

My name is David Frye.

I live in North Ferrisburg, Vermont.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening.

I want to talk to you about funding for services for people with disabilities.

I am a member of the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, Co-Chair of the Public Policy Committee, and I am on the boards of other organizations.

I am going to share a little about my experience – however I know from all the meetings I go to and listening sessions I have listened to- I am not alone or unique.

I am eligible to receive services from Vermont's designated agencies like the Howard Center and specialized services agencies like Champlain Community Services.

I need services and support to live in the community. I lived with shared living providers and never found a good match. I like living independently, but I can't do it with support.

It shouldn't be an all or nothing situation. Sometimes during the pandemic I went months without any support visits.

Now I receive services at home that help me stay straight with my bills and my benefits. Without support, my bills pile up and everything falls apart.

I have had staff leave because they do not get paid enough to keep working with me.

The most recent loss was a community support worker I liked and had worked with for 6 months.

She told me she was leaving to take a new job that paid more doing something else- not working with people with disabilities- which she enjoyed, but couldn't afford to do anymore.

I was without services for more than 6 months after she left and had to start from scratch with a new person when one was finally hired.

Please increase the wages for direct support professionals at least 10% and please increase them every year so people like me can have a stable workforce.

Thank you for your time and for your service.