

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 11, 2014

The Honorable Terence R. McAuliffe
Governor
Commonwealth of Virginia
1111 Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor McAuliffe,

We write to commend you and the members of the General Assembly for your bipartisan collaboration to address the continued care for individuals with intellectual and related disabilities through the adoption of Senate Bill 627. Like you, we want to ensure the best possible care for our fellow Virginians and to provide adequate support for the family members or legal guardians who supplement those services.

As you know, parents who have children living in one of the Commonwealth's five training centers have expressed concern about the continuum of care that will be available for those individuals transitioning from a training center into a community-based setting as a result of Virginia's 2012 agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice to close four of its five centers. Thanks to your efforts with SB 627, we hope these individuals and their families will find greater comfort knowing that they now must be provided written certification that the quality of care they receive will be "comparable" to their current services. Further the new law requires that certification to address the individual medical, health, developmental, behavioral, and safety considerations of each family.

We are particularly encouraged by the creation of a working group, consisting of relevant stakeholders, who have been directed to consider options for keeping one or more additional training centers open, "in whole or in part," to supplement the single statewide center envisioned by the agreement. We have heard from many constituents who have children living in one of the training centers, which historically have provided a high-level of care for their residents. In response to the 2012 agreement, most families have actively pursued placement for their loved ones in a community-based setting, usually in the form of specialized group homes. Unfortunately, many of them report having difficulty finding such services or services that they feel meet their needs. Local Community Services Boards across the state, as well as private providers, who support the transition to community-based services, have expressed similar concerns, warning that most communities lack the resources and physical capacity to care for severely disabled residents by the scheduled closing date of the training centers.

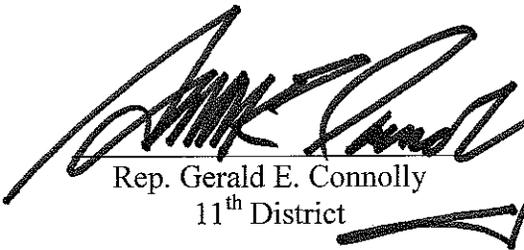
The timeline for closing four of the Commonwealth's five training centers was arbitrarily established. Since then, the parents and professionals overseeing this transition have come to learn more about the tremendous challenges of not only providing commensurate medical care in a community-based setting but also in addressing the practical and logistical hurdles for delivering that care. If they are unable to identify a community-based setting before the scheduled closures, they face the prospect of moving their loved-ones to the

Central Virginia Training Center in Lynchburg, which may pose considerable hardship on the residents and their families.

While these families are hopeful that the working group will identify additional options for providing community-based care, they remain anxious that Virginia officials appear to be moving forward with the scheduled closure of the remaining training centers: Southside Training Center closed on June 30, 2014, Northern Virginia Training Center in 2016, and Southwestern Virginia Training Center and Central Virginia Training Center in 2018 and 2020 respectively. These center closures leave only Southeastern Virginia Training Center with its 75 beds open. In keeping with the spirit of the SB 627, we respectfully request that you consider deferring any actions with respect to the closure of the training centers or the proposal of the sale of any properties and that you urge the working group to proceed swiftly in conducting its review and submitting recommendations that will directly affect whether one or more of the centers remains operational in whole or in part.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and your commitment to providing the highest quality care for these individuals and their families in their own communities. We stand ready to work with you to achieve this goal. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide any additional information.

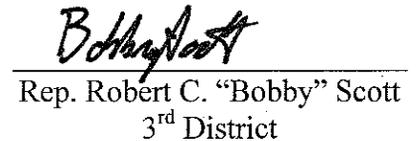
Sincerely,



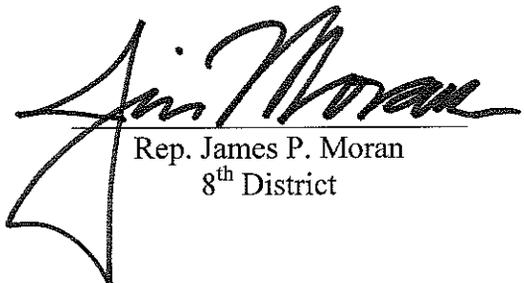
Rep. Gerald E. Connolly
11th District



Rep. Bob Goodlatte
6th District



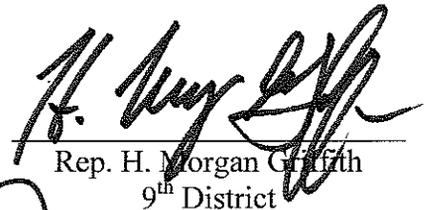
Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
3rd District



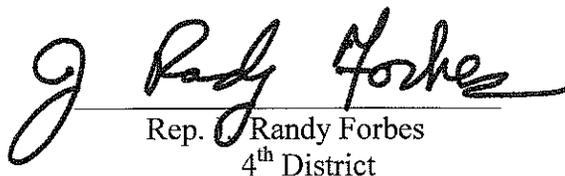
Rep. James P. Moran
8th District



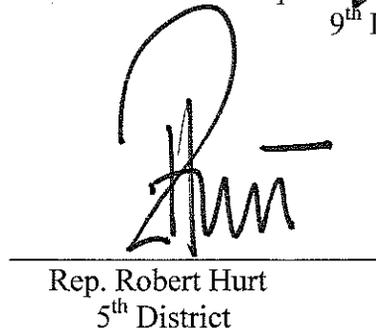
Rep. E. Scott Rigell
2nd District



Rep. H. Morgan Griffith
9th District



Rep. Randy Forbes
4th District



Rep. Robert Hurt
5th District

Cc: Mr. Connie Cochran, Chair
Members of SB627 Work Group