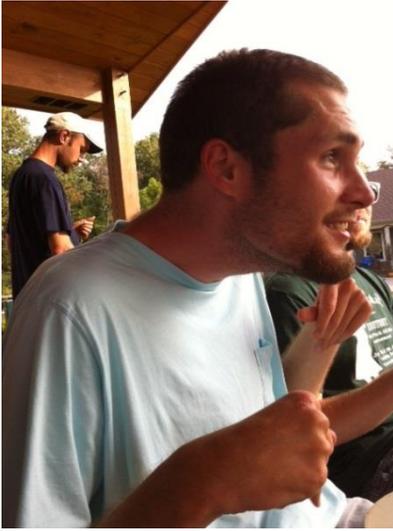


Written testimony of **Daniel W Norris, June 11, 2015**

Chair Oelslager, Vice Chair Coley, Ranking Member Skindell and members of the Senate Finance Committee



My son, **Jacob Norris**, 25 years old, who currently receives services on a HCBS waiver Thanks you for retaining language in the budget to guarantee the continued availability of sheltered workshops and day services. He is currently a resident at Safe Haven Farms and receives Day Habs services through Bittersweet Farms. Jacob has profound intellectual disabilities/MR and substantial behavioral challenges. His needs are distinctly different from a higher functioning class of individuals in the ID community. Although I support the call for fully integrated employment for the disabled, that effort must take into account the individual's choice and needs. My son's current services and supports are appropriate and necessary.

There has been a **LOUD** concerted effort by OPRA and others to miss cast your bill, which recognizes the broader definition of community-based and integrated settings, as a misunderstanding of the Federal CMS legislation. As an attorney specializing in Federal Disability Law, a parental advocate, an appointed court legal guardian, I have an understanding of the real life affects of the Law on the community at large. I applaud your actions in rejecting the pressures by these hand picked stakeholders.

The Disability Bill of Rights should be designed to cover all members of the disability community including my son Jake, who lacks the cognitive abilities to understand and interpret the legislation and assert his rights. Thankfully he has a knowledgeable, educated parent and guardian to assist him. Many individuals like Jake cannot speak for themselves. The effort by those functionally able to advocate for themselves, to tie the hands of us caring for other disabled people, shows a profound lack of understanding of the breath of needs of others and is **disgraceful**. I urge you to support my rights as guardian to guide Jake's future life decisions and **therefore his rights to live a full and integrated life**.

*I advocate a **simple win-win solution** for the entire Disabled Community. The efforts of some stateholders to pit the diverse members of the community against one another, to support their narrow agenda must be **thwarted**. The Senate must support protections for ICFs, developmental centers, sheltered work-shops, day-habs and legal guardians/parents and *then fund real increases* to the State Budgets for the disabled.*

Respectfully,

Daniel W. Norris, J.D.

President, D.W.Norris Co. LPA

Father and Legal Guardian of Jacob Norris, resident of **Safe Haven Farms**

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