

Representative James,

Thank you for sharing the update regarding the timeline extension. While additional time may provide administrative flexibility, it also means continued delays in access to government services for Vermonters with disabilities across the enterprise.

After listening to yesterday's joint hearing on State of Vermont IT Modernization Hearing, as well as HEDI's conversation with Lisa Gauvin today, I want to flag a structural concern about how that extended timeline may be interpreted.

This week's discussions reflected several underlying constraints:

- Limited visibility into project cost, scope, and status
- Inconsistent or incomplete reporting data
- Absence of completed gap analysis in key areas
- Ongoing uncertainty regarding funding alignment and oversight
- Confirmation that baseline requirements such as Section 508 are not consistently embedded in contractual obligations

Taken together, these conditions suggest that the primary challenge is not the timeline itself, but the absence of clearly defined and enforced procurement, implementation, or deployment baselines.

In that context, extending the compliance timeline does not materially reduce risk. Without defined requirements, verified system capabilities, and aligned oversight, accessibility gaps are likely to surface late in the process—potentially after substantial investment and near (or after) deployment.

Put differently, the issue is less whether the State has sufficient time, and more whether the current structure supports identifying and resolving compliance requirements early enough for that additional time to matter.

Given the scale of the systems involved and their role in public service delivery, this may be an area where more explicit alignment between procurement, oversight, and compliance requirements would be valuable.

Several statements during the hearing and committee conversation underscore those current constraints:

"What's the plan?"

"How can we do our job?"

"They haven't done the analysis."

"It just feels like we don't really have much oversight or control here."

"We don't really understand how we're funding it."

"The foundation wasn't there, and there's going to be a ripple effect."

Those concerns point to a broader issue: effective oversight depends on having a clear, reliable foundation to oversee.

I remain hopeful that the additional time translates into meaningful progress, rather than simply extending existing gaps.

Again, I encourage you to share this email thread in the record. Thank you for your continued engagement on this issue.

Warmly,

Emily Ray