

**TO:** Members of the Vermont House and Senate Appropriations Committees  
**FROM:** Jenn Townley, Williston  
**SUBJECT:** Public Comment for the January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 Joint Hearing on the Budget Adjustment Act  
**DATE:** January 22, 2025

I am a member of the Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative, serve as a family member on the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, and a member of the Act 186 Pilot Planning Grant awarded to the Champlain Housing Trust to explore new housing options for adults with I/DD. **I strongly support including \$2.8 million for Champlain Housing Trust to complete construction of Act 186 housing for adults with I/DD in the 2025 Budget Adjustment Act.**

My son is 26 years old, is on the Autism Spectrum along with other diagnoses, and currently lives at home with my husband and me. He desires to live with friends in the community where he grew up and where the community knows him and can meet his needs when we can no longer care for him. He wants choice in where he wants to live and with whom he wants to live with and be able to experience the same freedoms other people his age do but with the necessary supports and a safety net in place. My husband and I desire that he can live in a stable, permanent, affordable, service-supported peer residence that meets his support needs and provides him with a happy and meaningful life.

In 2022, the legislature passed Act 186 to begin planning for innovative housing models for Vermonters with I/DD. The planning is now complete but without additional funding to develop the Champlain Housing Trust project, tax dollars invested in planning will not have produced anything and Vermonters with I/DD will continue to lack appropriate housing choices which is a requirement of the CMS Medicaid Settings Rule. The \$2.8M in funding will allow for 10 units to be built to help close the gap on the 602 units identified in the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council's 2023 Research Brief.

This legislature has the opportunity to help the many Vermonters with I/DD seeking to live in community by committing the \$2.8M funds for Champlain Housing Trust to complete construction of a safe, affordable and integrated living option for adults with I/DD with moderate to higher support needs.

Thank you for your consideration and support of Vermonters with I/DD to meet their need for housing choice and options.