

HOBSON'S CHOICE -- PARENT'S REPLY TO ADVOCACY CENTER

I read with interest your objections to the elimination of the 10% Density Rule. Quoted below and precisely copied from the Advocacy Center's Web-site is your mission.

Our Mission

“To advance the quality of life, dignity, equality, self-determination, and **freedom of choice of** persons with disabilities through collaboration, education, advocacy, as well as legal and legislative strategies.”

I have high regard for the concept of choice, which receives so much lip service but little, if any, support from your organization. As a practical matter I have no objection whatsoever to the DD population who are capable of and choose to live apart from their peers. Or do you offer only Hobson's Choice? **

In my case my son, who is incapable of communicating would be overwhelmingly “segregated” if forced to live in a community which shuns him. Case in point, he was once dropped off in error at our house while we were away, instead of his brother's. Not a single one of our neighbors, with whom I have friendly relations, made the slightest effort to contact anyone in the family to find out what he was doing there. One family in fact turned him out when he rang their door bell. He was unable to voice his plight. I think many people would exert a greater effort over a lost dog, at least call Animal Control. Where was the safety net in this case? Not even a call to 911. His very life was in jeopardy. He needs, above all, a safe place to live in a community of his peers, and an isolated apartment or the like just won't do.

No, Ms. Smith. Physical integration is a myth for many at the bottom of the intellectual ladder. Why the unbounded determination to force a foot into a shoe that doesn't fit?

Incidentally, I find it staggering to think that my tax dollars are being used by the Advocacy Center to promote a philosophy at an extremely opposite pole from just about every parent's wishes with whom I have discussed the subject.

Please tell me where your disabled child resides. Are all of the “Esqs” on your Board parents of children for whom the “physically integrated community” is an appropriate venue? Is there a hidden agenda that I am unable to see?

Try as I may, I have been unable to find your annual report, including income and its sources and expenses, including salaries and stipends. I must believe that this information is part of the public record. It is probably a simple matter to locate but I have failed. Would you be so kind as to provide a copy or a link to it.

From my perspective “Advocacy Center” is a contradiction of terms. I never turn a deaf ear to an explanation of position. I sincerely await your response. Lastly, does every

member of your Board hold the same position? Should I apply or just remain a voice crying in the wilderness?

Eugene F. Klausman
Concerned Parent

**There is a story that this comes from a Mr. Hobson who rented out horses and gave his customers no choice as to their mount. Thomas Hobson (1545–1631), was a real historical figure and he ran a thriving carrier and horse rental business in Cambridge, England, around the turn of the 17th century. Hobson rented horses mainly to Cambridge University students but refused to rent them out other than in their correct order. The choice his customers were given was 'this or none', i.e. Hobson's choice.