

Hello Committee,

I appreciate your willingness to listen to the stories of parents with family members with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. I live in Williston and have a 26 year old, son, Justin, who will need housing soon, when my husband and I are no longer to care for him in the future. He has Down syndrome, an Intellectual /Developmental Disability. He is a good athlete and is a good worker, he is employed at UVM in the Grounds dept and receives great reviews, because he is a very positive friendly guy. He can take the bus to work, and does chores at home, even makes dinner one night a week. But he is not able to live on his own, he can't manage his schedule or money, he will never drive, and once we are gone he will need long term Service Supported Housing. We are part of Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative, a parent group working to create housing choices for people in Vermont.

I am asking you to include the language in a bill this session, that will make individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities priorities for Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, and for the Vermont Home Improvement Program. Including this language will provide more funding for service-supported housing to adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). These are ZERO DOLLAR requests, for policy changes only – not money.

My son would like to live with peers in a residence, like others his age, in Williston where he grew up, near friends and well known neighbors - the “village” that has supported him. This language will support a source of funding for service-supported housing for individuals with disabilities who are eligible to receive Medicaid-funded home and community based services. He doesn't want to be assigned to a Shared Living Provider in a town where he doesn't know anyone, where he will only stay a few years and then have to move again.

I have included below a list of reasons why the state needs to create this housing, many of which are based on Federal rules, and unfulfilled State promises. One of these is the promise made 30 years ago by governor Dean, to care for the individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities(I/DD). I would respectfully ask when you are trying to avoid new taxes, that you consider the financial burden that is carried by the unpaid families, and the caregivers who are paid less than a liveable wage. They bear a silent tax that should be shared by all Vermonters, not paid only by those who are providing care.

Thanks for your time and careful consideration, I appreciate that you are tasked with making decisions for funding the many needs of the state. Please dont ignore those with IDD because they are not causing noisy social problems.

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9% of individuals who have ID/DD are either homeless, or at risk of homelessness, (Vermont Care Partners).

The State of Vermont needs to create 602 new units of supportive housing to meet the needs of adults with I/DD who receive HCBS. (VTDDC 2023 Housing Research Brief).

The State of Vermont failed to meet their obligations under Federal Medicaid Rules, and now have 2 Corrective Action Plans to demonstrate that HCBS recipients have true choice, including choices in housing. The three Act 186 Pilot Planning Grants are contained in the latest Corrective Action Plan.

Since closing Brandon in 1993, there has been little to no money invested by the State of Vermont in appropriate service supported housing for adults with developmental disabilities and moderate to high support needs, in spite of promises made by Governor Dean. People with Developmental Disabilities have been unfunded for over 30 years, it is time to include them.

1999 Olmstead Act directed states to develop a fiscal plan to include housing for people with

developmental disabilities in their state budgets, however there are no targets in the VT Olmstead plan.

Our family members have HCBS funding provided by Medicaid for services, and access to entitlement benefits (SSA benefits) for ongoing housing costs, making them a stable and reliable renting group.