



ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 17, 2023

State Senator Julie Morrison
Chair – Senate Health and Human Services
Committee
400 Lake Cook Road - Suite 100B
Deerfield, IL 60015-4929

State Senator Ann Gillespie
Chair – Senate Health and Human Services
Appropriations Committee
171 W. Wing St. - Suite 202
Arlington Heights, IL 60005

State Representative Camille Lilly
Chair – House Human Services Committee
6937 W. North Ave.
Oak Park, IL 60302

State Senator Laura Fine
Chair – Senate Behavioral and Mental
Health Committee
1812 Waukegan Road – Suite A
Glenview, IL 60026

State Representative Anna Moeller
Chair – House Human Services
Appropriations Committee
164 Division Street - Suite 103
Elgin, IL 60120

State Representative Lindsey LaPointe
Chair – House Mental Health and Addiction
Committee
4349 N Milwaukee Ave
Suite 2
Chicago, IL 60641

Dear Senator Morrison, Senator Gillespie, Senator Fine, Representative Lilly, Representative Moeller, and Representative LaPointe,

The purpose of this letter is to respectfully urge you to work together to convene a public joint, bi-cameral hearing of the House and Senate’s Health and Human Services Committee and Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee and the Senate’s Behavioral and Mental Health Committee. The undersigned members of the Republican Caucuses of the Illinois House and Senate have serious concerns and many questions that we wish to ask regarding disturbing reports of neglect and abuse of the residents of Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center.

In a report published by ProPublica on February 10, 2023, we learned that multiple investigations by the Inspector General designated to oversee the Illinois Department of Human Services revealed serious and unacceptable incidents of neglect and abuse and a culture of intimidation and retaliation against whistleblowers.

We are aware that Choate Mental Health and Development Center has been the subject of more than 1500 complaints to the Illinois Department of Human Services spanning the last decade. We are also keenly aware that the problems at Choate have spanned multiple DHS directors and multiple gubernatorial administrations. Our concern in this matter is for the dignity, safety, and well-being of the 270 residents of Choate that suffer from the most profound developmental and mental disabilities in the state. Our concern is far from political.

We fear for the safety of the residents, staff, and administration at Choate if steps are not taken to improve conditions and to reform and eliminate an insidious “cover-up” culture that was vividly detailed in the ProPublica article referenced above.

It is our sincere hope that as the chairpersons of the House and Senate Committees charged with the duty of overseeing the operations of and funding for the State of Illinois’ various mental health facilities, you would act with urgency in cooperation with us to get to the bottom of, and eventually solve, the many problems at Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center.

It is vital that we address these issues immediately so that this critical facility can continue to serve the 270 residents who depend on it. This is their home. We cannot displace these vulnerable individuals because for many of them this is their last resort. The state of Illinois has a duty to them. They deserve better, their families deserve better, and the staff that serves them deserve better.

To reiterate our specific request, we urge you to please convene, at the earliest time of convenience, a public joint committee hearing of the House and Senate’s Human Services and Human Services Appropriations Committees, in person, in Springfield.

Additionally, we request the presence of any high-ranking member of the Pritzker administration that is charged with overseeing the Department of Human Services, the presence of Illinois Department of Human Services Director Grace B. Hou, and the presence of all appropriate and relevant high-level staff members of Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center, including, but not limited to the current chief administrator of the facility, Mr. Bryant Davis.

The favor of a timely response to our request is greatly appreciated. The undersigned members of the House and Senate stand ready to answer your questions and to work cooperatively to ensure this meeting happens, and that ultimately, the residents of Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center and their families are better protected and better served.

Sincerely,

Paul C. Jacobs
State Representative – 118th District

Charles Meier
State Representative – 109th District

Tony McCombie
House Republican Leader
State Representative – 89th District

Jason Bunting
State Representative – 106th District

John M. Cabello
State Representative – 90th District

Dan Caulkins
State Representative – 88th District

Michael J. Coffey, Jr.
State Representative – 95th District

Christopher “C.D.” Davidsmeyer
State Representative – 100th District

Jed Davis
State Representative – 75th District

John Egofske
State Representative – 82nd District

Amy Elik
State Representative – 111th District

Randy E. Frese
State Representative – 99th District

David Friess
State Representative – 115th District

Bradley Fritts
State Representative – 74th District

Amy L. Grant
State Representative – 47th District

Jackie Haas
State Representative – 79th District

Brad Halbrook
State Representative – 107th District

Norine K. Hammond
State Representative – 94th District

William E. Hauter
State Representative – 87th District

Jeff Keicher
State Representative – 70th District

Michael T. Marron
State Representative – 104th District

Martin McLaughlin
State Representative – 52nd District

Chris Miller
State Representative – 101st District

Adam M. Niemerg
State Representative – 102nd District

Tim Ozinga
State Representative – 37th District

Steven Reick
State Representative – 63rd District

Wayne A. Rosenthal
State Representative – 108th District

Jennifer Sanalidro
State Representative – 48th District

Kevin Schmidt
State Representative – 114th District

Dave Severin
State Representative – 116th District

Joe C. Sosnowski
State Representative – 69th District

Brad Stephens
State Representative – 20th District

Dan Swanson
State Representative – 71st District

Dennis Tipsword Jr.
State Representative – 105th District

Dan Ugaste
State Representative – 65th District

Travis Weaver
State Representative – 93rd District

Tom Weber
State Representative – 64th District

Blaine Wilhour
State Representative – 110th District

Patrick Windhorst
State Representative – 117th District

State Senator Dale Fowler
59th Senate District

State Senator Terri Bryant
58th Senate District

State Senator Jil Tracy
50th Senate District

Senate Republican Leader John Curran
41st Senate District

Senate Republican Deputy
Leader Sue Rezin
38th Senate District

State Senator Donald DeWitte
33rd Senate District

State Senator Win Stoller
37th Senate District

State Senator Sally Turner
44th Senate District

State Senator Erica Harriss
56th Senate District

State Senator Steve McClure
54th Senate District

State Senator Dave Syverson
35th Senate District

State Senator Andrew Chesney
45th Senate District

State Senator Neil Anderson
47th Senate District

State Senator Jason Plummer
55th Senate District

State Senator Tom Bennett
53rd Senate District

State Senator Craig Wilcox
32nd Senate District

State Senator Seth Lewis
24th Senate District

State Senator Dan McConchie
26th Senate District

State Senator Chapin Rose
51st Senate District