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Sonoma County and the Sonoma County Legislative Delegation Respond to the LAO's Report on the Sonoma Developmental Center.

As the state legislators and county supervisor representing Sonoma County and the Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC), we were very concerned to read the Legislative Analyst's Office recommendation for closure of the facility.

SDC is home to over 400 residents and a place of employment for 1,200 employees. As elected representatives we believe that any discussion of scaled back services must be thoughtful and have the health and well-being of the residents as the number one priority.

"The Legislative Analyst Office is widely respected for their analyses of fiscal and policy issues in the state budget and in the operations of state agencies. However, we strongly disagree with the LAO's recommendation for closure of the Sonoma Developmental Center. The LAO's job is to look at more than the bottom line.

We strongly believe any decision must balance the finances and what is best for the over 400 residents who call the Sonoma Developmental Center Home, SDC must be afforded an opportunity to address issues relating to federal funding and to correcting past problems with the care they provide to their residents. We believe the SDC will be successful in those endeavors. It is in the best interest of the residents of SDC and their families, and of the 1,200 staff at SDC, who live in our respective communities, that SDC remains open. At this time, discussions of closure of SDC are unwarranted," said the delegation in a joint statement. "You simply cannot put a dollar figure on the health and well-being of some of the neediest and most medically fragile people in our state."

Supervisor Susan Gorin, who represents the SDC on the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors stated, "Our first priority has to be patient care. Some of the residents have lived at the Sonoma Developmental Center for decades, and we have to ensure these services continue.

In his latest budget proposal, Governor Brown has proposed over \$515 million for the state's three Developmental Centers, including SDC.

The Legislative delegation and Supervisor Gorin pledge to work with the Governor and all stakeholders to find a solution to ensure the residents are the top priority and to address budgetary issues throughout the Developmental Center system.

Supervisor Susan Gorin chairs a broad-based coalition of community groups advocating for continuing services at the Sonoma Developmental Center, and the Coalition looks forward to working with the state and federal governments to ensure that our SDC residents receive the best care possible now and in the future.

Senator Mike McGuire
Senator Lois Wolk
Assemblyman Bill Dodd
Assemblyman Jim Wood
Assemblyman Marc Levine
Supervisor Susan Gorin, Chair of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

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