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Dear Legislature,

I am the mother and co-conservator for my daughter Kimberly Ann Loustalot.

I strongly oppose the decision to close Sonoma Developmental Center, (SDC). I feel we are going back in time with the terrible closures of facilities for Mental health. This continues to place those individuals in harms way.

I believe this closure will also place the residents of SDC in harms way.

I recommend that SDC be transformed in order to better serve the current residents.

My daughter Kim been a resident of SDC since 1966. It is her real home and community. In 1985 I contributed approximately \$10,000, as did several other families as part of a pilot program called DeAnza House with MARC of Marin. Five years later in 1990, the program failed Kimberley. The original staff was from Sonoma Developmental Center. The funding changed and this constraint led to untrained staff being hired at minimum wage. The result of which Kim's developmental disabilities and bipolar behavior could not be controlled, and a staff member called the local police. My daughter was handcuffed and taken to jail, and was called that Kim was no longer at DeAnza House. I found Kim in a 4-point restraint and heavily medicated at the Crisis Center at Ross Hospital where Kim was brought as a last resort, no other place. After a few weeks at the Ross Hospital she was returned to the Sonoma Developmental Center, where she has lived since 1990. This was no easy task. I have letters written to the Director of Developmental Services, thanking him for saving my daughters life. There must be something said that he was backing this move. Never in all of her life at SDC was her behavior as such that she has been treated in that manner.

SDC is the only home she knows as is the same for her friends she lives with. This is their community. The staff there are well trained professionals with compassion and patience for the residents. This is the least restrictive and safest environment for those currently living at SCD, also, for many of those who have left.

The passing of this bill and Governor Brown's signing of this bill to close has taken away these residents right to choice for a least restrictive and safe home. This move puts my daughter, Kim, at risk as it does for the others. This is the best place for Kim and the others to thrive, live and be as safe and best as possible in the most least restrictive environment. We would not be having these discussions and heart breaking meetings if there were these "great" places in the community.

You need to spend time at SDC to really know their needs. **There are not the facilities available with the same least restrictive and safe offerings as SDC elsewhere.** It would be less expensive to transform SDC to allow the residents to remain in their home than to serve “place” them in the “community”.

These individuals do not transition well. Kim is unable to transition easily in her daily life. Moving is a very stressful transition to make for a person without challenges. **Just imagine what will happen when they are removed from the only life they have known for years. It is not a matter of if they fail but when the community fails them.** What happens to them then? They will be put at risk.

If there is a closure rather than transformation, the state must develop and continue to provide:

- **We need a SDC site to provide medical, dental and behavioral support to the developmentally disabled (DD). Also we need to keep wheelchair repair there.**
- **This is key because these people are trained well in caring and understanding for our loved ones.**
- **We need housing for those who are not successful in community facilities. Because I do not want my sister or anyone else to go through what she did in the past. She has people who love and care for her at SDC..**
- **We want these services developed now! We need these to be developed now before there are problems and the kinks are worked out.**
- **We want our views and those of the Sonoma community and coalition to be heard and considered in making a plan for the future of SDC.**

There are options to transform SDC and that is my request, to transform. Build on the community already in existence and still having the **current residents** remain there. There is the possibility of building smaller homes for the **current residents** as part of this plan. To make this plan work it must include **the current population. In order for a transformation to really succeed we must work together and reopen admissions to SDC. The plans for this transformation need to be set in motion.**

These individuals have their daily rituals and routines. They are able to receive equine therapy, swimming, cooking, outings to town, religious freedoms, great day programs and more. They are free to come and go. **What have these individuals done to deserve this at this point in their lives?**

We must all work together and protect these innocent lives. These “perfect” facilities are not there in reality. If there is some “perfect place” the funding will not always be there. These individuals deserve our trust, love and respect.

I feel like we are just another special interest group without a following.

Transition SDC it is the only way to go!

Yours sincerely,

Pearl Loustalot