

*Presentation to Regional Center of Orange County Board Mtg. 2-3-11*

*My name is James Reed. I am the current chairman of the board of OCARC, a care facility and workshop for the disabled in Anaheim. I am there because of my daughter, Tiffany. I was pulled into this activity by her struggles to survive and my desire for her to thrive. I am grateful for the way our lives have been enriched through the support of the state of California. I am here because it appears that support is in serious jeopardy. The disproportionate impact on these services in the current government financial proposals dismays me. That may be a little selfish, we all know the state of the state, but I represent thousands with similar challenges who can't be here or heard. Cuts are inevitable, deep cuts and we must accept this reality, but the nature and allocation of the pain is outrageous.*

*To hold inviolate the salaries and generous pensions for well connected state employees who can and often do continue to work after retirement, or to make comparatively inconsequential cuts in other programs while making draconian cuts in funding for those who truly cannot support themselves is so wrong as to beg the question, "What are they thinking?" These expenses are no less legally binding and far more morally imperative. Is it to destroy the Lanterman Act entitlement? The existing infrastructure will collapse with it causing uncharted chaos. Our program, for one, enables the disabled to achieve their highest level of productivity, but without support they will become utterly dependent with a far greater cost to our society and an unconscionable impact on each of them.*

*Are these cuts meant to make us and our loved ones the poster children for the budget crisis?, designed to garner sympathy and support for additional taxation? It seems we are obligated to parade our children and loved ones in front of the TV cameras to expose the cruelty of the present financial mess and to express our anger and frustration so the electorate may be moved to generosity. This callous manipulation is the height of hypocrisy when the true root cause is not addressed for political cowardice or worse, cronyism. This great state, one of the most heavily taxed in the nation, is not in financial straits because of the expertise and courage of our elected officials, quite the contrary. It is time they respond to an outraged populace and put our house in order.*

*My one overarching suggestion is to gut the bureaucracy and its myriad stipulations, regulations, and mandates, and send the money and control to the local level, to paraphrase a campaign promise. We pay a high price for a complex, unwieldy, unresponsive system. Why should we trust the distant bureaucratic decision maker over those closest to the action in the first place? I personally see no evidence they are any more noble or insightful.*

*I, WE, enlist your help in applying the appropriate pressure to move them to honest debate and sensible action equitably applied across the state. We will all suffer to some degree before equilibrium is achieved and must address this fact in our particular stewardships. To play a game of chicken with the lives of those most vulnerable is not acceptable. Please use your authority and position to make this heard and felt by those in control.*

*I am grateful for the feeling that I am, "preaching to the choir." Thank you for your time and attention.*