

Hello Senate and House Appropriations Committees,

Thank you for asking for testimony on the Budget. My name is Marla McQuiston, my husband Tim McQuiston and I are from Williston, we are two of the over 175 parents in Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative advocating for permanent service supported housing, for our son with Down syndrome who receives services on a Home and Community Based Services Medicaid waiver.

Our son, Justin, is 28 and we are 68 and 70. Justin will need a permanent home in the near future, and will always need supports for living, for work and to be involved in his community and Special Olympics activities. He is not able to handle money, can't organize his schedule or drive, can't do all his cooking, cleaning, manage doctor appts or health care.

We are getting older quickly and we know that Justin will do best living in Williston, where he grew up and knows people. He knows the bike path, where to get the bus for work, and where his friends live. He will have a hard time if he is moved to another town. It is hard for anyone to move and much harder for someone with an intellectual and developmental disability! He doesn't want to be in a Shared Living Provider (adult foster care), where he will have to move every few years. He wants to be in a permanent service supported housing where he can stay even if staff change, and he can have the support of his "village" community and live with friends, after his parents are gone.

Please support:

1. The request for yearly funding thru VHCB to help create housing for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities(IDD).
2. The request for at least 30 state funded rental assistance vouchers for individuals with IDD in housing projects the legislature has already invested in.
3. A permanent position at DAIL to support housing development and create systems to support individuals in HCBS services to find housing that works for them.

The Act 69 Committee recommended these requests and the state has the responsibility to care for these individuals. The state agencies are not able to find enough Shared Living Providers and 600+ units are needed this year. We need to create housing ASAP.

If action is taken Justin will be able to live with friends in permanent housing, with the supports he needs, after his parents are gone.

Please make sure this funding is included in the budget.

Thank you

Timothy, Marla and Justin McQuiston

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