

## VOR State report Utah June 2024

Disability issues are in a pretty confusing place here right now—we really deserve the nickname ‘The Wild, Wild West’. Many people are working to make sure our guardianship laws can protect the most vulnerable while a supported decision making bill is also being drafted. This, along with the implementation of the HCBS Settings rule, has left families and providers uncertain as to who has final authority in making decisions regarding the individual.

Then, we just received a report from the DOJ finding that our employment and day services ‘unnecessarily segregate’ adults with I/DD. The report stops short of saying that segregated settings are prohibited but emphasizes that integrated settings are the goal. It asserts that “Utahns with disabilities” want to be out with friends, going to movies, shopping and working with non-disabled peers. I am always uncomfortable with the presumption everyone wants the same thing; that finding doesn’t ring true to me.

The state has not closed the segregated programs but continues to impose rules and make demands that have a chilling effect on providers. Some have simply closed, others try to appease the state by complying, adopting policies that do not adequately serve their clients.

I don’t know what the outcome of all this will be; we will work to continue the conversation about our vulnerable loved ones.