

**Justice for Predictable Tragedies**  
**Letter to the Editor**  
**Submitted October 24, 2012**

VOR, a national organization advocating for high quality care and human rights for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, applauds the lawsuit featured in the article "[Treated Like Product, Not People](#)" (October 21, 2012).

Although saying "I told you so" when discussing disability policies is of little comfort to the plaintiffs in the lawsuit against the provider ENMRSH, Inc. and New Mexico's Department of Health, the alleged abuse and neglect at the heart of the suit is sadly predictable.

Across the country, states, including New Mexico, have embraced the "enterprise of giving people away," turning a blind eye to the profound needs of those displaced from specialized residential programs in the name of "deinstitutionalization."

Individuals with profound intellectual and developmental disabilities who are also medically fragile or experience dangerous behaviors are aggressively targeted by advocates and federal agencies as needing to be "freed" from "institutional" care. Yet, time and again, in state after state, these individuals are subject to well-documented abuse, neglect and death. Just like merchandise, closure advocates seemed far more concerned about closing buildings and moving people than actual outcomes.

VOR is thankful for the brave plaintiffs in the case against ENMRSH and New Mexico. We hope their courage will result in more humane policies for people with intellectual disabilities in New Mexico and around the country in all care settings.

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**About VOR:**

VOR is a national organization that advocates for high quality care and human rights for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Offering community, legal, medical and educational resources for families of individuals with special needs, VOR is committed to providing help for people with disabilities. Standing up for long term care facilities and community disability programs, VOR is dedicated to maintaining family choice for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For more information about VOR, please visit us at [www.vor.net](http://www.vor.net).