

24 June 2014

Sunset Advisory Commission
P.O. Box 13066
Austin, Texas 78711

Honorable Members of the Commission:

According to a recent story in the San Antonio Express News the Sunset Advisory Commission staff is advising the legislature to close six of the state's 13 Supported Living Centers. If this is allowed to happen it will result in untold hardship on residents of the Centers and their families.

The rationale for closing seems to be that there have been problems at some of the centers and closing them will save the state money. But it doesn't solve the problems.

I have been told the Austin Center have not been accepting new residents for over two years, leaving many urgent cases in limbo. This means that, no matter how severely afflicted an individual may be, the family must find a way to give him the best support they can with no assistance from the state. Closing these six Centers also means that many of the current residents would be put out into group homes where they would get less supervision than the Living Center supplies. (Group homes are there for a profit, no matter how well-meaning they may be.)

My son, Robert Len Rogers, has been a resident of the Living Center System for over 50 years. He is, to all intents and purposes, a 68 year-old infant, unable to communicate his needs, wheelchair-bound, needing constant medication to control seizures. Moving him to a group home would be to give him a death sentence and I don't expect that to happen. But there are all those others, perhaps less handicapped but still in need of constant supervision, who are put in danger by this move to close the six Centers.

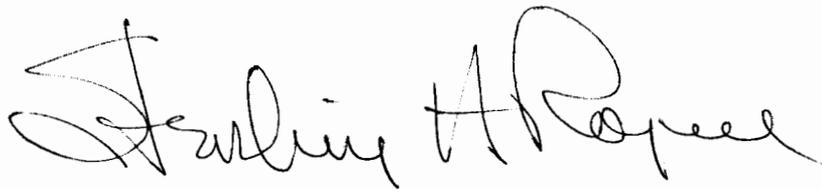
There have been some who thought such people should be allowed to die. Years ago I was advised by a medical "expert" on such matters to put my

son in an institution and forget about him. I did not follow her advice. The Nazi regime in Germany used such people as medical guinea pigs before consigning them to the death chambers.

The state of Texas should be better than this. We as a people **are** better than this, no matter what our elected government may do or think. Care for those incapable of caring for themselves is the responsibility of a humane society and we must provide that care through the Living Centers. It is the only logical way.

I understand that there have been abuses in the past. but that is not an excuse for throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Care is expensive but society must pay the price if we are to be considered a humane society.

I ask that you stop this drift toward downsizing government at the expense of those who can least afford it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sterling H. Rogers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "S" and "R".

Sterling H. Rogers