



The Arc of the United States

*People First, Democracy, Visionary Leadership,
Community Participation, Diversity, Integrity and Excellence*

Reply to:



1010 Wayne Ave., Suite 650
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 565-3842
(301) 565-3843 Fax

Reply to:



1660 L Street, NW, Suite 701
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 783-2229 (202) 204-0400
(202) 783-8250 Fax

December 2, 2008

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

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

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

The Honorable William J. Howell
Speaker of the House
Virginia House of Delegates
P.O. Box 406
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 Arc of the United States, the largest national community based organization advocating for and serving people with intellectual disabilities and their families, I am writing to urge you to withdraw your support for the expenditure of \$43 million to renovate and rebuild the Central Virginia Training Center ("CVTC"). Instead, the Commonwealth of Virginia should commit to a policy of deinstitutionalization and dedicate those funds to building an infrastructure of programs, services and supports which 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, the evidence today is incontrovertible that large congregate facilities are unnecessary and inappropriate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, regardless of the type or severity of their disability. In fact, there are already ten jurisdictions¹ that have successfully closed all similar institutions and many more that are making significant progress in that direction.

¹ Alaska, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Indiana, Maine, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia.

Virginia, unfortunately, appears to lag far behind the rest of the nation in its commitment to humanely and fairly meeting the needs of its citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Commonwealth is one of only ten states that have failed to close even a single state-operated institution since the 1970s when it became apparent that community based services and supports provided a preferable alternative. Likewise, in 2006 (the most recent year for which comparative data is available²) the Commonwealth rates below-average in comparison to most states across multiple measures of investment in programs and services for people with disabilities. For example:

- Of people with intellectual disabilities served in out-of-home residential settings in 2006, Virginia places and maintains a higher percentage of people in large facilities of sixteen or more people (34% compared to a national average of 19%) than in small settings of 1-6 people (59% compared to a national average of 70%);
- Virginia overutilizes large (16+) state-operated institutions and nursing facilities, ranking 39th and 50th respectively;
- Virginia ranked 40th in the nation in 2006 in per capita spending on Home and Community Based Services;
- Virginia ranks 34th in the nation in its provision of supported living and personal assistance services, serving only 3,182 people in 2006 and spending only \$5.79 per capita, compared to a national average of \$16.52;
- Virginia ranks 36th in the nation in its provision of supported employment services, serving only 2,460 people in 2006;
- Virginia ranks 47th in the nation in its provision of family support, serving only 2,917 families with an average of \$850/family, compared to the national average of \$5,400/family;
- Virginia ranks 45th in overall fiscal effort, 46th in fiscal effort for community services and 27th in fiscal effort for institutional services.

The Arc of the United States, our 22 affiliated chapters in the Commonwealth including The Arc of Virginia, and our 780 chapters nationwide, hold among our tenets that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have the right to be included and fully participate in the community.

² All data are from State of the State in Developmental Disabilities 2008, Braddock, D., Hemp, R. & Rizzolo, MC, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2008.

We urge the Commonwealth of Virginia to abandon an anachronistic and inappropriate approach to serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. It is time for Virginia to join the vanguard of states that are recognizing and respecting their right to live, learn, work and play as equal members of society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Berns", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter V. Berns
Executive Director