

1/18/2024

The Honorable Emilie Kornheiser
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means
115 State Street Montpelier, VT 05633

Re: H.610- An act relating to making home modifications for safety and livability

Dear Chair Kornheiser, Vice Chair Canfield, and members of the House Committee on Ways and Means,

As a resident of Vermont and someone who has been impacted by ALS and the cost of home modifications, I urge you to swiftly move H.610 through your committee.

ALS is a fatal, progressive neurodegenerative disease with no known cures. ALS robs a person of their ability to walk, talk, eat, and finally breathe, usually within 2-5 years of their diagnosis. ALS can strike anyone at any time, and throughout the course of their illness, people with ALS need significant medical care, which can easily exceed \$250,000 a year. In addition, the cost of making a home more accessible for someone living with ALS can be incredibly burdensome, costing thousands of dollars depending on the needs of the home and person.

H.610 would allow an individual to receive a tax credit of up to \$15,000 of qualified expenses in their lifetime with the purpose of helping individuals live more safely in their homes. Qualifying expenses refer to unreimbursed and uncovered expenses relating to modifications of a homestead to enhance safety and livability, such as: ramps, lifts, widened doorways and hallways, bathroom renovation, and other modifications specifically made to improve accessibility or safety. The cost of making a home more accessible can be incredibly burdensome, costing thousands of dollars depending on the needs of the home and person.

If enacted, Vermont would join 8 other states, including 2 of Vermont's neighbors, who provide tax credits for home modifications: Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, New Hampshire, and Virginia. This legislation would impact people living with ALS who modify their homes in response to their diagnosis, as well as anyone in the state who is interested in making their home more accessible, which has long-term positive impacts on Vermont's overall housing market. The financial impact on people living with ALS and other diseases that require modifying a home would be significant and would incentivize these families to invest in making their homes safer to live in.

For these reasons, I ask for the committee's attention and support on H.610 and hope to see a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Marina Fleites
60 Hayes Avenue
South Burlington, VT 05403