

**Hi, my name is Penny Pero - and I am a senior (in case you couldn't tell).**

**I live at Allard Square, a Cathedral Square community in South Burlington. I'm here today because I'm a beneficiary of VHCB funding, and I'd like to talk with you about what that has meant to me.**

**First, I would like to thank you for allowing me to testify here today. I am very honored.**

**My story is one like many seniors. I lived alone in my home in North Hero. I was working full time close to home. In 2013 I suddenly became ill and spent close to 2 months in the hospital. It was suggested that I move to Burlington where I would be closer to my doctors and the hospital. My daughter moved back to Vermont from Washington to live with me in an apartment in Burlington. After 5 years, in 2018, I put my name in at Cathedral Square. I knew the wait list was very long. I was living just on my social security, I had**

**mobility issues, and I really needed access to support and services where I lived. I was very fortunate because at that time they were just building Allard Square senior apartments in South Burlington. I put my name in for that building!**

**That Fall, the building was finished, I was approved for Allard Square, and I moved in. From then on, my life changed. I felt like I lived in a community - meeting new friends and discovering my new life. I loved it!**

**We met our great SASH (Support and Services at Home) team, consisting of a co-ordinator, a building manager and a wellness nurse. We have a very strong and helpful support staff in them.**

**Our building is very safe and handicap accessible - hand rails throughout, elevators, choice of bathtub or shower in apartments, all**

**with safety bars. Entrances are locked, including from the porch and garage.**

**We are all seniors here, but we are all from mixed incomes. The apartments are 1- or 2- bedrooms, and nobody knows which are subsidized, tax-credit or market rate. We are a community.**

**Some of the programs we have are Bone Builders and Chair Yoga, and we have an outdoor walking group when weather permits. We are walking distance to stores like Trader Joe's, restaurants, and the library and Senior Center are next door. We have a laundry room, a gym, and a lobby to socialize with your neighbors (my favorite).**

**There is a HUGE need for this kind of housing. I often wonder where I would be if it wasn't for Cathedral Square. Right now there is a wait list at Cathedral Square of about 1,000 people, and a 3-5 year wait.**

**We would appreciate your full funding for Vermont Housing and**

**Conservation Board and ask for your continued support of VHCB. This is helping to promote independence and a safe, affordable place to live.**

**Thank you for your time.**