



Speaking out for people  
with intellectual disabilities

[www.vor.net](http://www.vor.net)



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## VOR Weekly E-Mail Update

*News and views for VOR advocates*

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### VOR Action Alert

#### 1. H. R. 2032 CALL TO ACTION

Thanks to all VOR members and other advocates who contacted their U.S. Representatives in support of H.R. 2032. The bill, which will help restore the decision making authority of ICF/MR residents and their families/legal guardians now has [63 cosponsors](#), with good representation from both sides of the aisle.

H.R. 2032 was recently referred to the Judiciary Committee's [Constitution Subcommittee](#). A subcommittee referral signals real progress. **We need your help to continue this positive momentum.**

The Chairman of the Constitution Subcommittee is [Rep. Trent Franks \(R-AZ\)](#). **Here is how you can help:** Please contact your U.S. Representative and ask him/her to contact Rep. Trent Franks in support of a Constitution Subcommittee hearing on H.R. 2032.

A hearing is a necessary step in the process toward passage. Your calls can really help.

If your Congressman is already an [H.R. 2032 cosponsor](#), all the better! These Representatives have signaled their support for the bill having them ask Rep. Trent Franks to hold a hearing should be an especially easy request for them.

[H.R. 2032 resources are on VOR's website](#). And you can find contact information for your U.S. Representative at [congress.org](http://congress.org) (just type your zipcode in the box provided).

**Thank you!** And, feel free to contact [Tamie Hopp](#), VOR's Director of Government Affairs and Advocacy, for questions and assistance.

#### Advocacy Matters

2. What do life jackets and disability advocacy have in common? No

## **matter your passion, one voice matters**

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VOR's advocacy in support of a spectrum of residential and support options to meet the diverse needs of the ID/DD population is backed by common sense and research.

Last week, Susan Balistreri – using common sense and research – convinced the U.S. Coast Guard withdraw its already published final rule on life jackets. The Coast Guard cited as the sole reason for its reversal a single letter - Susan Balistreri's letter.

VOR has said many times that your voice matters. **“If not us, who?”** We know that elected officials listen to constituents. However, all of us at some point have questioned whether our one letter, our one voice really makes a difference. Yes, “numbers count” and collectively we can secure the reform and polices we know is critical for Americans with intellectual disabilities and their families, but we must never take for granted our single voice. You just never know who will be touched by your words.

Susan Balistreri didn't weigh the odds. She just wrote her letter. It worked.

[Read more.](#)

### **State News**

#### **3. Where Should The Disabled Live? Two Views**

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[A video blog featuring Martha Dwyer, VOR Board Member.](#)

#### **4. Public hearing on costs of services in CT; VOR representatives testify**

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#### **CT News Junkie \* Sep 27, 2011**

A [report](#) found it costs less to care for an individual with developmental disabilities in the community than it does at the Southbury Training School, a public ICF/MR, but the state said it has no plans to immediately close the facility and residential choice advocates point to flaws within the report.

Hugo and Martha Dwyer, whose brother has lived at the STS for 38 years, urged their support for the cost effective, quality services at STS and pointed to concerns about quality of care in smaller, unlicensed settings in Connecticut, New York and other states.

David Kassel, spokesman for the Southbury Training School Home and School Association said he believes there's other places to find savings in the Southbury budget. He said he doesn't believe the report takes into consideration the cost of the infrastructure that would need to be built in order to support the 425 residents in the community. He disagreed the private sector currently has the capacity to support the additional residents.

The next phase of the study will explore factors that influence cost of client care and explore whether there are reasons for client well-being to maintain some public capacity. The study is expected to be done before the end of 2011. [Read entire article.](#)

#### **5. Illinois: Closing center would cost \$47 million, report finds**

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#### **The State Journal-Register \* September 23, 2011**

Closing the Jacksonville Developmental Center (JDC), an ICF/MR will affect 591 jobs and \$47 million of economic activity in Morgan County, according to a state report. The total economic impact from the facility – including things like wages, commodities purchased and the ripple effect of those on the county – amount to more than \$47 million.

Additionally, 170 of the 196 JDC residents will be moved to smaller settings if the center closes, requiring an expansion of community capacity. “As such, it will be necessary to develop capacity in the community to serve these individuals through licensed or certified community-based services,”

the report said. "DHS is concerned about sufficient and appropriate community capacity in the state's system and the need to increase such capacity."

Still, the projected impact may be understated. "The impact is significantly greater than just the jobs of JDC employees," said AFSCME spokesman Anders Lindall of the economic impact study. "I don't know that we are prepared to accept the state-commissioned studies at face value."

Gov. Pat Quinn has said the Jacksonville Developmental Center and six other state facilities must close because the General Assembly did not appropriate enough money to keep them all open for an entire year. [Read entire article.](#)

## **6. Home Care Provider To Pay \$150 Million In Fraud Settlement**

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### **Disability Scoop \* September 13, 2011**

Maxim, a national home health care provider for people with disabilities and other health needs, has agreed to pay \$150 million to settle allegations by the DOJ and nine states that it fraudulently billed Medicaid and other government programs for services that weren't provided.

Government officials had alleged that Maxim — which provides home health services to people with disabilities and other health needs — ran a "nationwide scheme" to bilk federal benefits programs out of over \$61 million between 2003 and 2009.

## **Federal News**

### **7. Social Security – Bill to secure long-term solvency introduced**

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#### **Capitol Insider \* September 26**

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and 9 co-sponsors introduced the *Keeping Our Social Security Promises Act* (S. 1558). The bill seeks to ensure long-term solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund by eliminating the cap on earnings subject to payroll taxes. It would immediately eliminate the cap on earned income above \$250,000 and gradually (over 25 years) eliminate the cap between the current level (\$106,800) and \$250,000.

The Chief Actuary of the Social Security Administration has projected that applying the Social Security payroll tax to earned income above \$250,000 will raise about \$85 billion per year and will extend the solvency of Social Security for the next 75 years. Supporters say the bill will help ensure the long-term solvency of Social Security, while preserving the program's basic structure and strengthening its insurance functions.

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