

Bill Hill:

Members of the Committee, my name is Bill Hill. I am a Maintenance Repairman at White Haven Center and President of AFSCME Local 2334. I want to thank Darrin Spann for his and AFSCME's concern for the employees of Polk and White Haven. I echo his sentiments, but I want the Committee, Governor Tom Wolf, and all Pennsylvanians to understand that we are here because we are concerned about the well-being of the residents of Polk and White Haven.

I will say this about my fellow workers: It's a shame that we protect the most vulnerable citizens, we do excellent care for them, and we take a lot of pride in our work, and now this was done without even taking our thoughts and feelings into account. Everybody that this affects wasn't even included in the decision. White Haven is one of the newest facilities that the state owns. Our physical plant is immaculate, and that is because of the work we do every single day.

We're traumatized by this sudden announcement. And that trauma is only going to get worse if the Commonwealth moves forward with this decision. But our trauma will be nothing compared to that of the residents who will be forced out of their homes. And that's exactly what it is to them: home.

Some of them have lived there since they were babies. They don't know anything else. The notion that moving them to "community-based" settings will be better for them is downright absurd. To be quite honest, I'm not sure if some of them will survive the transition. That's why I'm here today. I believe this to be a matter of life and death, right vs. wrong.

I urge members of the Committee to choose which side they are on and do everything in their power to reverse this terrible decision.