



**Documentation in Support of Legislation to Amend F.S. 419.001**

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The following was addressed to an opponent of SB 1124 and published in FFDDnews.com, 3/30/09:

Support SB 1124 or Hobson's Choice  
Eugene F. Klausman

I read with interest your objections to SB 1124. Am I right in assuming that you agree with the stated missions of organizations like the Advocacy Center and FDDC?

Advocacy Center: "To advance the quality of life, dignity, equality, self-determination, and freedom of choice of persons with disabilities . . ."

FDDC: "To facilitate the development of a comprehensive and cohesive public policy and governmental structure which: encourages choice and self-direction in the lives of persons with developmental disabilities . . . consumer- and family-directed . . . promote innovative initiatives . . ."

These organizations have taken a position where they neither support choice nor are willing to encourage innovation. It appears that you agree with them. I have high regard for the concept of choice, which receives so much lip service. As a practical matter, I have no objection whatsoever to the DD population who are capable and choose to live apart from their peers.

Or do you only offer HOBSON'S CHOICE? \*\*

In my case, my son, who is incapable of communicating, would be overwhelmingly "segregated" if forced to live in a community that 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 doorbell. 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. An isolated apartment or group home just won't do! No, Ms. Aponte. Physical integration is a myth for many at the bottom of the intellectual ladder and simply not a preference for many less dependent folks. Why the unbounded determination to force a foot into a shoe that doesn't fit?

We could cite other heartbreaking stories of people who are never "included" in the community, where nobody from their apartment complex responded to an invitation to a party, others who are never included in a neighborhood barbecue, or where a resident in an apartment complex was beaten up by his neighbors. There are so many of our family members who are innocent, who don't sense the dangers lurking at every street corner, or who are forced to live in low income housing where drugs and crime abound.

"Inclusionists" need a reality check. How many of our state advocates have children of their own? How many parents of young children are charmed into thinking that their child will be accepted and

"included" in the neighborhood? How many children are shunned by kids in the neighborhood because one of them is "different"?

Is there a hidden agenda that I am unable to see? Is this all about money? From some comments on your "I Petition" web site, some folks think this initiative will cost millions of dollars. Let me assure you:

The proposal for Planned Residential Communities is cost neutral. The state doesn't build group homes.

The proposal will simply give another choice to residents of group homes isolated by the 1,000 ft. Rule.

It will not change the distancing rule for those who wish to remain in existing neighborhoods.

The entire initiative is family and consumer driven, not a government package.

As a planned unit development, it will be subject to local zoning.

It will not lock anyone into a ghetto.

It will give voice to progress and creative private initiatives.

It will provide safety, supports, services and meaningful inclusion.

It will include other living arrangements such as Supported Living.

Under your alarmist banner, of: "STOP DISCRIMINATION, ABUSE & SEGREGATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES" --

1. You've turned around the meaning of "discrimination."

Proximity, quotas, and density restrictions which you propose are discriminatory -- six beds no closer than 1,000 feet! No exceptions! Even AHCA recognized discrimination when they deleted the 10% Density Rule from the DD Handbook, as did the Administrative Code three years before.

2. Horror stories about abuse are not restricted to congregate living settings alone. Statistics abound with abuse in scattered group homes.

3. You are supporting segregation by the very fact that you champion isolation from friends and common interests with a "scatter" mentality. It seems obvious that you are not aware of the wonderful "inclusion" data of Bishop Grady Villas in St. Cloud. Yes, they do have programs on site, to their credit, but they also have 50% of their residents out in the community working either independently or in their Supported Employment program.

4. Constitutionality?

According to Federal PUBLIC LAW 105-402-OCT. 30, 2000 114STAT. 1677:

"Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families are the primary decision makers regarding the services and supports such individuals and their families receive, including regarding choosing where the individuals live from available options, and play decision making roles in policies and programs that affect the lives of such individuals and their families."

The option of a planned residential community which guarantees exemption from proximity rules must be available if that is what individuals with developmental disabilities and their families choose.

Why are you offering only Hobson's Choice?

## A Very 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.

Subject: Support HB 371 & SB 1124

Date: April 29, 2009

From: Arlene Lakin <FVDDorg@aol.com>

Dear Governor Crist, Florida Legislators, and members of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council:

I am writing to seek your support of HB 371 & SB 1124, which would amend Chapter 419 of the Florida Statutes to recognize planned residential communities for persons with developmental disabilities.

