

Members of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees; tank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Governors budget. My name is Michele Gallagher and I live in Manchester Center, Vt. I am one of the over 175 parents in the Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative advocating for permanent supported housing for our son with multiple disabilities receiving moderate to high support on a Home and Community based Services Medicaid waiver.

My husband, Ron Vallario and I adopted our son, Jaleel, when he was 3 after fostering him from infancy. Jay had been diagnosed with probable FAS. Since then, ADHD and ASD have been added to his diagnosis. Jay is now 29 years old. My husband and I are in our 70's. This young man, our youngest son, has struggled over the years to succeed, to make friends, to become a part of the community. My husband and I are aging, we won't be around forever to support Jay.

Jay needs supervision especially in the community as he is easily led and can get in trouble with the wrong people. He needs help living independently, reminders to take his medicine, practice health and hygiene habits, clean and cook. While he can do many of these activities, he needs help organising, and carrying through on these activities. Jay cannot drive, he needs help handling his finances, doing his laundry.

I strongly urge you to create a position at Dail to support housing development and process at HCBS.

Support new and increased funding for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to develop I/DD service supported housing. And quickly, quickly, before it's too late provide the funding and the means to allow our family members to continue to live in their own communities and lead productive, safe and happy lives. Please, include these requests in the budget:

ASKS:

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 – the Road Home report recommends the State fund rental assistance for participants in DAIL's HCBS programs- similar to the state funded rental assistance for participants in the Department of Mental Health's programs. The Road Home recommends \$1-2 million dollars per year to be similar to DMH. There may be a Bridge Rental Assistance Program that would include DAIL/HCBS 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.

Many Thanks, Michele Gallagher