



**To:** Senate Health & Welfare Committee

**From:** Liz Gamache, *President & CEO*, Lund

**Date:** April 3, 2026

Since becoming Lund’s CEO/President last May, I’ve consistently heard—unsolicited and from multiple adoptive parents—**that post-permanency adoption services are essential to their families’ stability and well-being.**

What quickly became clear to me is that adoption does not end with the court decree. **While finalization marks the creation of a new family, it often coincides with profound grief, identity questions, and trauma stemming from separation from birth parents.** Each year, 200–250 children in Vermont’s foster care system join “forever families.” Many have experienced significant adversity, and their needs can intensify as they grow, especially in adolescence.

**Post-permanency adoption services ensure families have somewhere to turn when challenges arise, whether immediately or years later.** These supports prevent disruptions, strengthen family bonds, and reduce the likelihood that a child will re-enter foster care or mental health systems. They are both responsive and preventative—helping families stay intact and helping children heal.

*“Our friends are great and offer support. However, their experience with their biological children is far different than ours (a kinship foster-to-adoptive placement with traumatic experience). Lund gets it. Being able to speak freely, to be understood and supported has been invaluable to us.” — **Tammy Russell**, Bristol, VT*

*“Since we began working with the Post Permanency professionals at Lund, we have come to understand that what we are doing is not traditional parenting, it is therapeutic parenting, and what we are experiencing is not what traditional families around us are experiencing in raising children. This validation alone has been a game changer. We are thankful for Lund and credit them with keeping our family whole.”— **Hannah Manley**, Panton, VT*

**These needs extend beyond traditional adoptions.** Kinship and guardianship families—often relatives like grandparents—step in to take on the full parenting role with little preparation, while supporting children coping with trauma or instability. **Post-permanency services are frequently the only structured supports available to help these families remain stable and strong.**

Cuts to post-permanency funding risk destabilizing Vermont families who rely on these services every year. **I urge the Committee to restore funding to FY26 levels so we can continue to keep families strong,** prevent crises, and uphold Vermont’s commitment to permanence and stability for children.