

Brother Frank Hagerty, S.S.E. of the Society of St. Edmund, which is a religious community of priests and brothers, who have served Vermont since the 1890's.

And I am also a member of the Board of Directors of Vermont Interfaith Action.

After VIA met with Governor Shumlin and Secretary of Administration Justin Johnson, they did include in their budget proposal a Current Services Budget, and we are grateful. But it is expressed in terms of what it would cost to level fund the current budget into 2017. We think that it would be more useful to reveal the actual cost of programs—programs to which the state has made commitments—if the programs were to be fully funded.

For example, Community High School .

I myself do ministry in the correctional facilities in South Burlington and Rutland. I know that education is vital for employment for inmates on release. And employment is vital for preventing recidivism. Level-funding will not meet the real educational needs for our young inmates. We need to know the real cost of fully funding this program, so that we can all work on finding solutions so that this program can continue to fully meet the needs of inmates for a high school diploma so they have a better chance in life on their release.

We all need to know the actual numbers so we can give input and try to help the legislature in making difficult budget decisions, and perhaps help find solutions.

As people of faith and commitment, we are concerned for the welfare of all the people of Vermont. We know the state is facing difficult financial problems and we know the legislature is facing difficult decisions. We want to help.