



Mission: To ensure all individuals with disabilities in Ohio are afforded the opportunity to live and participate in their community.

Promise: We will advocate through collaboration and innovative social action to ensure all individuals with disabilities are included and fully participate in all aspects of community life in Ohio. We will campaign for and provide education on the development of comprehensive, adequately funded community based living services that are necessary to protect the human and civil rights of individuals with disabilities.

June 07, 2016

Michael Kirkman
Executive Director, Disability Rights Ohio
50 West Broad St., Suite 1400
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

On behalf of the Coalition for Community Living – a parent led advocacy organization that supports greater options for individuals with developmental disabilities to live in their community – we write to express our strong appreciation and support for your recent legal advocacy.

Indeed, in 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court decided in *Olmstead v. L.C.* that unnecessary institutionalization and segregation of individuals with disabilities is discrimination and illegal. Unfortunately, Ohio has not updated its service system to fully comply with the *Olmstead* decision and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Individuals with disabilities are often segregated into institutional settings because the services and supports they need to live in the community are simply not available. We have long recognized that Ohio's funding of existing community-based services falls drastically short of being able to give all individuals with disabilities the freedom and true options to live, work and socialize in their communities.

To address this problem, Disability Rights Ohio filed a lawsuit on behalf of thousands of Ohioans with developmental disabilities. The lawsuit seeks to change the way Ohio provides services for individuals with disabilities so they will have adequately funded options that allows them to choose where they live and how they spend their time.

We understand how important this issue is because we have family members living with us with significant developmental disabilities and complex medical needs who are at risk of institutionalization if the current system of delivery does not improve. As such, we recognize that services, as they exist, are not adequate enough to ensure individuals with developmental disabilities successful integration into their community without additional funding.

We support Disability Rights Ohio's lawsuit, and encourage our local and state officials to come together and establish sustainable, adequate supports for all individuals with developmental disabilities.

Sincerely,

Mary Hall and Kim Kelly
Co-Founders - Coalition for Community Living