The intent of this legislation is to enable private providers to more easily develop planned residential communities for persons with developmental disabilities. In some of these communities, their families may be living there as well. In some of these communities, there will be many persons enjoying supported living and supported employment.

The individuals in these communities may be receiving Medicaid waiver funding. Some may be private pay.

These are not state operated institutions.

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, which is funded by tax dollars, is distributing emergency alerts to defeat this legislation, stating that such legislation will facilitate the opening of "institutions" and will be using Medicaid waiver funding for institutional settings. The DD Council is completely wrong.

There are families all over the USA who are seeking a variety of choices for their loved ones, including larger settings wherein their family member can interact with the people they choose, just as in the "typical" community, just as in the hundreds & hundreds of retirement communities in Florida. Some of these planned residential communities may be gated, which is something most individuals would like for themselves for security purposes - not to lock themselves away from society, as the Fla. DD Council would have you believe.

Why should the DD community be forced to live only in a single family home, or a group home isolated from others, just because some people do not want a planned residential community option for their family member?

One size does not fit everyone.

Please support HB 371 & SB 1124, so that the private providers can offer families with developmentally disabled loved ones another residential option, something that "typical" people enjoy without a battle!

Arlene Lakin, Esq.

Law Office:

7284 W. Atlantic Blvd.

Margate, FL 33063

954/975-5159

Subject: Support HB 371  
4/25/09

To the Honorable Representatives of the State of Florida:

I strongly urge you to pass HB 371 in its present form and to reject the two Rep. Sach's amendments. As one of many parent advocates working to create viable living and work solutions for our developmentally disabled adolescents and adults, Rep. Sach's amendments will clearly damage our efforts. As the President of a small group, Association For Developmentally Disabled Adults and Adolescents (AFDDAA), I personally have been working for the past two years for the creation and development of a residential permaculture farm with the goal of the farm supporting between fifty and one hundred developmentally disabled adults. This project is a collaboration between large scale ethanol producers who intend to build their plants in South Florida, modular home builders, farmers, a major Florida university and local South Florida small town residents who are suffering from lack of employment due to the downturn of our economy. If financially successful, the residential farm would save the State of Florida up to eight million dollars each year. If you accept Rep. Sach's amendments which state that "planned residential communities must by their characteristic be community based," you will doom the efforts of people like me who prefer to have the option to build the communities tailored to our adult children's needs. Accepting the amendments will only open confusion and further battles as it is totally unclear as to what "community based" really means.

I have argued before that inclusion means to be "part of" an individual's own world and surroundings. Isolating my son, who is severely autistic, in a community (city) based group home, would deny him the safe and supportive community which would accept him with his challenges, provide him purposeful work and appropriate social contacts. In fact, a community based group home would be dangerous for my son who does not understand that going out at night and entering a neighbor's home is not only socially unacceptable, but puts him at risk of being killed. I am still stymied as to why the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, continues to insist that planned residential communities means institutionalization. There are examples of residential communities such as Camp Hill in New York, which clearly are successful in providing a meaningful life for some our special needs citizens.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

David A. Clayman, MD  
President, AFDDAA  
[daclayman@pol.net](mailto:daclayman@pol.net)

Subject: Planned Residential Communities

To: DebraD@FDDC.org

Date: 23 Jun 2009

From: <sarrafl@aol.com>

Ms. Dowds:

My name is Maryann Sarra and I was on the teleconference call today regarding planned communities.

Our son Michael is 42 years old and has autism. He is considered high-functioning. He lives in an apartment by himself in Altamonte Springs. His supported living coach takes him to doctor appointments etc. He has lived there by himself for almost 2 years and has made no friends in the complex. The only people that have made contact with him have wanted to sell him something. His whole social life is Special Olympics and family activities. If his apartment was in a planned community he could have daily interaction with people he knows and can trust. Instead he spends most days in front of the television. He eats breakfast, lunch and dinner by himself in his apartment. He is totally isolated in "THE COMMUNITY" Our prayer is that before we die, he will be able to move into a planned community where he will have companionship and safety.

Please add my name and e-mail address to your list for information regarding this workgroup.

