

**Scott Renfroe**

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**From:** Danny Weitzel [dweitzel@cfstrategies.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 11, 2009 2:22 PM  
**To:** 'Scott Renfroe'  
**Cc:** 'Bonnie Darnell'; 'Triangle Cross Ranch'  
**Subject:** SB09-134

Dear Senator Renfroe,

Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend the hearing tomorrow on SB09-134. However, I did want to express the importance of passing this bill. My sister Gloria has lived at Triangle Cross Ranch since 1991. This has been a wonderful place for her to live. Previously, she had always lived with my parents who cared for her. Unfortunately, they overprotected her and didn't allow her to do very many things on her own. As my parent's aged and began to have failing health, my sister Bonnie and I convinced them to allow Gloria to live in a group home. After doing a lot of investigating, we felt that Triangle Cross Ranch was by far the nicest place she could live. She is in a rural environment in the tiny community of Galeton and lived in a home with a House Mom or House Parents and 3-4 other "Ranchers". They have many different activities to keep them busy including gardening, caring for the different animals on the ranch as well as house chores. Some of the Ranchers work part time in the community. They are also very active in Special Olympics and usually go on a weeklong camping trip every year. Gloria has gone from being overly protected to being very active and independent. Despite her disabilities, I have been amazed at all she has been able to accomplish. Because of her Cerebral Palsy, she cannot speak but she does know some sign language. She also has severe coordination and dexterity problems. She also has difficulty in swallowing due to her CP, so it is extremely difficult for her to simply eat. Despite her handicaps, she is able to dress herself, clean her room, make her bed and help with many different chores. She also loves to go bowling. I bought her a children's bowling ball so she can control it better. Triangle Cross Ranch is the best thing that ever happened to her.

About 2 years ago, she had her food stamps taken away from her because TCR was considered an institutional setting. Nothing could be further from the truth. As I stated before, the Ranchers live in houses with 3-4 other Ranchers and a House Parent. They each have their own private room and each house has it's own budget for buying groceries and other supplies. They all share in doing chores. It cost \$2,250 per month to live at the Ranch. Thanks to a lot of fund raising, the Ranch charges each Rancher just \$1,300 to live there. The

difference is made up with fundraising and donations. With the economy being bad, it will be difficult to provide this much support to each Rancher in the future. That is why the food stamp money is so important. Typically, Social Security provides about \$700 to \$900 to each Rancher with their families making up the difference. According to Mary Lou Walton who is the Director of Envision in Weld County, it cost them an average of \$50,000 per year to care for a developmentally disabled person in a group home setting. By contrast, TCR is doing it for about half the price! If TCR closed it's doors tomorrow, the additional cost to the State of Colorado would be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars per year to care for all of the current Ranchers. I can't think of any other citizen in this state who is more worthy of receiving food stamps. I feel that it is unfair to penalize them and their families because TCR is incorrectly called an "Institution". I encourage your committee and the House and Senate to approve this bill.

Respectfully,

Danny W. Weitzel