

For 35 years, VOR has advocated for high quality care and human rights for *all* people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Our membership is mostly comprised of families of individuals with severe or profound intellectual disabilities, often complicated by significant medical, psychological, or behavioral conditions. Many of our loved ones are non-verbal or non-ambulatory. Many engage in self-injuring behaviors. They often require 24/7 care, provided by well-trained and caring direct support professionals. **Our family members constitute a minority within a minority. They represent about 5% of the entire population of individuals with I/DD.** The home and community-based settings that work for many people with I/DD often fail to meet the needs of these severely disabled, vulnerable individuals.

To acknowledge the extensive range of needs and aspirations of *all* members of this diverse population, **VOR supports Individual and Family Choice**, and a **Full Continuum of Care**. In order to have choice, there must be a full range of quality options available, tailored to meet the intellectual, psychological, behavioral, and physical needs of this diverse population. **One size never fits all.**

We support the goals of those who aspire to integrate into the society around them in their choices of residence, education, and employment. We also support the needs of those who would be endangered in an under-protected environment, who can never integrate fully because they cannot even perform the simplest of daily skills, like brushing their teeth, washing, toileting, or verbalizing their needs, their desires, their agitation, or their anger. **The goals of one group should never be placed at odds with the needs of the other.** We support all residential options, including the individual's own home, family home, group homes, intentional communities, and larger congregate settings, such as public and private Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF's/IID, or ICF's).

By the same principle, **we support a full range of employment opportunities** for people with I/DD. We support the drive for integrated, competitive employment and laud the proliferation of programs aimed at helping people with intellectual disabilities achieve their full potential. But we oppose the movement to *eliminate* center-based employment, sheltered workshops, and the movement to eliminate compensatory wages by eliminating Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. People who cannot compete in the open job market need this opportunity. They enjoy this level of work, the peer environment, and the opportunity to be productive. The movement toward competitive employment for some should not mandate the elimination of programs that work for others.

There is no singular solution that is appropriate to all individuals with I/DD. Yet, this is the underlying premise of policies promoted by many powerful advocacy groups. This is a dangerous assumption, especially for the most vulnerable. They need protection, and we are asking for your help. The pages on the left side of this folder contain information on some of the issues that concern our families with loved ones in ICF's. The pages on the right side of the folder offer our outlook on the needs of the broader community, as we have learned from many of our VOR families whose loved ones have been forced out of their ICF homes and into HCBS-waiver settings. We ask that you take a few minutes to please read these materials, and act to protect our continuum of care, the residential options, employment opportunities, and civil rights of families to determine what is best for those they love, no matter what their level of ability or need may be.