

**For Trust in DPW be Restored, Admissions Must be Allowed:
Member Response to *Benjamin* Settlement Victory**

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[Magnificent news](#) concerning the “right of choice” for residents of group home or state facility placements: to choose to remain where they are, or to transition into community based services.

Bert Springstead is to be congratulated for his steadfastness and especially attorneys Sidley Austin and Carl Solano, and VOR and others for their Amici.

Would that we had been successful in securing “right of choice” for residents of Western Center 15 years ago – then 38 residents of that facility, gleefully destroyed by ARC and PA-DPW – would still be alive. And God knows how many others’ lives statewide could have been saved or improved rather than forced by DPW into inappropriate placements, homelessness, substandard services – swelling the huge waiting lists of such individuals for out of home placements and supports.

As for this decision serving to “diminish distrust of PA-DPW by many families and guardians” – this is not even a tiny bit likely. Heck, DPW itself, a willing defendant, along with its selected “stakeholders” opposed the settlement, and the current DPW deputy in charge of the PA Office of Developmental Programs has stated that “group homes are nothing but little institutions!”

Trust in PA-DPW will be restored only when “right of choice” for families of developmentally disabled Pennsylvanians is fully restored, and choice is extended by PA’s government to again support – and allow referral of developmentally disabled individuals to services chosen – not by DPW policy – but instead by parents, guardians, and treating professionals as being appropriate to their needs regardless of the location in which the services are provided.

Pennsylvania must see that ARC’s and “Everyday Lives” manifesto is consigned to the fairytale graveyard, and must get out of the social engineering business so incredibly costly in money and in human suffering.