

VOR is a national non-profit organization, founded in 1983, that advocates for high quality care and human rights for *all* people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Our membership is mostly comprised of families of individuals with severe or profound intellectual disabilities, often complicated by significant medical, psychological, and behavioral conditions. Many of our loved ones are non-verbal and non-ambulatory. Many engage in self-injurious behaviors. They often require 24/7 care, by well-trained and caring direct support professionals.

Our family members constitute a minority within a minority. They represent about 5% of the population of individuals with I/DD. The home and community-based settings that work for many people with I/DD often fail to meet the needs of these severely disabled, vulnerable individuals.

To acknowledge the extensive range of needs and aspirations of *all* members of this diverse population, **VOR supports Individual and Family Choice, and a Full Continuum of Care.** To have choice, there must be a full range of quality options, tailored to meet the intellectual, psychological, behavioral, and physical needs of this diverse population. **One size never fits all.**

While we support the goals of those who aspire to integrate into the society around them in their choices of residence, education, and employment, we also support the needs of those who would be endangered in an under-protected environment, who can never integrate fully because they cannot perform the simplest of daily skills, like brushing their teeth, washing, toileting, or verbalizing their needs, their desires, their agitation, or their anger. **The goals of one group should never be placed at odds with the needs of the other.** We support all residential options, including the individual's own home, family home, group homes, intentional communities, and larger congregate settings, such as public and private Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICFs/IID, or ICFs).

By the same principle, **we support a full range of employment opportunities** for people with I/DD. We support the drive for integrated, competitive employment and laud the proliferation of programs aimed at helping people with intellectual disabilities achieve their full potential. But we oppose the movement to eliminate center-based employment and compensatory wages under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. People who will never have the capacity to compete in the open job market need an opportunity to participate in employment appropriate to their abilities. Our family members enjoy this level of work, the peer environment, and the opportunity to be productive. The movement toward competitive employment for some should not mandate the elimination of programs that work for others.

There is no singular solution that is appropriate to all individuals with I/DD. Yet, this is the premise of policies promoted by many powerful advocacy groups. This is a dangerous assumption, especially for the most vulnerable. They need protection, and we are asking for your help.