasons why the majority of our people will never be self-reliant. There are too many to list. I would like nothing more than to be able to see each and every one of our people gain the ability to move out into the community. But the fact is that no matter how hard we work many of these individuals will always need constant care. 60% to 75% of our people need 24 hour, 7 days a week care, and at one time or another 100% of our people need 24/7 care.

On May 14th, 2015 Mr. John Martin Director of the Ohio DODD, (while talking of the DODD) in his testimony said "this field has been in TURMOIL over the past 18 months". The truth is the Ohio DODD has been self-destructing for several years. While the State of Ohio has had a list of 40,000 citizens waiting to use the Developmental Centers and other State resources (although Mr. Martin stated only 10% or 4,000 people need housing) Mr. Martin and the DODD have been downsizing all of the centers. They ordered all ten centers to cut the number of beds so that when someone leaves or dies they do not fill the bed. They then use the declining numbers as one of the reasons for the closings and groups like the DRO and ARC manipulate what the US Supreme Court said in the Olmstead decision (which stated there will always be a need for the developmental center to serve the severe and profoundly disabled) to threaten the State of Ohio with a lawsuit. Once again Mr. Martin neglects to fight for these disabled individuals and uses it as a reason for the closings. He stated in another one of his reasons for closing YDC (a center that is at the top or near the top in every category across the board) is that the property that it sits on would be easier to "resuit". Now, if you own a business with 10 locations would you take your best facility and close it just because the property would be easier to sell? (bad business move)

In the February 15, 2015 meeting with the parents at YDC Mr. Martin informed our parents that the center would be closing. They would have until June 2017 to decide where they would like to place their family member. Then they were told in another meeting at YDC that they needed to place their family member elsewhere "soon before all the good spots were gone". At the last meeting in April 2015 they were informed that they needed to move their family members by November 2015. The families feel that they are not getting the answers to their questions. The biggest question they ask is that they want to know about the medical availability and safety of their loved ones. The only answer that they get is that they are told that "it is suitable". I was just wondering why the DODD spent over a half a million dollars in January of 2015 to bring an expert in trauma to do a seminar in each of the 10 developmental centers to explain how a change in their daily routine could be so traumatic to these individuals, that they may never recover. Was Mr. Martin wasting the State's money in January or is he risking the lives of our residents now.

Now let's look at this responsibly. The most important thing is the safety of our individuals. Moving individuals in to group homes of four with one staff member is not a safe environment for the majority of our individuals. Mr. Martin states that the trend across the US is moving the disabled into a smaller

and public community based setting. Now, that is fine for the mild to moderately disabled . However, documentation shows that these smaller settings are far more dangerous for the profound and severely disabled. The smaller and community based homes have a much higher mortality rate, a much higher hospitalization rate and almost twice the amount of injuries to these disabled citizens then the developmental centers have. Whether it's an IFH or a Group Home setting neither can match the training provided the staff or the professionals that cover our residents

An advisory group is supposed to advocate for what is in the best interest for these disabled individuals. So, why would the owners and top officials of several group homes come together and form an Advocacy group like the DRO (Disability Rights Ohio)? It is not that hard to figure out. It is for their self-promotion, to allow them to get additional state waivers and in turn to get more money.

I would like to ask this committee to do five things. 1) Read the Olmstead decision 2) Remember the disability bill of rights and the family right to choose 3) Think what you would do if this were one of your family members, wouldn't you want them safe? 4) Come out and see YDC or MDC for yourself 5) I beg you to reconsider the closing of YDC and MDC PLEASE KEEP THEIR HOMES OPEN

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sean M. Murphy