

Tammy, Thank you , I am unable to attend the hearing due to health problems. I am a retired 32 year employee of the Commonwealth and was employed at Polk Center. I know many individuals who referred to Polk as their home and was a personal friend of an individual who went to the community to live in the 1980's. Her name was Evelyn. She was so unhappy living in a community group home she refused to eat and was finally allowed to return to Polk to live. She was happy and returned to good health at Polk. She was a frequent visitor to my office at Polk , Sunnyside building and took pride in her " job" at VRS and enjoyed having 2 rooms in Suncrest Apartments in Sunnyside and later in Juniper in Woodside. She always said, " it is home". I also had a friend named Robert that resided in the Sunnyside building. Robert had occasional behavior outbursts especially around Christmas. I was a supervisor at Sunnyside and for a few years would be the " grounds" Santa. I would put on my Santa suit and visit 7 buildings as well as being the supervisor. Robert would become a challenge so one Christmas Eve Santa had a helper, Robert. The first building we visited was quite enjoyable and Robert enjoyed saying hello to everyone and wishing them Merry Christmas. When we got to the second building things slowed down and I was finishing greeting each individual and saying , "Ho, Ho, Ho" before Robert. We were running behind schedule so after finishing the building I decided it was breaktime so Robert and I drank a , "soda" and had a chat. I told Robert how proud of him I was of him but he didn't have time to bless all the individuals and he replied that everyone was his friend. I explained that he wasn't a priest that the priest could bless everyone at Mass and we had 5 more buildings to visit and he could do a quick blessing. Robert had a response that I will never forget, " That's right, I'm not a priest and you aren't Santa Claus either". Robert called Polk home and everyone was his friends.

In closing I am 67 years old and have resided in my home 40 years, I hope and pray that no one comes and kicks me out of my home. A scripture verse in Matthew 25 says, "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' (verse 40) . My prayers are that you will let our individuals live out their lives in their homes at Polk Center and White Haven.

Sincerely Larry Shreffler