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**Letter to the Editor in Response to “[Phase out Southbury Training School and similar institutions](#)”
(Connecticut Mirror, January 13, 2015)**

Familiar myths are leveraged in the Op-Ed “Phase out Southbury Training School and similar institutions” (January 13, 2015)

Families whose loved ones are alive today because of the highly specialized care provided at Southbury Training School (STS) and similar state-operated programs have grown weary of this finger pointing. Their family members have profound intellectual disabilities with multiple physical, medical and/or behavioral challenges. They have expensive needs. Changing addresses will not change that.

Authors Shelagh McClure and Tom Fiorentino get *Olmstead* all wrong – and they know better. The U.S. Supreme Court considered what constituted discrimination according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – not the Constitution – and, most importantly, the Supreme Court did NOT require the closure of programs. The Court said that “[t]he ADA is not reasonably read to impel States to phase out institutions, placing patients in need of close care at risk.” Instead, the Court held that community placement is only required when chosen by the individual according to his/her specific needs.

Where we do agree with the authors is that “the time is NOW to address the waiting list crisis.” The winning formula to address unmet needs, however, is not to displace individuals now receiving appropriate care into an already strapped service system, creating even more need. Instead, STS and programs like it, now underutilized, should be made accessible to those-in-need now and in the future.

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