

Thank you for the privilege of allowing me to address you on this most important topic. My name is Joe Casto. I am from Dayton, Ohio. I am a retired clergyman of 27 years and a retired teacher in the Family Practice Program of the Wright State University School of Medicine in Dayton, or more accurately, Greene County, Ohio.

I am the father of Jeffrey, my 56 year old mentally retarded son or man who has resided at the Montgomery County Developmental Center for 16 years. For about ten years I was President of the Montgomery County Mental Health Association. One of our biggest successes was the closing of the Dayton State Mental Hospital. And the promise was by your predecessors that in exchange for the closing of this hospital there would be created in four catchment areas, four area mental health centers to be named Good Samaritan North, Eastway, Daymont West and Dayton South. And your predecessors kept their word. They were created. But they were underfunded and consequently understaffed. And still are to this day, decades later. So that for our mentally ill now, instead of being sent to Dayton State Hospital they are being shot, sometimes, killed by cared and untrained policemen. or most often taken to jail. Unsuitable places, and excessively costly for the mentally ill and the county taxpayers.

My contention is that we are creating a similar and worse scenario if we close the Dayton and Youngstown Development Centers and create group homes. In addition to the misunderstanding and jailing of the mentally ill, we will now be mistreating and jailing those like my mentally retarded son and thousands labelled the developmentally disabled. I have little faith in outsourced programs. They rarely work. If you give up close governmental oversight and connection you lose quality and caring. I site Haliburton in Iraq as one example and for another example the outsourcing of jails and prisons here in Ohio. We have reports just weeks ago of these prison companies serving rotten food to Ohio prisoners accompanied with maggots. Don't sentence Ohio's mentally disabled citizens to this possibility.

Keep these centers closely under your watchful eye and insure these beautiful, but dependent people, safe and happy homes because you care. The Montgomery County Developmental Center is 34 years old, has a beautiful, well-maintained campus, with a collection of well-trained, experienced caring staff, most of which will be lost if you close the center. Please don't.

Joe Casto  
5019 Far Hills Avenue  
Dayton, Ohio 45429  
Tel: (937) 291-8330