

**Joint Public Hearing on Governor's FY2025 Budget
Senate and House Appropriations Committees**

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am Jenn Townley from Williston, and a member of the Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative. Our children have an intellectual and/or developmental disability diagnosis with significant support needs whether medical, emotional, physical, health and safety, etc. and qualify for Medicaid's Home and Community Based Services waiver. Our I/DD community desperately needs the development of housing options that addresses the range of our sons/daughters needs and provides choices in stable, permanent, service-supported peer housing. I'm here to ask for \$10.82M for implementation of the three Act 186 Pilot grant projects, and for annual development of service-supported housing for adults with I/DD.

Vermont's State System of Care Plan for Developmental Services estimates 2.5% of the Vermont population have an intellectual or developmental disability. Many adults with developmental disabilities are living with their aging parents and seek a permanent service-supported housing option for them to call home in a community where they grew up and where the community knows them and meets their need when their parents can no longer care for them. For families like mine, there are restless nights and worry wondering who will care for our children when we are gone, to meet their needs and provide them with a happy and meaningful life. I'm sure many of you have faced a similar dilemma of finding appropriate housing and services for aging parents when the role of caregiving becomes too much.

Since the closing of Brandon, there has been little money invested by the State in service-supported housing for adults with developmental disabilities. Vermont has failed to meet their obligations under Federal Medicaid Rules and is currently under two corrective action plans to demonstrate that HCBS waiver recipients like my son, have true choice, including choices of housing. One thing that will support the sustainability of this type of housing model for our family members is that our adult children have HCBS Medicaid waivers to support them, as well as access to entitlement benefits like Social Security to help fund their rent. I'm here to ask for \$10.82M for Implementation of the three Act 186 Pilot grant projects, and for annual development of Service-Supported housing for my son and others in this vulnerable population, so we can close the gap on the 602 units needed immediately as outlined in last year's *VDDC Housing Brief* from Act 186. Thank you.