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Day-care sites

advertisement

I was pleased to see the extensive Tribune article about the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services' woefully inadequate supervision of day-care providers ("State fails to inspect day cares," Page 1, April 22).

I have been active in the human services in my community for more than 25 years. All my colleagues in child care have been distressed about this situation for as long as I can remember. And, unfortunately, it seems that every change in the way DCFS does its job is a change for the worse.

Those who want to go into the child-care business in a professional and legal way face longer and longer waits for DCFS services. Those who are looking to renew their licenses find there is no one to visit their facility.

As someone who tries to see the bright side of a situation, maybe I can take heart in the thought that perhaps DCFS has hit bottom so there will be nowhere to go but up.

— *J. Freed, Highland Park*

Day-care math

As I read the article about day-care center inspections, I want to thank you for some details provided.

If each inspector has 100 sites to inspect, and if there are at least 200 working days each year, then why have some homes not been visited in years?

— *Dennis Kostrzewski, Crystal Lake*

Community living

The Arc of Illinois has called for the rebalancing of the disability system for many years and supports the closure of institutions as long as the people living there have a safe and smooth transition to community services.

The governor has developed a rebalancing initiative bringing in national experts to assist individuals and their guardians to make a safe and secure move to community living. The approach is very different from past state institutional closings because it requires the full participation of individuals and their guardians

every step of the way.

I realize that this is an emotional time and I am committed to working with families at the Warren G. Murray Developmental Center to ensure a safe and meaningful transition into community living. Community living offers around-the-clock care and, unlike institutions, it allows people with disabilities a personalized care plan where they can live close to family and friends and be part of a community. This is about making sure people with disabilities enjoy the same freedoms and opportunities as everyone else.

I believe it is imperative that state institutions be closed in Illinois. Thousands of people have safely and happily transitioned from an institution to community living. About half of those currently living in a community setting came from an institution or nursing home. It has changed their lives, it can be done and we are here to help them through the process.

— *Tony Paulauski, executive director, the Arc of Illinois, Frankfort*

Lack of transparency

The City Council approval of the Chicago Infrastructure Trust ordinance was a vote to value political interests over the public interest and passed with inadequate public protections despite unanswered questions from aldermen, the public and the city's inspector general. The lack of transparency surrounding the decision-making process was patently unacceptable. Transparency and accountability, particularly in government contracting and spending, are critical tools to prevent corruption, boost public confidence in government and ensure fiscal responsibility.

While generally the city has provided greater accessibility to some government information, how deep the transparency commitment is becomes evident when crucial issues such as the CIT are in play. Reasonable accountability standards such as bringing the CIT under the purview of the inspector general's office, requiring council votes on all taxpayer dollar commitments, detailing enforcement provisions, ensuring compliance with ethics and procurement ordinances, and even declaring the CIT to be a subsidiary city public body to ensure compliance with state transparency laws were ignored. This lack of accountability is also inconsistent with Illinois Nonprofit Principles and Best Practices.

Moving forward, public bodies interested in creating similar entities should embrace that the goals of democracy are broader than those of economic development and implement meaningful public interest safeguards such as those suggested. Our organizations, along with the Donors Forum, Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, League of Women Voters of Illinois and Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund believe that the people of Chicago deserve better.

— *Brian Imus, director, Illinois Public Interest Research Group, and Terry Pastika, executive director, Citizen Advocacy Center, Chicago*

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