Maryann Sarra

Subject: PLANNED RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES

From: [Lsmith4774@aol.com](mailto:Lsmith4774@aol.com)

Date: Tue, 23 Jun 2009

To: DebraD@FDDC.ORG

DEAR MS. DOWD:

I WAS UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TELECONFERENCE CALL DUE TO OTHER OBLIGATIONS. HOWEVER, I AM EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN RECEIVING ANY AND ALL INFORMATION RELATED TO THE WORK GROUP ADDRESSING PLANNED RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES

ON A PERSONAL NOTE: MY DAUGHTER IS 42 YEARS OLD. SHE HAS MULTIPLE SEVERE DD AND IS NON-VERBAL. OVER THE PAST 3 YEARS SHE HAS BEEN OUSTED FROM TWO GROUP HOMES BECAUSE OF THE SEVERITY OF HER DISABILITIES AND THE STATE'S UNWILLINGNESS TO PAY GROUP HOME PROVIDER'S FOR THE ONE ON ONE CARE SHE REQUIRES. AT THE LAST OUSTING, WE WERE GIVEN THE CHOICE (IF YOU CARE TO REFERENCE IT IN THAT MATTER) OF A 10 PERSON GROUP HOME WITH A 1 TO 4 STAFFING RATION, ICF PLACEMENT OR SUPPORTED LIVING. WE (CHOOSE) SUPPORTED LIVING IN A NEIGHBORHOOD VERY CLOSE TO OUR OWN. ALTHOUGH, SHE RESIDES IN A LOVELY COMMUNITY WITH AMENITIES, SHE IS ISOLATED FROM HER TRUE PEERS.

NO ONE INTERACTS WITH HER IN THE APARTMENT COMPLEX EVEN THOUGH ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN BY FAMILY AND STAFF TO REACH OUT TO NEIGHBORS. WE ARE FORTUNATE SHE LIVES IN A CITY WITH AN ESTABLISHED SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM IN PLACE. THERE SHE IS WELCOMED AT RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND CAMPS. SHE HAS MADE FRIENDS. THEY ASK ABOUT HER. THEY CARE ABOUT HER. THIS IS JUST ONE OF THE REASONS, I AM SUCH AN ADVOCATE FOR PLANNED RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES. YOU KNOW, HER TRUE PEERS DON'T SEE HER LACK OF ABILITIES, THEY SEE HER AND ACCEPT HER FOR WHO SHE IS.

THANK YOU,  
LOIS SMITH

Subject: Planned Residential Communities

Date: 3/28/2009

From: BrevardBuddyWalk@aol.com

Dear Representative Murzin,

I am writing on behalf of my six year old daughter, Annie, who has Down syndrome. We are asking that you please include HB 371 on the agenda for the Economic Development and Community Affairs Policy Council next week. While our daughter is doing very well in Kindergarten, learning to write her name and read, we just do not know what her preference will be for housing in 15 or 16 years and would like her to be able to live in a Planned Residential Community if that is what she wants at the time. . It is frightening to me that she would not be allowed to live amongst her friends because of the 1000 foot rule. Her older sister will have many choices for living arrangements and we would like Annie to have the same options.

Please consider what parents and self advocates are saying about safe, supported choices!

Sincerely,

Theresa Stewart Mitchell

1012 Barton Blvd,

Rockledge, FL 32955

[www.FEDSofBrevard.org](http://www.FEDSofBrevard.org)

Subject: HB 371  
From: Sue Cannon <shoncan@gmail.com>  
Date: 28 Mar 2009  
To: Dave.Murzin@myfloridahouse.gov

Representative Murzin:

I support the efforts for planned communities for individuals with developmental disabilities as stated in HB 371.

It would be a shame to lose the ground that this group of individuals and family members with developmental disabilities have strived for so long to achieve.

Our family members need this option. One size does not fit all. As the parent of a son with Down syndrome who will be 16 this year, it is my hope that this bill goes into the agenda for the Economic Development and Community Affairs Policy Council next week.

My son deserves the opportunity to live in a planned community. Please allow this process to continue so that he and many others have options.

Sue Cannon  
Parent and Advocate

Subject: Petition Against DD residential Villages Proposed in FL Legislation

Date: 30 Mar 2009

I feel a strong desire to respond to the petition against “planned residential communities” for our loved ones with disabilities.

I find it interesting that many of those that are opposing the “Planned Community Option” don’t have kids with special needs that are in the age group of “transitional housing”..... My son Luke (23) has been mainstreamed his whole life, and continues to work in the community.... While he does well at work he NEVER get’s asked to hang with is co-workers after hours.... It’s a funny thing, but none of them want to watch the Disney Channel with him.....

