



Speaking out for people with intellectual & developmental disabilities



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**Reminders:
Help VOR Grow!**

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VOR Weekly News Update

News and views for VOR Advocates

VOR promises to empower you to make and protect quality of life choices for individuals with developmental disabilities

VOR is a one-of-a-kind nonprofit organization. If you value our work, please help support it by [donating](#) now.

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VOR and YOU

1. **Monthly Donations to VOR: Giving made easy, one month at a time**
2. [Thank You Annual Conference Sponsors!](#)
3. [It's not too late! Take Action – Urge Congress to Enforce Olmstead](#)

STATE NEWS

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4. **Ohio:** Medicaid changes could hurt severely disabled Ohioans, says VOR
5. **New Jersey:** Families of Disabled Protest Return Home NJ
6. **New Jersey** lawmakers will 'hit the brakes' on Christie plan overhauling disability programs

QUOTABLE, by Eleanor Roosevelt

Calendar Reminders

VOR and YOU

1. **Monthly Donations to VOR: Giving made easy, one month at a time**

About VOR

33 years ago, VOR was formed around a kitchen table in Illinois. Who would have known that today and in the future that the fight to protect all individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) would be more important now than ever! We must fight for quality care and upholding the Supreme Court Olmstead decision. Together we will continue the fight.

Please consider [committing to VOR with a monthly donation](#) and help us to continue to protect your loved ones.

Your monthly donation helps form a predictable source of income we can count on to fund our mission.

It's the easiest way to give and ensure that VOR receives your ongoing support. Your recurring monthly donation means, together, we will help families and your loved ones.

Your recurring online donation is secure and flexible. You choose the amount you wish to give each month and you can change, or cancel, your pledge at any time. Sign up now and make your first [donation](#) by credit card online.

Your monthly donation will mean so much. Please become a [Monthly Donor](#) today.

Thank you for your loyalty and support!

2. Thank You Annual Conference Sponsors!

If not for the generosity of our Sponsors, our Annual Conference and Initiative would not be possible. Please take a moment to take a look at the list of generous sponsors, share with others, visit their websites, and if you get a chance, offer a thank you!

[Click here to see our 2015 Annual Conference and Initiative Sponsors!](#)

3. It's not too late! Take Action – Urge Congress to Enforce *Olmstead* by Prohibiting Federally Funded Forced Deinstitutionalization

This year. VOR Washington Initiatives

**Join or Donate
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About VOR

participants focused specifically on “What *Olmstead* really requires” by providing to Congress the actual *Olmstead* holding and key quotes from the Supreme Court's decision. Rather than take our word for it, Congress was given what the decision actually says.

VOR participants explained on how certain federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Justice and Developmental Disabilities Act programs, persistently misinterpret *Olmstead* in an effort to force every individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities into small settings.

Many of you - nearly 500! - have already taken action. If you have not yet "clicked," you can support family and choice advocates who traveled to D.C. by sending a letter supporting their efforts today. Your letter will reach your Senators and U.S. Representative with an easy “click.”

[Take Action Now! Thank You!](#)

STATE NEWS

3. State News from VOR's Conference Now Online

Each year, VOR hosts a State Report Forum as part of our events at the VOR Annual Conference. These reports, delivered Saturday, June 5 in Washington, D.C., are [now available online at VOR's website](#). More written reports will be posted as they are received.

4. Ohio: Medicaid changes could hurt severely disabled Ohioans

Ohio Watchdog * June 17, 2015

Family members of developmentally disabled Ohioans are warning against state efforts to shrink Medicaid-funded residential facilities.

Medicaid pays for more than 5 000 Ohioans who live in

Intermediate Care Facilities where they have around-the-clock nursing care but are, according to nonprofit Disability Rights Ohio [Protection & Advocacy], “needlessly segregated.”

Disability Advocacy Alliance, a grassroots group formed in January, sees DRO’s focus on “community integration” as a threat to ICF residents — many of whom cannot walk or speak, cannot eat without assistance and cannot control their bodily functions.

Last July, DRO threatened a lawsuit should the state fail to “transition a substantial number of individuals from segregated residential, employment, and day services,” prompting Gov. John Kasich to target ICFs for downsizing in his latest budget.

