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## COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

**Office of Community Integration  
8004 Franklin Farms Drive  
Henrico, Virginia 23229**

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September 4, 2014

The Honorable Terence McAuliffe  
Governor of Virginia  
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor McAuliffe:

The Community Integration Advisory Commission (CIAC), as outlined in the *Code of Virginia* (§§2.2-2524 - 2.2-2529), was created to “monitor the progress of all executive branch agencies toward community integration of Virginians with disabilities.” The CIAC is also responsible for making recommendations to the Governor concerning community integration of Virginians with disabilities. Therefore the Commission feels compelled to provide comments related to the SB 627 (Newman) workgroup that is reviewing options for keeping some or all of the training centers in operation.

Virginia has been steadily moving towards a system where individuals with disabilities are no longer segregated into institutions but have the opportunity to live, play, and work in their communities. Stopping the planned closure of Virginia’s training centers is a step backwards. Individuals with disabilities can and do live successfully in the community.

By allowing the training centers to remain open it perpetuates the belief that the only way an individual can safely receive supports is in an institutional setting. In addition, funds that could be used for community based services should not be used to support an aging bricks and mortar infrastructure. Therefore, the Commission respectfully recommends that the original timeline for closing the training centers be adhered to, including the originally scheduled closure of Northern Virginia Training Center in 2015, Southwest Virginia Training Center in 2018, and Central Virginia Training Center in 2020.

Again, we stress that funds allocated towards community based care and supports should not be diverted to maintain training centers which do not provide the least restrictive environment of care for many individuals as required under Olmstead v. L.C. In addition, costs to provide care in the training centers will only increase as fewer individuals reside in these facilities yet capital costs remain. These dollars could be better spent providing supports in the community.

The CIAC appreciates the opportunity to add our voice to those supporting Virginia's systems transformation and we look forward to working with your administration.

Sincerely,

*CWK*

*Karen Michalski-Karney*

Karen Michalski-Karney

Chair

Community Integration Advisory Commission

Cc: Commission Members  
Dr. Debra Ferguson  
Connie Cochran  
James Rothrock