He is the one that told me he wants to live with his friends “like him” and be able to have lots of fun things to do and be able to choose who he hangs out with...Inclusion for many of our kids with DD is actually segregation and a very, very lonely lifestyle.... We need to listen to our kids... Planned Communities are just one option... No one is saying it’s for everyone... It just needs to be made available for those that “choose” it....

I would respectfully encourage those that are opposed to this option to take a step back and give the parents of those that have young adults that are of “transitional housing” age a little credit for wanting to honor our kids wishes.... We would never try and tell you what’s best for your loved ones, please don’t tell us what best for our families.... It’s all about choices!!!!

Respectfully, Betsy

Betsy Farmer, Executive Director  
Brevard BLN  
P.O Box 100024  
Palm Bay, FL 32910-0024  
www.Brevardbln.org  
Tapping into Brevard's Emerging Workforce

Subject: Please Support HB 371

From: Donna Rauber [drauber@earthlink.net](mailto:drauber@earthlink.net) Date: 18 Apr 2009

To: <Sandy.Adams@myfloridahouse.gov>

Dear Representative Adams:

I am writing to ask you to support the passage of House Bill 371 titled "Site Selection of Community Residential Homes" that would amend Chapter 419.001 F.S. to allow for the development of planned residential communities that would permit homes of six or fewer residents to be exempt from the 1000 ft. separation requirement. State funding continues to limit the dollars spent per individuals with developmental disabilities. It has become even more important to start looking at outside community resources. There are a number of creative, grass-roots and faith based initiatives in the state ready and willing to develop planned residential communities that would offer the safety, needs and supports of individuals with developmental disabilities. Many of whom are older adult "children" with aging parents. They live with the fear of who will care for their loved one when they are no longer able to or die. I am one of them only I'm a sister not a parent. I have cared for my 65 year old sister for the past 23 years as our parents are deceased. We have no other family and I have no clue what will happen to Amelia if I'm no longer able to care for her or die. She does not belong in a Nursing Home. We are in critical need of long term, permanent housing for our loved ones. Amending the 1000 Ft. rule is a welcomed step in the right direction. I ask you not to consider any amendments that will result in additional restrictions to housing options for persons with developmental disabilities. They have just as much of a right to choose where they want to live as you and me.

Your support of House Bill 371 will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Donna Rauber, Chair

Family Care Council Area 7

[drauber@earthlink.net](mailto:drauber@earthlink.net)

Subject: Please vote “YES” on HB 371 and “NO” on Amendments 600677 and 530169  
From: simone tetreault <[simonet@crfl.rr.com](mailto:simonet@crfl.rr.com)>  
Date: 27 Apr 2009

Dear Representative,

Planned Communities ARE “Community Based” and all plans for their creation and development are already subject to local zoning and approval as PUD - Planned Unit Developments.

As a parent of two adult children with multiple and significant disabilities, I am hopeful that you will give HB 371 your vote of approval. We are in the process of collaborating with many families, community organizations, faith-based organizations and others to provide safe, affordable daily living to our loved ones. However, we can not do this without your support.

Detractors of the bill have not supported ANY residential model other than the existing “group-home” design and prey on everyone’s collective fear by calling planned communities ‘institutions’. They use the terms: gated community, day programs and congregate eating as negatives. However, many Floridians currently choose to live in these types of neighborhoods and consider the same items as amenities!

Please consider the fact that institutions are created by a philosophy, not a location. It is not numbers of individuals in a community, or who they live next to that defines a life style. Unfortunately, many group homes currently exist and operate as mini- institutions.

Please give planned communities a chance to prove themselves and vote “YES” on HB 371 and “NO” on Amendments 600677 and 530169.

Thank you,  
Simone Tetreault, Member Family Care Council Area 7  
352-383-7008

Subject: A violation of the Civil Rights of people with DD and their families  
From: <jlacp@aol.com>  
Date: 9 Jun 2009  
To: Eugene & Lila Klausman <eklausman@cfl.rr.com>

Dear Legislators,

It is a violation of the basic civil rights of people with developmental disabilities and their families when they are coerced through the tactics of fear and intimidation to forego choices that they would otherwise freely make.

