

Esteemed Chair and members of the Appropriations Committee,

As you deliberate on this budget, I ask that we ground our decisions in the living realities of Vermonters. Healthcare costs are rising. Benefits are being reduced. Property taxes are increasing. The cost of groceries, housing, and utilities continues to climb. So, I ask: who are the Vermonters WE- the legislature are trying to serve?

We are serving people of varying identities. We have an aging population, people on fixed incomes. We are serving working families, many of whom are stretched thin. And many Vermonters are doing well, for that we are grateful.

“We” as a system are tasked with providing the structures necessary to serving people with disabilities, caregivers, migrants, LGBTQ+ Vermonters, and communities of Color who already experience disparities in access, wealth, and health outcomes.

I encourage you all to apply a serious lens of equity and fiscal responsibility as you move forward. We have the tool of the probing equity questions at our disposal (which should be on the wall of every committee, and I will provide an abbreviated version to your committee assistant) to use as part of our decision-making. Who benefits? Who is burdened? Who is left out? And how will this proposal impact those historically underserved?

We invest in studies. We convene task forces. We ask experts and community members for recommendations. Let’s honor that work by implementing what they have already told us.  
\*Please reference the Reports. The data is there!\*

Housing is Healthcare. Healthcare is a Human Right that should be focused on Wellness and preventative care versus illness and sickness treatment when it is sometimes too late.

Please Invest in housing authorities and housing trusts. Housing development, accessibility and universal design. Please invest in programs that provide services and support to our most vulnerable populations, including but not limited to people of marginalized identities, aging and unsheltered.

Some of the program requests that I encourage you to support, which you have before you, are those of the Land Access and Opportunity Board (LAOB), Human Rights Commission (HRC), Vermont Professionals of Color Network (VT POC), VT Developmental Disabilities Council, CAP agencies, Designated Agencies, Shelter and Recovery Agencies. We need to ensure the pieces are there to bridge the gaps.

Our budgets are moral documents. Let’s ensure they reflect our values — fairness, dignity, and care for those most impacted. **When we meet the needs of our most vulnerable and historically marginalized individuals, we meet the needs of EVERYONE!**

Thank you for your diligent and arduous work in balancing the funding streams that support a system where ALL Vermonters can thrive.

Respectfully,

Rep. Saudia LaMont  
Lamoille-Washington

General and Housing

115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633  
(802) 335-2334 (W)  
[slamont@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:slamont@leg.state.vt.us)