

Hi, my name is Laurie Mumley. I live in Shelburne, Vermont. I'm an aging single mom of two. I am asking that the budget be amended to INCLUDE 10.82 million towards implementing the 3 pilot planning grant projects designated by Act 186 as well as an annual funding pipeline to develop service-supported housing for adults with I/DD and moderate to high support needs.

My son Joey is autistic. He struggles with a number of behavioral challenges, including compulsive behaviors, sensory issues, a complete lack of safety awareness, and a need for assistance with all activities of daily living. He requires 24/7 supervision and is functionally nonverbal, making him particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

Vermont didn't have any educational programs to meet his needs. Two years ago, he began a residential educational placement in Manchester, New Hampshire. He is getting what he needs, and is absolutely thriving. However, he ages out of that program in May. Vermont doesn't have service-supported peer residences that can meet his needs. His team and I are exploring out of state options for him. He should not have to live in another state, possibly further than he is now, in order to receive appropriate care!

Over the years, I served on a number of state level committees, advisory boards and work groups. All had recommendations to address housing this particular population. We were repeatedly told there was "no money". This is not quite the truth.

The truth is that every single year, Vermont spends money on housing certain populations. The homeless, criminals being released from jail, substance abusers, new Americans -all have routinely gotten housing dollars. I certainly wouldn't say that those populations don't need housing. HOWEVER, as a society we need to prioritize the our most vulnerable citizens FIRST.

When Brandon Training School closed in 1993, promises were made by the State that have not been kept. The community programs (day programs, work programs and HOUSING programs) still do not broadly exist over thirty years later. Very little money has been invested in the System of Care over the years and we have fallen behind. It is time for Vermont to end the trail of broken promises and do better.

Thank you,

Laurie Mumley