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Public Comment

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I am Martha Scoppa from Liberty.

I am also a member of the Senior Legislative Action Committee.

I am very glad to learn that there are now two warming stations – one in a church on North Main Street in Liberty and one here in Monticello at the Ted Stroebele Recreation Center. As a homeowner, I keep the thermostats low to conserve fuel, so my house is on the chilly side and I add sweaters when I feel the cold in my bones, or I may turn the thermostats up for a toasty house when company comes. Those are my choices and they fit my household budget. When someone does not have choices, however, it is a totally different story, so the warming center becomes a crucial need, and I think it is wonderful that the County has arranged for places for people to come in out of the cold. It's really good. While I was driving here this morning, I was thinking about being cold – the heat wasn't up yet in my car. I don't know if any of you have read One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, but it's about the Gulag, a penal colony -- people cold all the time – cold working outside, cold when they came back in. That was going through my head. I was also thinking about people in a war-ravaged country, like today's Ukraine, heading into winter without heat, without water even. So, it's good that we are doing this for our County residents, and I think it's great.

On another topic, I have some concerns about the Care Center at Sunset Lake. At the Health and Human Services committee meeting last week, the Chairman, Nick Salomone, was asked when the Care Center's reconciliation reports would be available. He said he had no update and, when pressed for information, he said, "Whenever they get it to me. I've asked three times." It has been a very long wait. In fact, it is now 15 months without a reconciliation. That means 15 months without oversight. I believe the County is paying \$30,000 per month to Infinite Care for the management of the Finance Office, so I do not understand why the contractual quarterly reconciliations have not been provided. I agree with Nadia Rajsasz that the Chairman of the Health and Human Services committee, Nick Salomone, should put pressure on Infinite Care for the reconciliation reports.

Another concern at the Care Center is staffing. There are not enough CNAs and there are not enough RNs. That shortage means that the residents are not receiving the quality of care they need and deserve. Over the past year, this Legislature has heard complaints from the public regarding understaffing at the Care Center. There are just not enough

staff to care for the residents. I understand this staff shortage is happening all over the state and that Infinite Care says they are doing what they can to recruit and retain workers, but the problem remains. When there is not enough staff, there is inadequate care.

I am not a Nursing Home Administrator, and I don't pretend to understand the workings of this type of facility, but I have worries about Infinite Care. I think many of you also have worries. How can we have better care for the residents? Why are we in the dark about financials? Should the Care Center reduce the number of residents? Despite the creation of the LDC and the consulting agreement with Infinite Care, this Legislature still has responsibility.

Thank you.