

If I were to ask every member of this committee assembled here today the question: "What dollar amount would you be willing to pay in order to save your life or the life of someone you love?", I imagine that most of you would find this question to be absurd if not impossible to answer because I suspect we all inherently hold to the belief that the cost of life is priceless. But let's just say you were forced to assign a dollar amount to this price tag of life. What figure would you start at? Ten million? Twenty million? Maybe even more?

Now, how would you react if I were to tell you that WRAP has literally saved my life. Would you say it would be worth sixty thousand dollars? Because this is the exact amount of money now on the chopping block that would eliminate the funding of WRAP initiatives throughout the state of Vermont.

A little over a month ago, I was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. This sudden and unexpected news was both jolting and terrifying. Upon learning my diagnosis, my life was turned completely upside down in a matter of seconds. My PTSD returned, I became panic-stricken, severely depressed and even suicidal. However, by utilizing the Wellness Tools contained in my WRAP plan, I was able to thwart off urges and acts of self-harm, which ultimately kept me from being admitted to the hospital.

Because of my WRAP plan, I was able to reach out to friends, family members, mental health professionals and my church community-all of whom I had identified in my WRAP as people on my support team. And guess what? Every one of them came through for me.

Furthermore, one of the most fundamental teachings of WRAP that became vital to my survival was taking personal responsibility for the future of my health care needs and strongly advocating for myself .

Initially, I encountered delay after delay with the first health care provider I was referred to. First my pathology results would have to wait an additional week to come in. Next, my PET scan couldn't be scheduled for another five weeks- a test which would detect if my cancer had spread to any other parts of my body. Only after the PET scan would I then be assigned to a team of oncologists to take on my case. Now we're talking six weeks or longer. I was running out of time and no one seemed to care. All the waiting and not-knowing became excruciating.

Believing I had the power to act and change things on my own, I made a few phone calls to another care facility and lo and behold, I was able to schedule a PET scan all by myself for less than a week later. I had taken back control of my body and the direction of my care, feeling hope for the first time since my diagnosis.

Because there are no guarantees when it comes to cancer, I took quick action to make sure I had all of my end of life paperwork and documents in order. This was no fun chore to be sure, but it was crucial. I can now rest assured that my loved ones will know exactly what my wishes are

and what to do should my life come to an end sooner than expected. Having completed this task is a huge relief to me and my family. Again, this is another component of WRAP. I have even established a website where my support network can sign up on-line to offer me rides to and from my future radiation treatments which are expected to begin in several months and last Monday-Friday for six weeks straight. Already I have over thirty volunteers signed up and ready to go.

On Tuesday the 18th of February, I will begin my first round of chemotherapy, surrounded by an excellent team of oncologists, an empathetic medical staff and so many family and friends cheering me on.

Although my journey ahead will be arduous and long, I have hope for a bright, even joyful future full of meaning and purpose. You see, I am a WRAP facilitator and I need to get back to work! I need to demonstrate to countless of other Vermonters that WRAP really works!

So when you think about spending sixty thousand dollars, it doesn't simply go to pay for one person's recovery, it goes to pay for multitudes of Vermonters' wellbeing. And that my friends, is not only a bargain, it is priceless!