

**From:** [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)  
**To:** [Dawn Roberson](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 25, 2014 8:01:48 AM

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

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]  
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2014 9:44 PM  
To: Sunset Advisory Commission  
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Tuesday, June 24, 2014 - 21:43

Agency: DEPARTMENT AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DADS

First Name: Jay

Last Name: Dietz

Title:

Organization you are affiliated with:

City: Katy

State: Texas

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

I am writing in support of State Supported Living Centers (SSLC's) across Texas and more specifically, the Austin SSLC. I STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH THE SUNSET COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION TO CLOSE ANY SSLC'S. Clearly, placement in a properly regulated and monitored community group home should remain a viable option for many developmentally disabled Texans. However, IT IS NOT THE BEST OPTION FOR ALL - especially those with profound disabilities and special medical needs. SSLC's are essential in providing the care and services this population needs. It concerns me that legislators and the general public are constantly bombarded with mis-stated facts, misleading reports, and sensationalized articles about abuse and neglect at our SSLC's with very little mention of the many positive things that occur every day on each of our SSLC campuses.

Please take a moment to meet my 70 year-old sister, Lucy who upon the death of our parents, has come under my guardianship. Lucy has enjoyed a wonderful, fulfilling life for over 50 years at the Austin SSLC despite having advanced cerebral palsy. She cannot walk, speak, or hear and has very limited use of her hands. She must be bathed, dressed, fed, and toileted with assistance from her care givers. The 14 other ladies in her cottage and the 24-hour staff are, in fact, like family to Lucy. Members of our family and I make unannounced visits to see Lucy in her cottage on a regular basis, and we are always impressed with and grateful for the loving care she receives. The care givers are very dedicated, hard-working folks who are grossly underpaid and frequently are required to work double shifts due to extreme staffing shortages.

Despite her physical limitations and an IQ equivalent of a 5-year old, Lucy is mentally sharp, has a fantastic memory and fun sense of humor, and knows what it means to give and receive love and affection. Remarkably, Lucy is able to move about the entire Austin SSLC campus independently in her electric wheelchair and is excited to participate in the Golden Years weekday activity program on the Austin campus. She can enjoy this freedom because the Austin SSLC provides a safe environment

protected from the harsh realities of the world just beyond its boundaries.

The independence, protected environment, and loving care Lucy enjoys at the Austin SSLC simply cannot be found in a community group home. For over 50 years, the Austin SSLC has been the least restrictive and most fulfilling environment for Lucy, and it clearly remains the best setting for her going forward.

We as a family are grateful for all efforts to improve care for the developmentally disabled population of Texas, but WE DO NOT SUPPORT THE SUNSET COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION TO CLOSE ANY SSLC'S. Please feel free to contact me for more details about my sister or my personal experiences at the Austin SSLC.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: I strongly believe the SSLC model with multiple residential cottages and centralized on-campus services is the best alternative for citizens with profound developmental disabilities. Community group homes might be appropriate for many individuals who can function more independently, but they are not suitable for our most vulnerable citizens.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree