

Honorable Chair and Members of the Finance Committee

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My name is Jeffrey Fox, and I am the father of a 33-year-old autistic young man named Matthew Fox who lives at Montgomery Developmental Center (MDC). Matthew is nonverbal himself but understands what other people say. He is very active. Prior to coming to MDC, Matthew lived at home and then later at a 3-bed group home. Although there were some positive things about the group home, these were more than offset by the shortcomings. At the group home Matthew was given a near-lethal overdose of Depakote that put him in the hospital, he had gastro-intestinal problems such as impacted bowels that also led to hospital stays, and he had several stays in hospital psych wards when group home staff were unable to follow his behavioral plan. Since coming to MDC in 2002, Matt has thrived. With the nursing care that MDC provides, he has not suffered the overdoses, bowel problems, or behavioral crises that characterized his period living in a group home.

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My concern is that the state now plans to move forward with a downsizing plan that involves closing the excellent Montgomery Developmental Center facility BEFORE they have developed robust community group homes in the Miami Valley area or the qualified staff that will be needed to operate them. In my view, a key component of such a group home for individuals like Matthew will be qualified nurses, rather than direct care workers, to administer all prescription medications and check regularly for chronic conditions like impacted bowels. Also, I am troubled by the centers selected for closure. The officials at the Department of Developmental Disabilities in Columbus have chosen to close a small, modern community-based facility like MDC while leaving open larger more "institutional" developmental centers like the one in Columbus. I was told by Director Martin this is because the

smaller more modern centers can be more easily sold. I find this logic crass and troubling.

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> Moreover, the previous biennium's round of developmental center downsizing has yet to be started in the Miami Valley. As of now, ground has still not been broken for the two 6-bed intermediate care facilities promised in the 2013 budget. Given this track record, my fear and expectation is that in the end, most residents at Montgomery Developmental Center will be herded into remaining centers in Batavia and Columbus, much further from home. This will greatly increase the drive times for parents and family to visit loved ones and also the likelihood of successful court challenges against the State by Disability Rights Ohio and other advocacy groups.

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> Thank you for the opportunity to make my voice heard.

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