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**Sent:** Tuesday, October 15, 2019 5:09 PM  
**To:** Erin Raub <[Eraub@pahousegop.com](mailto:Eraub@pahousegop.com)>  
**Subject:** Testimony for hearing on Oct. 21, 2019

My name is Mary Ohler. I have worked as a RSA (residential service aide) at Polk Center in Venango County since January 26, 1997. Let me start off by saying that it is a job I did not want to have. My mom worked at Polk Center for 26 years. I saw her go to work every night for so many years. I saw her get hurt over and over. Yet she still loved the people she took care of on a daily basis. I thought that she was crazy. Turns out that she was. But then you have to be kind of crazy to work at Polk Center. Crazy to fall in love with people who society may find unusual.

When I was going to college in mid-Ohio, there was a place in the town that was similar to Polk Center. My friends and I went over one day to feed bread to the fish. One of the gentlemen who lived there saw us and came over. He started talking to us. My friends stood there silently. I talked with him for a while. On our way back to school my friends couldn't get over the fact that I understood what this man was saying. I couldn't believe that they couldn't. I guess I thought that everyone had the same upbringing. I was so wrong. But I realized how special that man was and how blessed I felt to spend some time with him.

Fast forward to 1997. I began working at Polk Center. I have seen so many things over the course of 22 years. I love my job! It's not really a job to me, it's more of a calling. I consider it an honor to take care of the amazing people who call Polk Center HOME. And home is what it is to these people. Home is where you spend time with those who love you most. And these people are very much loved. I have given of my personal time to make sure that life is a bit better for those entrusted to my care. My co-workers have as well.

These people have quality of life. They are extremely well taken care of. They know that they matter to so many people. They are safe. They are part of their community. They get to attend many sporting events, see movies, eat out, go to concerts, go shopping, go to fairs, zoos, etc. They are hardly hidden away.

When they end up in the hospital, I often hear from the nursing staff how well they are taken care of. Their skin is excellent. Usually the only time you see a bedsores is right after they have returned from a hospital stay.

I consider it a privilege to take care of the ladies and gentlemen who live at Polk Center. I thank you for taking the time to read this. Please keep Polk Center and White Haven open. Let these people know that their lives are more important than money. Human beings are more valuable than money. It's time we show that all lives matter.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ohler