What does this coercion and intimidation look like? Well, to people with developmental disabilities and their families, it looks a lot like "other" people in "positions of authority" telling them that they will lose their waiver funding if they choose to live with whom they want in settings of their own choice. It looks a lot like "other" people in "positions of authority" crafting and controlling legislation that artificially and arbitrarily defines what living "in the community" means for them. It looks a lot like "other" people "in positions of authority" telling them that they are not presumed competent to make decisions that are fundamental to their own lives and so the availability of options will be limited to what they would choose for you. And finally, it looks a lot like "other" people in "positions of authority" scaring away those who might actually be listening with an open mind and an open heart, scaring them away by of jumping out of the closet, petitions and red alerts in hand, yelling "institution" "abuse" "segregation" every time they encounter a parent initiative that proposes residential options that don't fit within their defined narrow conception of community living.

It is essential to our civil rights that these "other" people in "positions of authority" are not permitted to abuse the means and the platform they have been entrusted with to coerce and intimidate us. Our lives. Our families. Our choices. Step back.

Lucille Pivinski  
Amanda's mom  
Boca Raton

Subject: FDDC: Outrageous Policy  
From: T. Balducci <balduct@hotmail.com>  
Date: 14 May 2009  
To: Charlie.crist@myflorida.com

Dear Governor,

I do not understand how the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC), which receives federal funding, can abuse its position by directly endorsing legislation that is in conflict with the wishes and needs of Floridians with developmental disabilities, and with its own departmental stated principles to advance their rights.

The FDDC has endorsed the "unfriendly" and "unnecessary" amendments filed by Rep. Maria Sachs to SB 1124 after it had passed unanimously on the Senate floor.

Under the FDDC's banner of "Inclusion Now," the FDDC continues to discriminate with a more insidious form of segregation via the Thousand Foot Rule in Ch. 419.001.

The FDDC policies amount to a serious discriminatory and civil rights issue. One needs to question the legality of the FDDC use of federal funding to promote their own agenda at the expense of the people they are obliged to serve.

Governor, this is coming from an agency under your supervision and it needs to be stopped.

Tito O. Balducci  
2402 Miranda Ave. Tallahassee, FL 32304

Subject: RE: Thousand Foot Rule in Ch. 419.001  
From: T.Balducci [balduct@hotmail.com](mailto:balduct@hotmail.com)  
Date: 9 Jun 2009  
To: <Tom\_rice@apd.state.fl.us>

Dear Tom,

I deeply appreciate hearing from you.

Unfortunately, your reply repeats the same arguments that were posed before, the premises of which are incorrect. Not for a second are we proposing segregated communities that are equivalent to an “institutional placement”. I strongly suggest that the Agency for Persons with Disabilities take a second look at the links I sent in my original email and then have a conversation with the parents that wish a different option for their children. This can be a win-win situation for all of us.

I will be glad to meet with your director and discuss these ideas.

Sincerely,  
Tito Balducci

Subject: HB 371  
From: "Embarq Customer" <osscc@embarqmail.com>  
To: Murzin@myfloridahouse.gov  
Sent: March 27, 2009  
Dear Representative Murzin,

My name is Beatrice Schindler. I am the mother of a 20 years young lady with profound disabilities. The reason I am writing today, is that I want to make sure that HB 371 is included on the agenda for next week.

It's a very important issue, for all of us, parents, guardian of children with disabilities. The point is this, I don't see or let say I don't understand how our children who have disabilities don't have a choice like the rest of the World has. The choice of living in a Residential community made for them, where they can have support and being taking care of and living surrounded by their peers.

My arguments will start with a very important point, freedom of living with friends. Freedom to receive services and not being left out because of lack of providers in their area. The freedom to be a human being with choices.

In most cases, our children can not talk or fight for themselves, and I will have to be the advocate for the rest of my life. I really don't mind about that, because I will always be the voice for human beings who cannot always speak for themselves.

I really feel very strong about this issue, and I would like you to think about it as well. None of us knows what our future will bring. Tomorrow, you can be one of them. Suppose you have an accident and have to spend the rest of your life in a wheelchair but yet...Legislation gives you restrictions where to live and what to do. I really wonder how would you feel about that then. The point is, we need people to defend our children who cannot speak and who are realistic about life and not narrow minded. Beside remember these words that are familiar to us "Justice for ALL", I would like to think about these words very deeply.

Sincerely,  
Beatrice Schindler

Subject: Regarding HB 371  
From: [rick.russotto@yahoo.com](mailto:rick.russotto@yahoo.com)  
Date: 13 Apr 2009  
To: Kelly.skidmore@myfloridahouse.gov  
Hi Representative Skidmore,

My name is Rick Russotto, and I am currently a student at Yale University, but my permanent address is in Florida House District 90, which makes me one of your constituents. I see on the Florida House website that you graduated from Deerfield Beach High School, which is where I went before coming to Yale, and I am proud that my alma mater has produced a Florida state representative.

