

To the Appropriations Committee Members:

My adult daughter is 32 years old. She is profoundly and culturally Deaf and is wheelchair-bound due to cerebral palsy with spastic quadriplegia. She also lives with a mild developmental disorder. She requires full-time supervision and assistance with all activities of daily living. She yearns to communicate what's in her head, but people who don't know her well often lack the patience and intuition to understand her. She is bright and eager to engage in social and cultural activities, but her opportunities for peer interactions, experiential learning, and contributing to her community are severely restricted due to Vermont's very limited housing options for citizens who need developmental services. After graduating from the American School for the Deaf in 2015, she returned to her home state of Vermont where, unfortunately, our best efforts to develop and arrange appropriate supports have met with little success.

Vermont's system of care for adult citizens living with intellectual and developmental challenges has been dominated by a one-size-fits-all residential care model, the Shared Living Provider template, which places clients in foster care family situations. While this model offers many benefits for some, it has resulted in unintended negative consequences for many others. They have found themselves isolated from their peers and from the community at large, deprived of the social and cultural activities which are crucial to healthy inclusion in the community.

It is essential to this vulnerable population for Vermont government to take an active role in developing changes in its system of care in order to meet the basic human rights of these citizens. Vermont must step forward to offer a range of supportive community services for vulnerable individuals. These services must include supportive housing options which include group and collective living environments which incorporate full time staff support.

As a member of the Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative, I support their goals and objectives:

1. **New permanent position at DAIL** – Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living – to support housing development and housing process for participants in HCBS services (DS,CFC,BI). Position is included in S. 328 Senate Housing Committee bill, and recommended by the Act 69 Road Home Report;
2. **New funding for Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to develop I/DD service supported housing** – there is no money in the Governor's recommended budget specifically for I/DD housing. **The Senate Housing Bill includes \$3 Million** – the Road Home Report recommends \$5-10 million per year for 5 years;
3. **New funding for Bridge Rental Assistance** – State funded rental assistance (Section 8 vouchers)for participants in DAIL's HCBS programs- The Road Home report recommends \$1-2 million dollars per year.The Bridge Rental Assistance Program that would include DAIL/HCBS is in bill H. 494.
4. If #3 is not funded, there is an **immediate need for 25-30 state funded rental assistance vouchers to support the tenants in the Service Supported housing** the legislature has invested in – e.g. the DDHI pilot projects in

Waterbury and Burlington, and new I/DD projects in the VHCB pipeline-
WWJ. \$400,000.00 dollars estimated annual investment.

Sincerely,
David McKay, MD