



Speaking out for people with intellectual & developmental disabilities



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**Reminders:
Help VOR Grow!**

VOR Weekly News Update

News and views for VOR Advocates

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

[About VOR](#) * [Refer a Friend](#) * [Donate](#)

[VOR Conference](#)

[Register now to attend our one-of-a-kind event](#)

Registration Remains Open through TODAY May 1, 2015.

Rates increase after today.

VOR and YOU

1. **TODAY IS THE DAY:** [Register](#) by May 1, 2015 (today!) for VOR's Annual Conference and Save
2. Wanted: A UPS Employee!
3. VOR's Mary Reese Testifies About Cruel and Wasteful Health and Human Services (HHS) Funding for Deinstitutionalization
4. What would you like your Government to know about deinstitutionalization?
5. VOR Submits Testimony in California, Opposes Closure of Sonoma and Fairview Developmental Centers

AUTISM NEWS

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8. Schools Warned On Pushing Families Into

**2015
Conference:
Advocating for
Choice by
Expanding
Opportunities**

**Join or Donate
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About VOR

Due Process

QUOTABLE by Dale Carnegie

Calendar Reminders

VOR and YOU

1. TODAY IS THE DAY: Register by May 1, 2015 (today!) for VOR's Annual Conference and Save

Registration open through May 1, 2015 for VOR's Annual Conference; rates increase again after today.

[Full Conference, Registration, and Hotel details are available on VOR's website.](#)

Thanks to the many of you who have already registered. We look forward to seeing everyone in Washington, D.C. this June.

2. Wanted: A UPS Employee!

Are any VOR members out there UPS employees?

For many years, UPS has been a sponsor of VOR's Annual Conference. This year, UPS requires that "an employee of UPS volunteers with the organization requesting sponsorship dollars."

If you can help, please contact info@vor.net.
Thank you!

3. VOR's Mary Reese Testifies About Cruel and Wasteful Health and Human Services (HHS) Funding for Deinstitutionalization

On April 29, 2015, Mary Reese, VOR Board Member, represented VOR in testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS.

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About VOR

Education and Related Agencies. Consistent with VOR's written testimony and the written testimony submitted by many VOR members and others, Mary asked the Committee "not for any money, but instead, that the appropriated funding be used as intended, according to the law, and in support of family values and choice."

"VOR respectfully requests the Subcommittee's support for language in the HHS appropriations bill to prohibit the use of such appropriations in support of forced deinstitutionalization activities which evicts vulnerable individuals with profound disabilities from HHS licensed Medicaid facilities," she states. "HHS funded deinstitutionalization, which target HHS funded and licensed homes, is an absurd and cruel use of federal funding."

[Read Mary Reese's Verbal Testimony Here](#)
[Read VOR's Written Testimony Here](#)

4. What would you like your Government to know about deinstitutionalization?

VOR's recently released "Giving a Voice to Families and Guardians" survey report included responses to this question:

"What would you like our government to know about the current move to deinstitutionalize ICF residents in favor of small community-based facilities?"

What mattered most to the families of those receiving care in both ICF and HCBS homes was that their family members received the care they needed and that their right to individual choice was respected - exactly what the Supreme Court in *Olmstead v. L.C.* required, individual choice based on need!

The respondents' responses. verbatim. are

available on VOR's website. You are encouraged to use them in your communications with elected officials and lawmakers. The responses are heartfelt and compelling.

[Read the responses here](#)

[The survey is available to VOR members. For details about joining VOR and receiving the survey results, click here.](#)

5. VOR Submits Testimony in California, Opposes Closure of Sonoma and Fairview Developmental Centers

SB 639 Update:

SB 639, which proposed the closure of Fairview and Sonoma Developmental Centers has been changed to a “2 year bill,” meaning there will be no further action on this bill this year. [Here is an article from the Sonoma Press-Democrat, “Breathing room for Developmental Center advocates.”](#)

Summary of VOR’s Testimony:

SB 639 is motivated by the typical fallacies associated with the demand and cost for specialized, licensed care facilities, such as Sonoma and Fairview Developmental Centers. To force fragile Californians from their chosen homes based on shortsighted myths associated with the cost of care places affected individuals at enormous risk of harm and potentially higher costs to California taxpayers.

Instead taking such a draconian approach – total closure – California lawmakers are instead encouraged to consider solutions which will better utilize Sonoma and Fairview for residents and nonresidents – disabled and non-disabled neighbors – while also increasing the Centers’ ability to serve as a safety net for individuals in

community settings who are facing a temporary crisis or whose needs, due to aging or illness, have intensified beyond the ability of the community provider to safely accommodate them.

Positioning the Centers as one option of care a true continuum of care to accommodate the diverse and ever changing needs and demands among the disabled population, while expanding shared use opportunities for these beautiful campuses, is far more visionary, holistic, and reasonable than simply closing these necessary resources forever.

[Read VOR's complete testimony here.](#)

AUTISM NEWS

6. Many Young Adults With Autism Struggling

Disability Scoop * April 24, 2015

Young adults with autism are facing significant challenges after high school, a new report suggests, with many on the spectrum finding themselves unemployed, isolated and lacking services.

More than a third of those with autism don't work or continue their education in their early twenties, a circumstance shared by fewer than 8 percent of young people with other types of disabilities.

Meanwhile, 26 percent of young adults with autism receive no support services at all.

The findings come from a report this week from Drexel University's A.J. Drexel Autism Institute based on data collected in two nationally-representative government studies — the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 and

the Survey of Pathways to Diagnosis.

The 68-page National Autism Indicators Report paints a stark picture of a group of young people with little support.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEWS

7. Feds Put Brakes On Special Education Cutbacks

***Disability Scoop* * April 28, 2015**

With a new rule, federal education officials are telling schools not to skimp on funding for special education.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, schools are required to spend at least as much on special education as they did the prior year. Those that fail to maintain or increase their funding for special education from one year to the next without receiving an exemption from the U.S. Department of Education can miss out on federal funding.

Now the Education Department is clarifying that in cases where school districts run afoul of the spending requirement known as “maintenance of effort” for any given year, they are still expected to achieve the original, higher funding level for future years.

“The department continues to believe that when (a school district) fails to maintain its required level of expenditures, the level of expenditures required in future fiscal years is the amount that would have been required in the absence of that failure, and not the (school district’s) actual expenditures in the fiscal year in which it failed to meet the compliance

standard,” the agency said in a rule [published](#) Tuesday in the Federal Register.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

8. Schools Warned On Pushing Families Into Due Process

Disability Scoop * April 23, 2015

Federal education officials are warning school districts to think twice before forcing parents into potentially long and costly due process proceedings.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, families may pursue due process or file a state complaint if they don't believe their child has been provided appropriate school services.

However, in a [“Dear Colleague” letter](#) to education leaders across the country, officials at the U.S. Department of Education said this month that they are concerned that some school districts are moving to file for due process over issues that parents have already chosen to address via state complaints.

Such circumstances can put parents in a tough spot, the guidance notes, because states are required to wait for a due process hearing to conclude before they can take up any portion of a state complaint that is also the subject of a due process proceeding.

[Read more, comment and share](#)

QUOTABLE

“You’ll have more fun and success when you stop trying to get what you want and start helping other people get what they want.” ~

Dale Carnegie

Calendar Reminders:

Sunday, June 7, 2015:

[VOR Annual Conference: ADVOCATING FOR CHOICE BY EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES. Registration Open.](#)

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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