

## Testimony for Public Budget Hearing 2/21/23

Hello. My name is Francis Churchill and I live in Richmond, VT. I am here to ask that you prioritize *increased* funding for expanding the care and housing options for older Vermonters in the 2024 state budget.

My Mom is 85 years old and as of last October is living at Cathedral Square's Assisted Living in Burlington. It took my family *five years* to secure a spot for her there and as I understand it, *we are the lucky ones*.

When she turned 80, mom was living in an independent senior apartment in Hinesburg. Between my brothers and our families living in the area, members of her church, the SASH program at her housing facility, and the VNA adult day program, she was able to live there independently *but just barely*.

At that time, mom's doctor told us that if she had one wrong fall, illness, or cognitive decline, that she would likely end up in a nursing home facility, so we needed to develop a Plan B living arrangement for her. We took the advice and reached out to assisted living facilities in the area and got on waiting lists at two places. Some facilities never returned our calls- as their waiting lists were already overwhelmed.

We heard from Cathedral Square Assisted Living this past summer about an opening in the fall. We took the opening and were approved with a move-in date later in October. In early October however, mom had a medical event and brief hospitalization and could not return to independent living. She absolutely needed Assisted Living right then and somehow that was the first time in 5 years it was available. We were the lucky ones. She has the care she needs now.

My Mom has lived her entire life in Vermont. Grew up in Bristol and raised her 6 boys in Richmond. She worked in the Richmond school cafeteria, drove school buses, worked at the local bank, and at the Community Action agency in Burlington.

Please fund more housing and care options like SASH and Assisted Living so Vermonters have the housing and care they need as they age here. It shouldn't just be for the lucky ones.

*Thank You*

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