

Honorable Chair and Members of the Finance Committee

My name is Lily Angell. My son, Shane Angell, has profound mental retardation and autism. He is 46 years old with a mental capability of a one year old child. He can walk and feed himself, but that's all he can do for himself. He is non-verbal and cannot communicate his feelings or his needs. He is extremely hyperactive, has a habit of pica where he puts everything he can get into his mouth. He displays very high anxiety by running. He seldom sits still except for meal time. He doesn't always sleep well and he's up at night running. He does not know how to get out of harm's way. He relies completely on his direct-care staff for his care 24/7.

Many higher functioning disabled individuals do well in group homes, but group home setting would not be appropriate for Shane because he is very low functioning. He is well-care for and loved by the staff in his house. He is happy living amongst his peers in a community setting surrounded by residential homes. So, community concept is already met here at the Montgomery center.

Director John Martin told us that it is his final decision to close the center, and he will not change his mind. My question is, how can "one man" makes a decision that affects the life of so many? Must "one man" be allowed to do something that amounts to dismantling the working mental health system in Ohio? Setting the State back decades.

Mr. Martin has offered my son the choice of moving into another center. The closest one is at least 65 miles away from the family. This is a lousy choice for him, because his family cannot visit him on a regular basis due to the distance. The Montgomery center is his home for the last 26 years. The move will be devastating to him, because he doesn't adjust well to changing conditions.

Developmental centers serve clients who have not functioned well at home or in private group homes, and some have been placed into the

centers for care by the judicial system, because they do not function well in the community, and do not need to be in a prison or in a psych ward of a hospital. These centers offer the least restrictive yet controlled and safe setting that allows many of them to function as best as they can, given their developmental levels and complex behaviors.

I find Mr. Martin's decision to close centers extreme and in violation of the civil rights of citizens with mental disabilities, by taking away their home and their choices to live amongst their peers. He said the reason for closing the Montgomery and Youngstown centers, is due to the decreasing demand across the state of Ohio, that there were 1,600 individuals living in ten centers, and today only 900 living in these centers. He stated that the decreasing demand has driven up the cost for each individual being served. The truth is, Ohio has not allowed admission into centers for many years. The only admission is through court probate on a temporarily basis. It just doesn't make sense.

If the center closure is allowed to happen, the results will be horrible and the long-term damage is unfathomable. I respectfully urge your support against closing Montgomery and Youngstown centers.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.

Lily Angell
8725 Crenshaw Lane
Huber Heights, Ohio 45424
Tel: (937) 667-3436