

April 13, 2015

To: Ohio House Finance Committee

From: Kathy Wojciak

Re: Funding in the proposed budget for ICF's, Adult Activity and workshops

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony as I am unable to come to Columbus to testify the second time due to work commitments. My brother Garry is 59 years old and lives at Mt. Aloysius in New Lexington Ohio which is an ICF that DODD and DRO would like to see downsized.

My brother has lived there for many years. He has Fragile X syndrome and autism. He has severe behavioral issues as well as some medical issues. My family has been very fortunate to have found such a facility in the state of Ohio. My parents are both deceased. They lived in Ohio all their lives. They were very instrumental in getting 169 boards established many years ago. And here I am, continuing the fight to keep services that my parents and many other pioneer parents established. By profession, I am a licensed special educator. I worked for the Cuyahoga County Bd of DD for 36 years as a teacher, and later as an administrator. I currently teach at special education courses at Cleveland State University part time. I am very knowledgeable about services and supports for individuals with severe disabilities.

On April 12th of this year, there was a Dateline special on NBC about adults with disabilities aging out of the school services. Several families interview in other states had no other options for adult services. We are very fortunate that in the state of Ohio we have an array of services and supports for adults with disabilities. It's not a perfect system, but nonetheless, it is in place and people use the services and supports. We cannot allow the entire system to be taken apart. ICF's work for individuals with severe disabilities. DRO keeps talking about segregation. Segregation is not a place but an attitude. At Mt. Aloysius because of the extensive supports and enhanced staffing, my brother is more involved in the community than he would be if he were living in my home.

I am asking the finance committee to keep funding in place for ICF's and community workshops and adult activity centers. I am asking that negotiations between DODD and other parties about these matters be open and not secretive. It is imperative that families be involved in any decisions. It is so important that Gov. Kasich and the legislature listen to what we, family members and concerned citizens are saying to this committee.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Kathy Wojciak

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