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Honorable Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member  
Cafaro

My name is Michele Sims and I have a brother named Carl Hayes who has been a resident of MDC for over 30 years. He was in the first group to come to MDC when it opened. So you see why this is important to me. MDC is Carl's home. Carl was hit by a car when he was 3 years old causing irreparable damage to his brain. My parents kept him at home for as long as possible. My father passed away leaving him in the care of my mother only. Over the years Carl's behavior began to change. He became more delusional, uncontrollable and violent. I came home one day to find my mother had locked herself in the basement fearing for her life because he had physically attacked her. As a result Carl became a resident of Orient State in Columbus until its closure and then a resident of MDC. The transition was not an easy one for Carl. He didn't understand why he was being moved or where he was going. He had violent bouts of behavior often destroying the things my mother bought him to make him feel comfortable at MDC. In due time with the fantastic care of the staff at MDC these bouts subsided. MDC is his home as well as his family. A home is a place where a person should feel safe, can relax. It's a place that you miss when you're away from a certain period of time. It's where your joy comes from. It's where your family is. The other residents in my brother's home as well as the staff are his family. I did not know the great State of Ohio was in the business of breaking up families and homes. How would you feel if someone was trying to take you away from your family or put you out of your home.

I am not against community living, but you need to know it is not for everyone, especially those with severe mental as well as physical disabilities. These homes that Mr. Martin is trying to get us to put our loved ones in are not capable of caring for these individuals that reside at MDC and YDC. That's why they were created in the first place. You will hear testimonies from our adversaries stating that it

does work. But for every story that they give that says it works, I can find you just as many or more that says it doesn't work. The information that you read about is very vague and usually comes from individuals who function at a higher level than my brother. Carl pays no attention to where he walks, he could easily get hit by a car. He likes to touch, which we all know would be misconstrued by most people of the community. He is delusional and beginning to suffer from dementia. He has the attention span of maybe 2 minutes at the most and very little patience. He can get violent when agitated and harmful to others. Community living is not for him.

I could go on and on, but whatever I leave out you will more than likely hear from someone else. That being said, I urge you to support House Bill 64 amendments to create a Closure Review Commission and include the additional language in the Developmental Disability Bill of Rights. This is a serious matter and no such decision should every lay in the hands of one person. The State of Ohio needs this bill that will create a committee to review such closures. No one should have that much control. Where is our choice that the state promised us for our loved ones? It is not their fault that they are different, but should they be punished for it? They are few but they are still God's children and he made them special for a reason. Anyone of us at any given time could become the same way. Also I ask that you extend the reviewing process from 30 days to 90 days. It is evident that 30 days is not enough time to review this process and come up with a viable decision. Once again, please support us in this process. This may be a trend in the nation, but it is not a good trend. Ohio is a leader not a follower. My mother always said, " Everything that looks good, ain't good." Keep Ohio looking good.