Disability Advocacy Alliance supporter and VOR representative Tamie Hopp thinks attempts to shrink ICFs are misguided.

“The Kasich Administration’s budget proposal would have resulted in thousands of individuals with profound intellectual and developmental disabilities and significant needs being forced from their ICF homes,” Hopp said in an email to Ohio Watchdog.

“Tragedies are predictable when individuals with significant needs are displaced from specialized care and separated from trained caregivers and instead placed in small, unlicensed settings with staff not trained to accommodate their needs,” Hopp warned.

“An analogous situation would be removing a patient from the ICU and attempting to serve that individual in his/her living room,” she said. “Serving ICU patients in scattered locations is either cost prohibitive to do safely, or dangerous.”

Hopp pointed to studies from Georgia and Virginia showing sharply increased mortality rates when developmentally disabled residents were moved from ICFs to “community-based care.”

Relocating ICF residents wouldn’t just hurt those individuals, Hopp said — it could also increase medical wait times for other disabled Ohioans as former ICF residents “moved to the head of the line” for care.

“Community homes are needed for people who can handle and desire to live in the community, while large and small ICFs are necessary for those requiring higher levels of

care,” Hopp said.

“This is what is envisioned in the U.S. Supreme Court’s Olmstead decision,” she added. “This needs to be achieved through policies which do not pit the disabled population against each other.”

The Ohio General Assembly removed budget language targeting ICFs, but has not finalized the 2016-17 state budget. Kasich’s Office of Health Transformation did not respond to a request for comment.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

5. New Jersey: Families of Disabled Protest Return Home NJ

*NJTV News * June 10, 2015*

Families of developmentally disabled adults protested outside and watched inside, as members of the Legislative Oversight Committee grilled Christie administration officials about Return Home NJ. The controversial plan’s brought 170 developmentally disabled adults back from residential programs out of state — where some lived for years — to less expensive group homes in New Jersey. Twenty-six-year-old Alexa Kelly returned a year ago over her mom’s objections.

“It’s been a disastrous placement,” Alexa’s mother Laura Kelly said. “Pretty much everything has happened to her. She’s been hospitalized twice for aspiration pneumonia from choking. You know often left not adequately supervised. Lots of medication errors.”

“Wouldn’t we be better off making this optional for families?” asked Senate President Steve Sweeney.

Sweeney spoke, he said, from the heart. His daughter Lauren was born with Down syndrome.

Families of the remaining 370 developmentally disabled facing a return to New Jersey have appealed to Sweeney and other lawmakers to freeze the program.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

6. New Jersey lawmakers will 'hit the brakes' on Christie plan overhauling disability programs

NJ.com * June 10, 2015

Following a day-long hearing discussing the Christie administration's overhaul the system for determining where thousands of adults with developmental disabilities live and work, state lawmakers Wednesday said they intend to "hit the brakes" and offer ways to fix what many told them is a poorly conceived plan.

The overhaul enables the state to qualify for as much federal Medicaid money as possible to pay for cost of providing supervised homes, jobs and vocational programs to about 30,000 people with developmental disabilities.

Kevin T. Casey, executive director for the N.J. Council on Developmental Disabilities, said the state was moving much too quickly.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

QUOTABLE

"Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people." ~ Eleanor Roosevelt

Calendar Reminders:

Sunday, October 4, 2015 * San Antonio, Texas:
[**Leading the Charge for Compassionate Care: A Day for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Residential Services Providers**](#)

Sponsored by the American Health Care Association and the National Council on Assisted Living

Archives:

*** Thursday, March 20, 2014**

[**VOR's "Regional Meetings: The Need for Advocates to Act Global and Local" Webinar.**](#)

***Social Media Strengths: Using Facebook and Twitter to Advance Your Cause (VOR July 2013)** [Visit VOR's website for](#)

[a copy of the powerpoint presentation and an audio of the event.](#)

* **How Congress Works Webinar: [Recorded - Listen Here.](#)** Tuesday, April 23, 2013 - 12:00 pm central / 1:00 pm eastern. How Congress Works: The Basics. Hosted by Peter Kinzler and Larry Innis.

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