

**From:** [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)  
**To:** [Dawn Roberson](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)  
**Date:** Friday, June 06, 2014 11:57:42 AM

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-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]  
Sent: Friday, June 06, 2014 9:45 AM  
To: Sunset Advisory Commission  
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Friday, June 6, 2014 - 09:44

Agency: DEPARTMENT AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DADS

First Name: David

Last Name: Goldstein

Title: Rabbi

Organization you are affiliated with: Chabad Friendship Circle

Email: [info@friendshiphouston.com](mailto:info@friendshiphouston.com)

City: Houston

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or  
Opposed:

My name is Rabbi Dovid Goldstein and I am opposed to the Sunset staff recommendation to close the Austin State Supported Living Center (ASSLC) and five other centers and to place certain residents in other "community based," non-SSLC settings.

My professional training includes Rabbinical Ordination since 1996 . I have 14 years of experience working with diverse, special needs populations through chaplaincy at Richmond and Brenham State school as well as running the Friendship Circle of Houston which services children with special needs and their families.

The State Schools are home to many medically fragile and cognitively impaired adults who need constant direct observation and care. Many cannot articulate their needs, desires, or concerns. To be safe, secure, and healthy, they require coordinated efforts by experienced medical personnel, behavioral support staff, occupational and physical therapists, nutritionists, speech and language pathologists, and direct-care attendants. These professionals provide: (1) close and constant monitoring for health, safety, and basic daily needs; 2) regular access to consistent and timely medical care; 3) round-the-clock monitoring because many residents cannot clothe and feed themselves and require assistance with toileting and hygiene; and 4) regular stimulation including opportunities for the residents to walk, be outside, interact with the greater community through excursions, and engage in meaningful, personally productive activities.

In contrast, most "community-based" programs and settings I have reviewed and seen onsite are not prepared to offer this kind of assistance. They are predicated on the notion that the residents can complete some basic

household duties. They lack adequate numbers of staff, which in turn means few excursions and outings, and thus diminished opportunities for residents to actually interact with the outside world. In addition, a residential situation without multiple staff on location at all times potentially creates the risk that these vulnerable residents could be subject to various forms of abuse.

Also as a Rabbi, most group homes do not provide spiritual support services as well as the State school system does.

From the Jewish perspective, we are all responsible for one another and we know the teaching of loving your fellow as yourself with the explanation, that which you do not like, do not do onto others. Just think for a moment if you had disabilities and you were placed in a group home which could not handle your severe disability. You would feel imprisoned and your crying for help wouldn't be understood. Please exercise more sensitivity to our citizens. Lets do what is right and not what is popular.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency:

Recommendation to the Sunset Commission: Do not close any State School. It is clearly inhumane. Figure a better way to balance your budget.

With Blessings of Shalom to y'all

Thank You.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree