

### 3/24 Public Comment

“Take back the ACC. End the LDC.” How many times did we hear that last year from the new Chair of this Legislature? Now that she’s not the one being bullied, she’s changed her mind about the ACC, and she’s not the only one. What happened to “Let’s treat the ACC like any other Department that delivers a service that the public wants?” Now it’s changed to “The important thing is that the county shouldn’t have responsibility.” I guess that’s more important than the vulnerable people you’ve promised to represent. I wouldn’t have campaigned for you or voted for you, if I knew that you would change your mind two months into your term and that you would join with Rob Doherty’s mission to rob the taxpayers of our nursing home and the decades of our investment in it. We’ve had four years of the county manager’s office acting as that bully’s mouthpieces and enforcers. Now you’re feeding out of their hands rather than carrying out the agenda you campaigned on. You were supposed to be leaders of change. What makes you think that breaking your promises to the public is ok?

Let me remind you that our county manager said publicly in 2020 that he could no longer manage the ACC. When any other county employee says publicly that they can’t do the job they were hired to do, there are consequences. Those consequences never include jettisoning an entire department, as far as I know. If he can’t do the job, ditch him instead of the ACC. Some of you legislators voted to lease the ACC to a management company having no idea what you were voting for on an 11-page handout resolution which included selling the CHHA and afterwards you stated how you regretted your votes. The process of leasing the facility was supposed to involve a trial period in which the selected company showed us what they could do. How has that worked out? From every possible viewpoint, it’s been a failure. Fiscally, the county has paid for every penny of the increasing costs of the ACC over the years of Infinite care’s consultancy and has not received either the capital investments or the shortfall payments Infinite care owes us, amounting to approximately 5.4 million dollars of Sullivan County taxpayers’ money, just for their first year. Are we getting any interest on that? Is there a repayment schedule? The county manager has misled us by adding cumulative debt to the totals of his accounting, that are supposedly owed to the county, instead of real time totals like all the other departments, and he also told us last month that taking back the ACC would raise our taxes by 10%. How does that make any sense at all? We’re paying for everything now, so what would be so different if the ACC’s deed is transferred back as to raise our taxes by 10%? Check for yourselves. Think for yourselves. Your job is to fix this mess, not to make it worse.

Remember the misery and squalor that the 117 residents of the 1 star rated ACC are enduring right now. They aren't cute like the Headstart kids but they're also our family and neighbors. Let me ask you, when Joe went on his cruise last month, was it a 1 star cruise? Have any of you stayed in a 1 star hotel lately? Eaten in 1 star restaurants? I guess 1 star is good enough for the disabled and elderly here, but not for you. You are betraying the trust of the ACC residents, county taxpayers and employees to contract with a company of con artists and scavengers rather than keeping your promises.

Let me put it another way. If you hired a nanny to look after your children, would you keep employing her when you saw that your kids had such long toenails that they couldn't wear their shoes and were covered in bruises and wounds? Bad parents look the other way and say that it's all the nanny's fault. That's what you're doing by going ahead with this lease for Infinitecare. You are the parents who are responsible for what happens to those vulnerable adults at our county nursing home. That's what the operator of a nursing home is.

So now you want to just hand your children to the bad nanny for keeps. You seem to have no confidence in this county's ability to manage the facility, even though the ACC was 5 stars in 2018, and it can be again. Start by hiring an expert consultant who can make that happen, not an agent of the privatization agenda. Such people do exist, rather than the experts at squeezing the last penny from the suffering of others. Let the ACC's staff know that you're not going forward with the lease to Infinite Care and hire them back. Keep your promises to the public. This is our nursing home. Our people live in it and work in it and we want to keep it.

I have a petition online and in print for the public to sign to show their support for the ACC to be restored and against Infinitecare's lease. Please let me know if anybody wants to sign or to get signatures, or to assist in other ways with this effort. Thank you.