

Hello:

My name is Pat Dani. My husband's name is Frank. We are writing to you to share a bit about our lives with our daughter, Laura, and our concern for her future. Thank you so much for your attention.

Laura is 47 years old. She was born with congenital brain damage and an abnormal chromosome, which together have resulted in her total dependence on others for her life. She has never been able to move her body from one place to another, to grasp anything in her hands, to speak or express her thoughts, needs or desires. She hears well and sees well, but what she comprehends has always been a mystery to us. Getting to know and understand this unique, beautiful person has been a central part of our lives as parents.

It has always been important to us that Laura's limitations not limit the quality of her life, that she can experience life outside of our home as much as possible. And so, a large part of our lifestyle has involved taking Laura to social settings with her peers, to the many cultural settings that Denver offers, to programs and activities available for people with developmental disabilities, to local, state and national parks ... Keeping Laura "active and involved" has been rewarding for all three of us.

But now we are beginning to face our own limitations. In July Frank will be 76 years old and I will be 73 years old. I have gradually developed moderate to severe arthritis in my hips and am not able to lift or transfer Laura. Frank has recently had a knee replacement, and will have another later in the year. These things we can accept as part of our ageing process, and it is painful but inevitable that at some point we will have to trust someone else to love and care for our daughter. As do many other ageing parents who must give up their children to someone else's care, we so much want to be involved in that transition. We want to be available to teach the new people in Laura's life what we have learned about our silent child and how they can begin to relate to her. We want to be able to spend time with Laura in her new environment until it becomes familiar and comfortable for everyone involved. It is difficult for us to imagine what it will be like going through this process. But it is devastating to imagine that we would not have such an opportunity.

Please know that we are very grateful for your consideration and support of HB18-1407.

Pat and Frank Dani (and Laura)