

# Letters: Closures are right thing to do

GateHouse News Service

Posted May 10, 2012 @ 12:02 AM

Thank you for your refreshing and bold editorial last Thursday, "[Politicians talk cuts, but won't OK them.](#)"

Illinois is in a fiscal crisis and it's time for our state representatives and senators to step up to the plate and do what is needed to put our state back on solid ground. I have witnessed legislators who claim they support community services, yet vote to preserve our reliance on state institutions.

The governor's Rebalancing Initiative is a perfect example of how Illinois can cut costs while improving services for people with disabilities.

There is not a doubt that lawmakers are facing some tough decisions. Supporting the closing of state institutions and redirecting those funds to programs for community living, however, is a no-brainer. It will save the state \$20 million and offer opportunity, freedom and dignity for our friends with disabilities.

The governor's Rebalancing Initiative is a modest and courageous effort to move us into a person-centered system that advocates have been working on for decades. Failure to advance this rebalancing will crush the hopes of those desperately in need of services, including the 21,000 people on the state's waiting list and young adults exiting out of special education.

Here is your call to action. The legislature is scheduled to adjourn May 31, so now is the time to make yourself heard about which direction the disability system needs to move. Call your state senator and representative and demand that they support the closing of state institutions. It's the right thing to do.

— Tony Paulauski, executive director, *The Arc of Illinois*