



Statement from The Arc of Illinois on recent reporting out of Choate Developmental Center and Garrison School:

For over a year now, we have continued to read [reports of unacceptable experiences](#) regarding several employees and residents at Choate Developmental Center located in Anna, Illinois. Another [story](#) came out this week about Choate residents being arrested for acting in a manner consistent with their diagnoses and/or histories of trauma. Just days earlier, [another similar story hit the headlines](#) - this time from a school for children with disabilities in Jacksonville, Illinois.

The Arc of Illinois was founded by parents of people with IDD who believed that, despite the popular medical advice at the time, they would raise their disabled child in the family home, within their respective communities. For decades, The Arc has worked to advance community-based supports available to these families.

When will the rights violations of residents who live in Illinois facilities be addressed? The Arc of Illinois implores Governor Pritzker and his Administration to take immediate and meaningful action to assure the health and safety of the [232 Choate residents](#) as well as secure necessary community-based funding to support the at least 31 individuals living at Choate who have indicated a desire to transition into the community. As I stated on a [recent interview](#) with host Vicki Niswander on her radio show [Disability Beat](#): “We need to make sure we’re doing a better job on behalf of people with IDD. ... if we are wanting to move away from our over-reliance on these large congregate settings, we’re going to have to put some serious thought and action and dollars into the IDD service delivery system to increase that system capacity to be able to receive people who are wanting to move out of SODCs.” Board President Leanne Mull, also interviewed, commented: “These are people that we are talking about who deserve to have the life that they want. And a life free from fear. And a life where when they do have support, the staff supporting them have support to support the people.”

-- Amie Lulinski, PhD, Executive Director of The Arc of Illinois