



Toll free
877-399-4867

www.vor.net

Executive Director
Julie M. Huso
836 S. Arlington Heights Rd, #351
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
605-370-4652 Voice
605-271-0445 Fax
jhuso@vor.net

Dir. of Govt. Relations & Advocacy
Tamie Hopp
PO Box 1208
Rapid City, SD 57709
605-399-1624 Voice
605-399-1631 Fax
thopp@vor.net

Washington, D.C.
Larry Innis
529 Bay Dale Court
Arnold, MD 21012-2312
410-751-1VOR Voice/Fax
LarryInnis@aol.com

*Speaking out for people
with intellectual disabilities*

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For more information

Julie Huso, Executive Director
605-370-4652 direct
jhuso@vor.net

Tamie Hopp, Dir. of Govt. Relations & Advocacy
605-399-1624 direct / 605-484-8300 cell
thopp@vor.net

**VOR Slams Justice Department Plan to Close Virginia Centers for Disabled
*Calls on President Obama and Congress to Intercede***

In the last speech he ever made, Hubert Humphrey said, "...the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life; the sick, the needy and the handicapped."

The Department of Justice's announcement January 26 of a settlement agreement with Virginia to close state training centers for profoundly disabled individuals ignores Humphrey's compassion and elicits an alarming—and likely dangerous—prospect for Virginia's most fragile citizens.

On behalf of our constituency and their families in Virginia and nationally, VOR calls on President Obama and Congress to stand up for these affected citizens, help them reclaim true choice, protect them from predictable tragedies, and reverse this dangerous decision by the Justice Department in Virginia.

VOR also urges the President and Congress to halt all future federal lawsuits to close specialized centers until investigations of reported tragedies can be conducted. Reports of people with profound disabilities experiencing harm and even death after being displaced from specialized care settings are frighteningly predictable. In Georgia – a situation just like Virginia – [displaced residents died](#) just one year into the implementation of a similar Justice Department's settlement.

It's easy to argue for "mainstreaming" people who can't vote or even complain. But those affected by this agreement and actions like it around the country have profound intellectual disabilities and related, complex conditions. They require intensive, 24/7 specialized care – care that usually cannot be provided in small group homes or living with aging parents.

In just this past November, it was revealed that [1,200 people have died for "unnatural or unknown" reasons in New York group homes](#). Similar widespread tragedies have been reported in [Washington, D.C., California, and many other states across the country](#). How many more people will be harmed before the Justice Department is stopped? Under the current Justice Department regime, it is justice denied, not justice served. The President and Congress must act. Changes are needed federal policy to guarantee residential choice for individuals with profound disabilities.