



Speaking out for people
with intellectual disabilities

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**Concerned About Deaths of Intellectually Disabled Individuals,
National Organization Renews its Call for Moratorium on Deinstitutionalization Lawsuits**

[VOR](#), a national advocacy organization representing people with intellectual disabilities and their families, today renewed its urgent request of Members of Congress in several states to call for a moratorium of federally-funded deinstitutionalization lawsuits.

VOR renewed its call for Congressional action in light of ongoing reports by *the New York Times* which detail the ‘unnatural or unknown’ deaths, abuse, neglect, and financial fraud perpetrated on New York’s most vulnerable citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities (see, *New York Times* “[Abused and Used](#)” series, from March 2011 – current).

“Reports of people with profound disabilities experiencing harm and death after being displaced from specialized settings are frighteningly predictable,” said Tamie Hopp, VOR’s Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, citing a [bibliography](#) of similar reports from around the country.

A recent *New York Times* article reported that the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) released a [report](#) criticizing New York’s federal protection and advocacy system, the NYS Commission on Quality of Care & Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (“[U.S. Report Criticizes New York on Monitoring Care of Developmentally Disabled](#),” January 11, 2012).

VOR finds ADD’s reaction to the horrors exposed by *The New York Times* a woefully inadequate and incomplete response to 1,200 deaths over the past decade (“[In State Care, 1,200 Deaths and Few Answers](#),” Nov. 6, 2011).

ADD’s findings are predominately focused on process and budgeting and fail to even consider that ADD’s support and funding of deinstitutionalization efforts – removing vulnerable people from specialized care – may be one of the major causes of problems in New York and other states. Despite the extraordinary level of deaths in the community, ADD persists in its blind devotion to community placement by pointing to the NYS Commission’s “support for segregated educational . . . and residential programs” as problematic.

“It’s not surprising that a self-audit of one its own programs would avoid the difficult question of whether small settings are prepared to safely care for all individuals with profound ID/DD,” said Hopp. “If ADD won’t ask those difficult questions, Congress must.”

Citing the “enormity of the human tragedies taking place in New York and other states and the inadequacy of ADD’s response,” VOR has urged Members of Congress to respond by calling on these federal agencies to halt deinstitutionalization lawsuits until Congress has had time to investigate how these problems occurred, determine what changes in federal policies are necessary to protect the lives of people with ID/DD who reside in the community, and decide if changes are needed in federal policy to guarantee residential choice to the residents of facilities for people with ID/DD.