

To the Public Health Committee:

I will say "No" again and again to closing Southbury Training School. Why does this seemingly endless debate have to be about only one option and no other?

Why not utilize community group homes AND institutions like STS to more completely serve the wide range of the disabled, as well as others in the community who might benefit from related services?

Those of us who want to see STS stay open and take new admissions already know the facilities, many staff and administrators. We deeply value and respect the level of care and depth of caring shown to our loved ones. We know there are residents whose very survival depends on the 24 hour care and dedication of STS staff. Just think how care of this caliber could help some of the 2,000 people being offered little or nothing.

My brother, Duncan, has been at STS since 1964. In recent years my brother, Al Raymond, and I have spoken to most of the staff who have been at STS longest. We have learned how some of his challenges were met and succeeded in bringing Duncan to a more confident and sociable self.

In order to be considered "well informed", we as guardians and family members were asked to keep an open mind about community options when going to visit. How many of those intent on closing down STS and other institutions like it have scheduled appointments and gone to visit--with an open mind--to see how well it is working, its dedicated staff and administration, and even more important, to see how the role of STS can increase and serve ever-growing numbers in the future.

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