

October 17, 2019

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Michael and I have spent 27 years assisting the individuals living at Polk Center with their daily needs. When I started I had no thoughts about the benefits or vacations or even how much money I would be making. I wanted a job where I could help people. Now don't get me wrong, the money is nice and everything, but that wasn't my motive. I felt happy taking care of the people living at Polk and over the years they have become very important to me. Every time one of them left the center or passed away, a part of me went with them.

Now the thought of Polk Center closing and the individuals losing their home deeply saddens me. I am also saddened with all the talk of money. The group home providers and ARC claim to want to place the individuals at Polk and White Haven in community settings and far away from cold isolated "*institutions*"! The truth is they just want the money it takes to house someone who already has a home.

DHS talks about saving money or how much they are spending on the individuals living in our two centers. When did DHS place price tags on the people living at Polk and White Haven stating how much each person was worth? When did they become commodities to be bought and sold like stocks and bonds? That's what seems to be happening. If DHS, the Governor, ARC or any high ranking politician or agency is in the health care business for the money, then they are in it for the wrong reasons. The people living at Polk and White Haven are living, breathing, loving human beings and should be treated as such! **THEY ARE OUR LOVED ONES!!** Stop talking about money and start talking in terms of lives. We deserve it and they most certainly deserve it!!

Thank you!!

Michael Hopper,
TAA, Polk Center

#PolkCenterStrong