My uncle is developmentally disabled, and my grandmother has been at the forefront of the effort to pass HB 371, which exempts planned residential communities for the developmentally disabled from the 1,000-foot density rule. This bill is of the utmost importance for the well-being of people like my uncle, who would have the choice to live in family-like settings with well-trained caretakers, but I also think it has broader implications as a civil and human rights issue. Assigning restrictions to where a person can live based on developmental disabilities is a discriminatory practice that would be constitutionally banned on any other basis, such as race, gender, marital status or sexual orientation, and self-determination is an important human right that we must extend to those of our citizens whose cognitive abilities have been impaired by diseases like Down Syndrome, autism, and cerebral palsy. I believe that the 1,000-foot density rule must be abolished entirely somewhere down the line, but I would still support HB 371 even though it only provides an exemption to the rule because it is a good start and allows for the kind of community where many, like my uncle, would be enjoying the safest and most supportive lifestyle possible.

Those who oppose the bill say that allowing groups of developmentally disabled people to live in planned communities would undermine "inclusion" and "integration" of these citizens into "normal" communities. The only parallel I can think of for this is the harsh laws against women in Taliban-like regimes in the Middle East, where women are not allowed to go outside without wearing a veil that covers their entire bodies and without being accompanied by a male relative, all in the name of "protection" (when "oppression" more correctly describes what is really going on). The issues facing women in the Middle East and developmentally disabled citizens in Florida are far different, but in both cases people's freedom are being eliminated "for their own good". I think the real motives behind opposing HB 371 is a "not in my backyard" issue, but to the extent that I understand it, local governments would still have control over zoning regulations (like they do for over-55 communities), and in any case squeamishness is not a valid reason to extinguish basic human freedoms.

I would like to end with a personal appeal: my uncle Mark is currently living with my grandparents, but as my grandparents age, this issue is becoming increasingly urgent as my uncle may not have an adequate place to live once my grandparents are no longer around. A planned community, of the kind that HB 371 would allow, would provide a healthy and comfortable environment where my uncle could live with friends like himself and with knowledgeable caretakers who would attend to his needs. With this in mind, I urge you to support and to vote for this bill for the sake of my uncle and others like him.

Sincerely,

Rick Russotto  
2463 SW 12th Court  
Deerfield Beach, FL 33442  
Deerfield Beach High School Class of 2008  
Yale Class of 2012

Subject: Please vote yes on HB 371 or SB 1124  
From: Emily Chambers <[etcmeu@gmail.com](mailto:etcmeu@gmail.com)>  
Date: 13 Apr 2009

Dear Legislator,

The Thousand Foot Rule was intended to protect people with developmental disabilities from the horrors of large closed institutions. It doesn't protect people.

It moves people from large institutions to small, scattered places which can be just as closed as other facilities. Often, only those involved with the care of residents know where the houses are located. That isn't Inclusion. Being physically close to a park or other place you'd like to visit is meaningless, if you can't actually get there.

Planned Communities expand options for the community and its surrounding area. People with developmental disabilities deserve the same kinds of choices offered to retirees in "The Villages" and the hundreds of other Planned "Adult Living Communities" like it.

Please vote yes on HB 371 or SB 1124.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Emily Chambers  
Concerned Sister

Subject: Bill #371  
From: Joan Warnock [hjcew630@yahoo.com](mailto:hjcew630@yahoo.com)  
Date: 28 Mar 2009

Dear Legislator,

As parent of a 47 year old developmentally disabled son we have been members of Noah's ark for 13 years and believe this is an answer to our prayers for a place for our son when we are no longer able to take care of him and a way for the state to save many dollars in med wavier funds.

Sincerely yours,

Hank and Joan Warnock

Subject: Rebuttal to Petition for Residential Villages

From: [Vsequenzia@aol.com](mailto:Vsequenzia@aol.com)

Date: 29 Mar 2009

To: Berthy Aponte <[podemos@aol.com](mailto:podemos@aol.com)>

Berthy:

I must say that I am a little surprised that you would want to come out against something that would provide another choice to families? The fear that we will have the institutions that existed 20, 30 or 40 years ago are unfounded. There are too many safeguards in the law and too many advocates like you and I to allow that to happen. The changes to the statute do not promote "institutions" at all. They are only to provide families another community option that is now restricted.

