

Scott Renfroe

From: Bonnie Darnell [bhdarnell41@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 3:38 PM
To: senatorrenfroe@gmail.com
Cc: Danny Weitzel; director@trianglecrossranch.org
Subject: Senate Bill 09-134

February 11, 2009

Senator Renfroe,

My sister, Gloria Weitzel, lives at Triangle Star Ranch in Galeton, a group home facility. She is physically and mentally disabled. She will be 64 years old on March 31. She has worked in the past at the Sheltered Workshop in Greeley, making a very small income. Her only income now is my deceased father's (Dan Weitzel, deceased February, 1997) SS for a disabled dependant.

I understand that you plan to introduce a bill on Thursday designed to reinstate the food stamp benefit for individuals who qualify and are living in a residential facility. Two years ago, this benefit was revoked because TCR is considered an institutional setting, rather than a group home or host home.

I can assure you that TCR is not, nor ever has been institutional. Residents live in individual houses and have their own bedrooms. These houses are very much homes. Residents are assisted by a live-in adult facilitator. Residents do household chores, cook their own meals, take care of animals on the property including sheep, goats, horses and rabbits. They grow their own garden and make items to sell using the above resources. They bowl, attend football games, dances and other events just as a family might.

With her SS check, her food stamps, and some support from me and my brother, Danny Weitzel, she can survive quite nicely. If she gets dumped back into the state system, it will cost the state about \$50,000 per year, according to her case worker. Since several of these residents may not be able to afford to remain at TRC without food stamps, it is in the State's best financial interest to provide them with food stamps.

I very much encourage your committee and the full senate and House to pass this bill. I'm sorry I will not be able to attend the meeting, but want to share my concerns.

I very much appreciate your efforts on behalf of these important citizens who cannot speak for themselves. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Darnell

2/12/2009