



April 22, 2025

Sen. Lyons,

I am writing today to express my support for H.91. I did provide a letter of interest to Rep. Wood and wanted to follow up with a letter to the Senate Health and Welfare Committee.

VT 211 appreciates the work of the legislature to improve the current housing and shelter system. I believe it is important these programs have consistency and statewide continuity, which is currently lacking in our system of care. It is also important that this restructuring includes ongoing and timely technical support, training and oversight to agencies that are part of this system.

VT 211 has provided after-hours administration of the GA Emergency Housing program for the Agency of Human Services since 2010. We have a unique view of that program, how it operates, and how it impacts homeless Vermonters and service providers. In current operations, the program rules can change up to four times a year, and usually with very little time to explain these changes to clients and other community providers. This creates confusion and increased stress for 211 and ESD staff, our vendors, service providers and clients. There is a bottleneck at shelters and little flexibility in communities for specific population needs such as transition beds and medical respite. Over 50% of VT 211 calls in 2024 were for housing and shelter, but we know many of those callers have already exhausted their local resources and there is not a consistency in what that looks like across the state. In my testimony to the House Human Services Committee on 211 Day, I shared that our evening shift supervisor told me recently she was worried 211 has become the “face of no” due to the current GA Housing rules and their implementation. This is not what our service is meant to be. We are caught between our role of helping Vermonters and the current system that is not working.

VT 211 sees H.91 as an opportunity for better communication, and more streamlined access to local, community-based services. This must include convening partners regularly, oversight by the Office of Economic Opportunity, and thoughtful, data driven planning. VT 211 has a history of partnership with the CAP agencies and sees the potential for thoughtful planning and partnership with them.



VT 211 is interested in change and in the possibilities that could come out of H.91- a streamlined system based on regional data to provide the services needed in those regions with oversight and solid communication.

Thank you for your time,

Elizabeth Gilman

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