

**VOR Action Item Reminders**

\*Have you called your U.S. Rep and asked him/her to COSPONSOR H.R. 1255. If not, please CALL today! Visit, <http://www.vor.net/legislative-voice/legislation/>, for H.R. 1255 background and resources. ***If not us, who?***

\*Shop and benefit VOR! Visit <http://www.igive.com>, type in "Voice of the Retarded" and Shop!

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**VOR Weekly E-Mail Update**  
**August 28, 2009**  
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**VOR Website - What's New!**

Thanks to all who have visited VOR's new website. We've received great feedback! As promised, the website is a work in progress, so even if you have visited new site, visit often. It is changing often. Here are some recent updates:

- 1. VOR Awareness Month - October 2009!
- 2. HEALTH CARE: What's really in it for people with disabilities (Commentary, by Ethan Ellis, Next Step)
- 3. Fernald Fighters, by Laura Marmion

**STATE NEWS**

- 4. **CALIFORNIA:** Feinstein: Don't furlough workers paid by feds
- 5. **COLORADO:** Legislators write Ritter asking he reconsider closing nursing unit

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**1. VOR Awareness Month - October 2009!**  
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**For full article, see <http://www.vor.net/get-involved/vor-initiatives/>.**

**Summary:**

During the last 26 years VOR has accomplished many things due to the support our loyal members and donors. We are proud and excited about what we have been able to accomplish over the past two decades.

We need your help now to let others know about VOR's important work. With VOR's 2009 Awareness campaign we are calling on ALL VOR members to EDUCATE existing donors and RECRUIT as many new members as possible.

We need the help of all of you to get the word out and make October 2009 a really special time for VOR Awareness.

**Read More:** <http://www.vor.net/get-involved/vor-initiatives/>.

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**2. HEALTH CARE: What's really in it for people with disabilities**  
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**Summary: Commentary by Ethan Ellis, President, Next Step (excerpts)**  
**August 26, 2009**

Congressman Frank Pallone, unruffled and cool, managed to turn the provocative questions and comments [at a recent "Town Hall" meeting] into opportunities to provide real, substantive information about the bill he supports and the legislative alternatives being considered in the Senate. Despite the din, I learned more in an hour than I had in months of sorting through news and opinion on TV and online. I even got in a question that filled in some of the blanks.

Here's how H.R. 3200 will affect people with disabilities.

**Read More:** <http://www.vor.net/news/news-flash/health-care-whats-really-in-it-for-people-with-disabilities>.

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**3. Fernald Fighters**  
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**By Laura Marmion**

As a young girl I didn't know much about the Fernald Center; a massive state-owned property for mentally handicapped adults in the heart of my town, Waltham, MA. All I knew was it was a ten minute walk from my house, they had a soccer field my team always practiced on, and great hills for sledding. Little did I know, I would grow to learn more about the Fernald Center and its people than I ever would have imagined I would.

Read More: <http://www.vor.net/get-involved/great-story-submissions/>

**STATE NEWS**  
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**4. CALIFORNIA: Feinstein: Don't furlough workers paid by feds**  
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**The Associated Press**  
**08/25/2009**

WASHINGTON-Federal officials are asking Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to cancel furloughs for employees paid with federal funds so payments to thousands of disabled Californians aren't delayed.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., said in a letter Tuesday that most of the Department of Social Services employees who assess Social Security disability applications are paid with federal funds, so the furloughs don't even save California money.

Social Security Commissioner Michael Astrue says disability claims are rapidly increasing and furloughs could postpone another \$15 million in federal payments-worsening California's economic problems.

Schwarzenegger furloughed more than 200,000 state workers three days a month earlier this year during a budget crisis, reducing their pay by about 14 percent.

Rachel Cameron, a spokeswoman for Schwarzenegger, said the furloughs in the division that handles claims are self-directed, meaning employees can schedule them like a vacation. Therefore, she said, the furloughs shouldn't affect services.

The governor will review the concerns in the letter, but furloughs need to be applied universally to generate savings, regardless of departments' funding sources, Cameron said.

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**4. COLORADO: Legislators write Ritter asking he reconsider closing nursing unit**  
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**By Gary Harmon**  
**The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel**  
**Tuesday, August 25, 2009**

Two Mesa County legislators have written to Gov. Bill Ritter asking that he reconsider closing the skilled-nursing unit at the Grand Junction Regional Center.

Ritter last week announced the closure, to be complete in February, as he announced a round of state budget cuts of \$320 million.

"Governor Ritter, this is a success story and should be cited as an example of good government," state Reps. Steve King, R-Grand Junction, and Laura Bradford, R-Collbran, said in the letter.

King and Bradford noted the skilled-nursing facility has a five-star rating from Medicare and is the only unit of its kind on the Western Slope.

The 32 clients of the facility "will be disproportionately affected by moves that could take them far from family, or local moves to non-five-star-rated facilities that are not as prepared to take on people with such severe physical and mental limitations," the legislators wrote.

"Governor, this service is a critical function of state government, and we believe that lives are at stake," King and Bradford wrote.

The directors of the state's three regional centers should be asked instead to recommend other cuts "to achieve the best possible outcome," the legislators wrote. Colorado operates regional

centers in Wheat Ridge and Pueblo, as well as in Grand Junction. King said he would deliver the letter today to Ritter's office.

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**Editor: Tamie Hopp, VOR Director of Government Relations & Advocacy**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

**TO JOIN OR CONTRIBUTE:** \$25 per individual, \$150 per family organization, or \$200 per provider/professional organization. Extra donations are welcome!

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