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Sent: Tuesday, February 13, 2018 6:44 PM
To: Theresa Utton
Subject: budget testimony final

My name is Tracy Thresher and I have lived in Barre, Vermont for my entire life. I want to say that it is the support I have received during my many long years that has gotten me to where I am today. I want to share with you words of wisdom about wars of Autism, movement, and speech.

With Autism my speech is unreliable and the words are stuck in my head fighting to come out. With typing I am able to get the words out and let people know what I am thinking and feeling. I want others to know that not being able to talk doesn't mean there's a lack of understanding, or that the person doesn't want to share what they are thinking.

I am all worked up after looking at the budget. It is so infuriating to see that people with disabilities have to defend our right to be able to access the community and participate in meaningful employment.

In her analysis of the proposed budget, Monica Hutt- the Commissioner for the Department of Aging and Independent Living- had this to say about the developmental services waiver reduction:

"If the proposed reductions are implemented across the board as suggested, this will impact 3,070 currently in services. Direct supports to consumers, including employment supports, community supports, respite and residential supports will be reduced and/or eliminated."

I want to do something with my life just like anyone else put on this earth, and without support I am at risk of wasting my time away with no meaningful relationships or being trapped in life of uselessness.

I like to think that my existence matters enough to the decision making people that they will consider me, and the thousands of Vermonters who depend on our services to survive and hopefully to thrive. Please have high expectations for us that make our life worthwhile.

That I want to say, don't cut our budget, is an obvious statement, it would put an awful burden on our lives; not to mention our families.

Thank you for listening to my words.