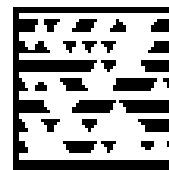


**Home Access Program
Vermont Center for Independent Living
Senate Appropriations Testimony
April 7, 2015**

- Thank you for the opportunity to be here.
- My name is Patricia Tedesco and I reside in Woodbury. I am the Coordinator of the Home Access Program at the Vermont Center for Independent Living which is a state-wide organization headquartered in Montpelier.
- **We are grateful for your past funding of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board.** Part of this funding supports VCIL's Home Access Program. The program helps pay for ramps and bathroom modifications allowing Vermonters with disability to more fully participate within their community.
- Over the past three months, with dollars received by VCIL from the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, we have been able to complete 13 home modifications. These modifications are pivotal as they allow Vermonters who have permanent physical disabilities to remain in their own homes. During this time, the average age of the people we helped is 56, and the average income bracket is just above what HUD defines as "extremely low income."
- Without these modifications to make their homes and communities more accessible, the program participants might otherwise be forced to live in a nursing home. There is a cost savings here. For example, the average bathroom modification – installing a roll-in shower, a higher ADA toilet,



and a wall mounted sink which a person in a wheelchair can use – costs about \$10,000. The average ramp costs \$5,000 and enables a person to get out of their home to participate in their community. One goal of our program is to prevent Vermonters with disabilities from having to live in a nursing home, which has an average yearly cost of about \$97,000.

- Although funding through VHCB for this past quarter made it possible for nine Vermonters to receive 13 projects, during that same time span our program received 26 more new applications. We currently have 67 projects in the works, many of which are receiving leverage funding through other organizations or independent donations. At this moment we have 79 people on the waiting list.
- On behalf of the peers we work with at VCIL and the Home Access Program, I ask you to support funding for the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board. Thank you.