

### **Jerome Hazlewood 3SquaresVT Day 2025 Testimony**

My name is Jerome Hazelwood, I am currently a resident here in Barre at the Pierre Motel.

I am here to ask you to pass legislation to instruct the State to opt into the SNAP Restaurant Meals Program, appropriate \$75,000 to cover restaurant startup costs, and \$100K to create a staff position within DCF to administer the program.

For myself personally it comes down to my inability to be as practical as possible financially when my cooking and storing options are so limited. I only have a dorm sized refrigerator that doesn't freeze or keep things cold. It also inhibits my ability to eat healthier foods due to lack of storage. I managed to get around the fact that I have microwave knowing that certain foods are not appropriate for cooking in one. If I take my time with meal preparation I have made things that are suitable such as kale, and broccoli but it takes much longer and my disability limits what I can do. Again, taking into consideration all of this, there is still the problem of storage.

This can be a problem because I have physical challenges that I am dealing with that require me to shop more often and it's very painful later in the month. When my wife was alive and I was healthier before my surgery I was shopping much less than I do now since she has passed.

One thing that seemed to be of help was the meals program that allowed me to purchase hot, restaurant prepared food at various dining establishments. The time that I saved was phenomenal, and my diet was a bit more diverse. In an ideal situation I would have a pantry or cupboards and a large but standard size refrigerator for holding produce and dairy. This is the next best thing. It's less stressful for me physically, and that means fewer x-rays, medications and hospital visits in general.

Again, I ask that you support people like me by passing legislation to instruct the State to opt into the SNAP Restaurant Meals Program, appropriate \$75,000 to cover restaurant startup costs, and \$100K to create a staff position within DCF to administer the program.

I appreciate the time you took to listen to my testimony today, and thank you.