



Speaking out for people  
with intellectual disabilities

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## VOR Weekly News Update

News and views for VOR advocates

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

#### VOR and You

1. [Annual Conference - Register Today!](#)
2. VOR testifies in support of choice in New Jersey
3. VOR submits comment to federal court in Virginia. [Legal filings](#) by families now available on VOR's website
4. [Related Virginia News: Virginia Congressmen Call on DOJ to Reconsider and Withdraw Proposed Settlement Agreement](#)

#### VOR and You

1. [Annual Conference - Register Today!](#)
2. **Choice Matters: VOR testifies in support of choice in New Jersey**

On Monday, April 9, 2012, VOR testified at the New Jersey Task Force on the Closure of State Developmental Centers. [Geoff Dubrowsky, VOR Board Member, spoke on VOR's behalf](#), referencing his personal experiences as a father and uncle of individuals with profound intellectual disabilities and autism. He also referred to [extensive written testimony](#) submitted on behalf of VOR by VOR New York State Coordinators Cristy and Hugo (Hugh) Dwyer. On March 26, Cindy Bartman, VOR's New Jersey State Coordinator, testified in her capacity as President of the Association for Hunterdon Developmental Center, along with family representatives from other New Jersey Centers.

As the name indicates, the *Task Force on the Closure of State Developmental Centers* is a legislatively-created entity which is considering the fate of New Jersey's Developmental Centers. VOR testified in support of

developmental centers, state licensed ICFs/MR. Our testimony provided quality, cost and legal justification for maintaining developmental centers and expanding their professional services to nonresidents.

"VOR offers the Task Force a unique organizational perspective, but one that is consistent with the perspective of families. Choice matters. VOR is the only national advocacy organization that supports the provision of a full spectrum of care options for individuals with ID/DD, from own home and smaller homes to federally-licensed larger residential homes (Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons with Mental Retardation (ICFs/MR)), including New Jersey's Developmental Centers."

[Read the Dwyers' Written Statement Here](#)

[Read Geoff Dubrowsky's Compelling Statement to the Task Force Here.](#)

### **3. VOR submits comment to federal court in Virginia. [Legal filings by families now available on VOR's website](#)**

As previously reported, families in Virginia are seeking intervention on behalf of their families members with profound intellectual disabilities who receive training center (ICF/MR care).

Their filings in support of intervention, including a reply to DOJ and the State, both of which have asked the Court to deny intervention, are now available on VOR's [website](#). Families have also filed a response to an opposition filed by The Arc-et al., and an *Amicus* brief opposing the proposed Settlement. In support, a VOR Declaration ("affidavit") was attached to the Families' reply to the Arc, and [VOR also submitted a comment to the Judge](#) urging that he reject the settlement agreement as written. Ultimately, families seek intervention status which would allow them to participate in an action they believe violates the rights of their family members with profound intellectual disabilities and will cause irrevocable harm.

The dispute centers on the legality of a case filed by the U.S. Department of Justice ("DOJ") against the

Commonwealth of Virginia on January 26, 2012, and a proposed settlement agreement submitted the same day. The proposed settlement, which is pending federal court review, would result in the closure of four of the five Virginia Training Centers for persons with profound and other significant intellectual disabilities, by 2021. The fifth is expected to be downsized to accommodate 75 residents at a time for short-term (30 day) stays.

#### **4. Related Virginia News: Virginia Congressmen Call on DOJ to Reconsider and Withdraw Proposed Settlement Agreement**

March 27, 2012

Congressmen Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and Jim Moran (D-VA) call on U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to "reconsider and withdraw the agreement until the Administration and the Congress have time to review the ongoing evidence of massive abuse and neglect leading to the deaths of profound intellectual disabilities (ID) in communities unprepared to take care of them."

[Read their letter here.](#)

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