

Good Afternoon, I am Wanda Guay-Folsom, the mother of Keith Guay. I want to thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts, feelings and knowledge about the privatization of the State Staffed Group Homes.

My son Keith is a resident of Little Meadow Road in Guilford. He had to be placed in a State Run Group Home at the age of 16 years because of the severity of his violent behavior. He has made great progress with his psychotic violent behavior. He has been a resident for 22 years. The excellent, consistent care he receives daily from the loving, caring and well trained staff has curbed his violent outbursts. My son has grown to love them and think of them as his family. He can now go to the store to shop, go out to eat in a restaurant and even come home to my house for a visit or dinner. This is all possible for him because of the secure, consistent, loving care he is now receiving.

This also goes for other residents in his home and the other homes. There is another resident in Little Meadow, who at one time had to live alone with five staff to care for him at all times. He has done extremely well and now has two roommates. He is also leading a more normal lifestyle, due to the consistent, loving care he receives from the well trained staff. There is another home in Hamden, Pelham, which is home to a blind resident. He has lived in this home for many years with the same consistent, loving care from a well trained staff that he knows as his family. Should he have to move and adjust to a new staff, it would be very devastating to him. He can now move about the house with ease and be somewhat independent, take his family away and his current home and I shudder to think what is going to happen.

It is very difficult to re train the Developmentally Disabled. My son, Keith, is deaf and requires a staff who can communicate with him in sign language. The current staff needed about 1 year in order to be able to communicate with him comfortably. Keith is very social and loves attention, parties, and conversing with the staff, so Sign Language is a must for my son. He will become so frustrated that his violent outbursts will increase and **look out – someone could be hurt, including my son.** Why do this to him???

I know unless you have lived with this type of child or person or been involved through family situations, you cannot understand. What is happening here with the State wanting to privatize these homes is proof that the average person has not a Clue even the politicians do not understand or they would not be suggesting and trying to go through with the privatizing of these homes. I'm here to ask you why.

Don't do this to our most vulnerable citizens. They can not speak or defend themselves. The only answer the state has provided the parents or family members of these clients with is the homes were chosen because they were stable functioning homes. Why do you people want to change

this?? Governor Rell says the transition will be smooth and the clients will receive as good if not better care than now. **WRONG!!!** How can they, when in February of 2009, she asked for a cut to the private sector. This resulted in a cut in staff, vehicles, day programs, recreational activities, etc. This definitely affects my son and all those clients who are involved in this change. I'm sure they (the private sector) cannot afford to train the staff in sign language. Perhaps the state could make a few cut backs themselves, less vehicles, less gas expense, less wear and tear repair and routine maintenance of vehicles. Also close the mansion if the governor does not want to live there. Why must the state pay for the upkeep and staffing of the mansion when no one lives there? What is it costing the state for the driver to transport the governor back and forth to the capital from Brookfield? How much gas expense could be saved were the governor to live in the mansion as was meant to be. Could the state explain what happened to the home that went to the private side and then had to be taken back for several months by the state because of abuse in that home?

Also check the mortality rate increase in those homes that became privately run. There were also more hospitalizations of those clients. There is a higher rate of turnover in the staffing of private run homes. Check the stats!! Most of our loved ones are reaching middle age and need security and stability in their lives, even more so now. They don't need the inconsistency, upset and insecurity they will face if their homes are put out to the private sector. The people in the private homes may be nice people but nice is not what my son or the other clients need. They need the expertise knowledge and skills and loving care they currently receive from the state staff, whom we call our loved ones Family and Life Support System. Please do the right thing and do not privatize these group homes.

Where is your conscience??? How can you take advantage of the Developmentally Disabled in order to correct a financial crisis in this state's budget, for which they (the clients) were not responsible?? Thank You and Please do the right Thing--Leave our loved ones homes and families alone. Let them stay as is---State Run!!

Wanda Guay-Folsom  
West Haven, CT