



*Building a Safe Harbor for Vermont Elders through Advocacy and Education*

**COVE Testimony to House Appropriations Committee on FY '17  
Budget  
February 11, 2016**

Good afternoon. My name is Gini Milkey and I am here as the Executive Director of the Community of Vermont Elders. COVE appreciates this opportunity to address a few important issues in the FY 17 budget.

First, I would note that there are no state funds for the LIHEAP program, an essential program that helps keep Vermonters warm and safe. I would encourage the committee to go back to the practice from a couple of years ago, in which the State's LIHEAP portion was included in the base budget. This would provide certainty for those elders and vulnerable Vermonters who depend on this important funding.

Second, I would like to speak in support of the Choices for Care budget as proposed by the Administration. The need for elders to access supports allowing them to age at home are great, and we think the state should continue to examine how we can better support the Choices for Care program. We continue to support fully reinvesting any additional savings back into CFC. That being said, we do think that the administration's CFC proposal is a step in the right direction. One technical issue of note is that, unlike the last two years, it seems that language addressing how to calculate savings in the CFC program has not been included in the FY 17 budget. Perhaps this was an oversight, but we would encourage the committee to look at that issue and include the same language that was included in the FY 16 budget.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.