

Submitting written testimony only against closure of MDC

My name is Michele Sims and I have a brother who has been a resident at MDC for over 30 years. He will be 61 years old In June.

Saturday I attended a meeting at MDC where Representative Henne was present where he listened to our concerns and in return asked us questions enabling him to get a better understanding of the situation. Let me first say I am not against group homes where it works, but fr those at MDC and YDC I'm afraid that this will not be the proper fit.

While present at that tour, a woman made a comment as to whether or not the closure of these facilities was actually saving the state money as well as stating the abilities of staff in group homes handling clients with severe intellectual and physical disabilities. She stated that if something should occur with a resident beyond the scope of the staff's ability to handle the first thing they would do was to 1) call the police, 2) call an ambulance 3) have the resident admitted to hospital. These things are very costly to the state and detrimental to our loved ones safety.

When I awoke yesterday morning and went on the Internet, the first story I read was a case in San Francisco where a case was being taken to the Supreme Court about a girl in a group home. She had an episode, that staff couldn't handle. So what did they do? 1. called the police, 2.called an ambulance, 3. had her admitted to the hospital. This woman did not have the severe developmental disabilities that the residents at MDC have. The bottom line is as stated in the case, the staff in the group home were not trained enough to handle this problem, nor the police. The woman locked herself in her room where police came in with a key, she lunged at them with a knife, in return they ineffectively tazed her. So they shot her five times but she did not die. She is suing because she says her rights were violated under The Americans Disabilities Act, requiring officers to "reasonably" modify arrest procedures when confronting people with mental illness.

This is exactly what we are afraid of. At MDC our children are safe and explosive situations that occur are handled expeditiously and cautiously because the staff is properly trained with years of experience. They can foresee a situation and diffuse it right away or before it happens. We don't have to worry about them being tazed or shot. What if the woman had died? All because of lack of training. There is more that I could say but I have a window of 5 minutes. We are begging you to seriously and

cautiously think about your decision in this case. Please allow our loved ones to remain safe at MDC as well as YDC. Is it really a savings at all when someone's life is on the line? Remember though they are few, Developmentally Disabled Lives Matter. All lives matter.

Thank you

Sincerely, Michele Sims