My name is Bennett Townley and my family is a part of the Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative (DDHI), seeking choice in permanent, affordable, and service-supported housing for adults with IDD. I am 28 years old, live with my parents, have a developmental disability and receive Home and Community Based Services. I currently have a part-time job working for Special Olympics Vermont and like many other adults with IDD, I want to live more independently in my community. To do this my friends and I need service-supported housing available to us.

My friends and I desperately need this service-supported housing now as there are not many service-supported housing options available to us. The Road Home Report from the Act 69 Committee laid out a state plan to help create the >600 needed units for adults with IDD. I am requesting that these asks be funded in the FY2027 Budget to help create more service supported housing options for adult Vermonters with IDD like me:

1. Create state-funded waivers to make housing affordable for us because we require rental subsidies to live in service supported housing due to our limited income.
2. Invest $10,000,000 USD annually for five years to create a funding pipeline administered through the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) to develop housing specific to adults with IDD.
3. Fund a new housing specialist position at the Department of Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) to help develop service-supported housing for adults with IDD and create educational material to help my friends and I know what housing options are out there and how to become a tenant in those units.

I ask the members of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations to please include all these asks in the Fiscal Year 2027 budget given the critical shortage of safe, permanent, and service-supported housing, so that myself and countless other friends with IDD can live more independently in our communities. As a vulnerable population, we need your help to make this a reality.

Thanks for your service and consideration of my ask.

- Bennett Townley (Williston)