Also, there are some individuals that are served very well in what you would consider an institution. While I think everyone should live in the least restrictive environment, for some it is not in their best interest and not safe for them to do so. A group home can be more of an institution than what this bill is trying to allow. Have you ever seen Camphill in Pennsylvania or Lambs Farm in Illinois? If not, then it is not fair to try and kill this bill without knowing what the intent is. The fact is, many of our adult children live in group homes that are mini-institutions. They have shift staff and drive them around in white vans and they are typically, far from a normal home life. They have little or no involvement in their own neighborhoods. They have nothing in common with their neighbors. They have no social interaction with their neighbors. If you know of such a group home and can show me how they have a social relationship with their "immediate neighbors" I would love to see one. This is not to say that many group homes try to be included in the community and provide a valuable service and they are a great option. But, they are only one option. Why would you want to limit the options for our children?

An amendment to Ch. 419 would not have any effect on community residential homes (group homes) in residential neighborhoods or change the 1,000 ft. distancing requirements. This amendment would simply create another option to isolated group homes.

Regards,

Ven Sequenzia, Jr.

With Permission to PPP

Subject: In favor of more residential options RE: Denises List petition against SB 1124

From: Susan K. Goldstein <skgoldstein@hotmail.com>

Date: 28 Mar 2009

To: Denise Karp <deniseslist@yahoogroups.com>

I am in agreement with you Valerie.

I have seen these petitions and have run into people opposing this bill in Tallahassee for the last three weeks. While I respect everyone's right to advocate, I hope we can agree to disagree. I feel that those who are opposed to this bill and advocate for forced inclusion, must realize that everyone is different. Everyone has the right to live as they choose, including the developmentally disabled. Often times those living in group homes in communities under the '1000 foot rule' are more isolated than ever, because many neighbors do not accept them or choose to socialize with them.

They can only interact with their own group home room mates. I can understand why people might want to go out for a walk to get away or see another friendly face. That is why I am supporting this legislation. It can ensure protection and a safe environment.

All people, with the exception of prisoners and offenders on work release programs, can live around people like themselves if they so choose. Elderly folks, golfers, Cuban (or other ethnicities), gay or even nudists, can choose to live in communities with others like themselves, but developmentally disabled people cannot. They must meet at a park if they want to ride bikes with their friends who are also developmentally disabled, because they are not allowed to live near them.

Segregation is only truly segregation if someone is forced into it. I view this option more as protection, not segregation. We are not talking about small cottages with four walls and a cot. These communities have beautiful homes, exercise paths, employment options, transportation options, therapy, and many other opportunities. The arguments that claim 'this is how institutions started' may have been true 50 years ago, but they are not now. These fears are archaic and in this day and age of advocacy and inclusion, institutional segregation will never happen again.

SB 1124 simply provides an additional option for people who want to live near one another, with natural friendly supports, socializing opportunities, neighborhood watch groups, concentrated services, transportation options, safety and security, just like people do in any other gated community.

To those opposing this bill, I urge you to consider that your definition of a community may be quite different than someone else's definition of a community.

Respectfully,

Susan K. Goldstein

Floridians for the Future of the Developmentally Disabled

[www.FFDDNews.com](http://www.FFDDNews.com)

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Subject: Petitions to Veto SB1124 or HOBSON'S CHOICE

From: Richard Stimson <specialgatherings@yahoo.com

Date: 29 Mar 2009

To: Gene and Lila Klausman [eklausman@cfl.rr.com](mailto:eklausman@cfl.rr.com)

Lila:

I hear your heart, and would like to add to or jump on.

Both the Advocacy Center and DD Council are funded by federal dollars. If I understand correctly the Advocacy Center is to make sure that federal dollars are being spent the way the federal government wanted them to be spent. I am not sure why they are even part of this discussion. A good question for Bill Nelson and Bill Posey. The DD Council has money to be spent on creative ideas (which I would think planned communities would be). There is a ground swell of interest in specialized programming. Not only do you see it with people like us who are interested in planned communities, but also with parents of school age children who are rejecting the public school with there integrated settings and using their McKay Scholarships to put their disabled children in specialized schools. I believe the DD Council have such fears of what went wrong in institutions that they are not even open to inclusion having short comings. They have become part of the establishment that is resistant to change where they should be a funding source of change. Just a thought.

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