

December 11, 2008

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
1111 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Charles J. Colgan  
President pro tempore  
Senate of Virginia  
P.O. Box 396  
Richmond, VA 23218

Re: Central Virginia Training Center

Dear Governor Kaine, Lieutenant Governor Bolling, President pro tempore Colgan, and Speaker Howell:

On behalf of the Association of the University Centers on Disabilities, I would like strongly urge you to withdraw your support for the expenditure of \$43 million to renovate and rebuild the Central Virginia Training Center ("CVTC"). Instead, we urge the Commonwealth of Virginia under your leadership to work toward and commit itself, as so many other states throughout the country have, to providing supports to persons with disabilities so that they can live and participate in the life of their communities. Dedicating those funds to building an infrastructure of programs, services and supports will enable current residents of CVTC, and other people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, to live, learn, work and play in community settings.

While large state-institutions may have been well accepted in the dark past, our country has decisively moved away from large congregate facilities for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, regardless of the type or severity of their disability and toward supported community living. In fact, there are now ten states that have no large institutions and that number is increasing each year. We urge Virginia to join other states on the path toward self determination and full inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

AUCD is a network made up of 68 University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs), funded by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities; 38 Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) Programs funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau; and 21 Intellectual and Developmental Disability Research Centers (IDDRCs), most of which are funded by the National Institute for Child Health and Development (NICHD). We have at least one center in every state and territory and are proud to count a UCEDD and LEND program at Virginia Commonwealth University. These programs along with their sister programs of the State Councils on Developmental Disabilities and the Protection and Advocacy Agencies have been working for years to conduct the necessary research, training programs and support and service models that can help communities to develop the capacities needed to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their home communities. We know that these programs can be of assistance to you and your administration in developing the necessary supports that would make the CVTC a needless and ineffective expenditure of tax payer dollars.

The Honorable William T. Bolling  
Lieutenant Governor and President of  
the Senate  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
102 Governor Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable William J. Howell  
Speaker of the House  
Virginia House of Delegates  
P.O. Box 406  
Richmond, VA 23218

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George S. Jesien, PhD  
*Executive Director*

AUCD and its member across the nation also believe that the issue of deinstitutionalization is a civil rights issue that serves to undo years of discrimination, and in many instances inhumane practices and forced incarceration of individuals because they had a disability. Our mission statement states, "AUCD envisions a future in which everyone, including people living with developmental and other disabilities, are fully integrated, participating members of their communities. We envision a future in which culturally appropriate supports that lead to independence, productivity, and a satisfying quality of life are universally available across the life span."

We urge the Commonwealth of Virginia to join a 25 year long trend of moving toward community living and the closing of large congregate care facilities, to stop building institutions and to institute policies that will support individuals in their rightful place in their own home communities. We would also pledge to be of assistance and support to your administration if you were to move in this direction. Please let us know if we can be of help or provide any data, research findings or other materials that will show the science, wisdom and effectiveness of this policy approach.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Jesien". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

George Jesien  
Executive Director