

Hello. My name is Will Lahrmann and I am 18 years old. My brother and sister Henry and Elizabeth are 15 and are severely intellectually and developmentally disabled. It has not been easy having siblings who are disabled, but they have brought me a lot of joy. Henry and Elizabeth are incredible individuals and they have taught me that being a complete person is not just about what you can do.

I am here today to ask the Senate Finance Committee to keep large ICFs open for people like my brother and sister. The opportunities available to them at Heinzerling would not be possible anywhere else. Henry loves to explore the long hallways and different areas of Heinzerling. He takes me around with him and gets so excited that he shrieks with happiness. Without a large facility like Heinzerling, Henry would be stuck in a small home with nowhere to roam. It is not possible for him to wheel outside very far because of the bumps and cracks and slopes in the pavement.

But there is more than just the long hallways. Therapists get Henry and Elizabeth into gait trainers and tricycles. Heinzerling also has full time nurses, behavioral specialists and nutritionists; and they have teachers who take residents on outings all over Columbus.

The love you feel when you are at Heinzerling is overwhelming. Henry and Elizabeth are showered with love by so many people everyday who spend time with them and tell them how cute and special they are. Their faces light up when they see their friends.

I am told that policies in the budget will force Heinzerling to downsize and build small 6-8 bed settings away from their main campus. I cannot imagine Henry and Elizabeth living in a small building. They would have no place to explore or ride their tricycle. They would miss all the social interaction they get at Heinzerling. And they would not have the specialized care they get now.

Next year I am heading off to college to study economics. There is a concept I have learned called 'economies of scale'. These are the cost advantages that an entity gains because of its size. Making Heinzerling downsize destroys its economies of scale, raises its cost per resident and lowers its ability to provide all the services it does now. I urge you to oppose efforts to downsize ICFs so that my brother and sister can continue to receive the excellent care they get now in a way that is affordable to the taxpayer.

Will Lahrmann

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Henry, Elizabeth and me at Heinzerling's Sensory Park.