

Dear Chair Lyons & Calysta,

Vermont Legal Aid urges you to maintain the language in Section § 2215 of H.938 that allows Vermonters to appeal to the Human Services Board. Recipients of emergency housing have historically had the right to appeal decisions to the HSB, **and this right is essential to fundamental due process.**

**Furthermore, we urge you to maintain specific language authorizing housing pending appeal.** This provision is essential. It protects people from losing their housing when the Department may have made a clear mistake – mistakes that are only corrected through the appeals process. Without it, Vermonters will be forced out of their homes before their case is even decided. Due process after a household is evicted from emergency shelter is not meaningful due process.

No one should become homeless because of an error that is still under review. Stripping this protection will only increase instability and homelessness across our state.

**Finally, VLA urges the committee to establish a two-step grievance and appeal process for participants housed through community providers.** First, a participant who disagrees with an action or decision made by a community provider shall have the right to grieve that action or decision to the relevant AHS department or office. AHS shall review the community provider's action or decision and issue a written determination reversing or upholding it within five business days of receiving the grievance.

Second, a participant who disagrees with AHS's determination shall have the right to appeal that determination to the Human Services Board pursuant to the appeals process described in § 2215. Participants shall remain housed from the time a grievance is filed through the final resolution of any subsequent HSB appeal.

We urge the committee to maintain these critical protections within H.938.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Andrea