

Thank you for taking public testimony today regarding the FY2015 Rescission Plan.

My name is Sarah Launderville and I am the executive director of the Vermont Center for Independent Living. As a organization representing people with disabilities we are concerned about the cuts that will impact the lives of Vermonters who have disabilities including cuts to developmental services, mental health services, substance abuse services I want to spend time focusing on a few programs that will be effected by the cuts.

Two programs listed in the Governors' proposed budget rescission plan are administered by VCIL and are the Home Access Program and the Sue Williams Freedom Fund. The Home Access Program provides home access modifications to Vermonters who have physical disabilities in need of entrance and bathroom modifications and the Sue Williams Freedom Fund which provides up to \$1,500 worth of assistive technology that is not covered by insurance or other programs.

Back in July, the DAIL Advisory Board received a memo from Commissioner Wehry regarding priority setting of the Choices for Care reinvestment funds. In her memo it states "Our first commitment is to Choices for Care (CFC) enrollees who are currently on a waiting list for home modifications (18) (through the Home Access Program) and assistive technology (9) (through the Sue Williams Freedom Fund). This decision was endorsed by the DAIL advisory board in February 2014 and again at the July 2014 meeting.

As we presented to the commissioner and the DAIL Advisory Board, the home access program waiting list includes eighteen

11 East State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

802 229-0501, 800 639-1522 (voice & TTY); fax: 802 229-0503

email: vcil@vcil.org web site: www.vcil.org



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individuals in need of home modifications who are also on the Choices for Care program. This number represents individuals living in Bennington, Caledonia, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Orleans, Rutland, Washington, Windsor and Windham Counties. These individuals are in need of entrance and bathroom modifications. The average cost of a modification per household is \$10,000.

In addition, there are nine individuals on the Choices for Care program and the SWFF in need of assistive technology. They are looking for up to \$1,500 in support for vehicle modifications, adaptive kitchen equipment, wheelchair repairs.

For just under \$300,000 these individuals with disabilities can continue to live in their own homes and achieve the goals in their independent living plan, some of which include; employment, parenting independently and becoming involved in their local communities.

Another program we want to highlight is the Participant Directed Attendant Services Program. According to the budget narrative this cut will effect a minimal amount of people, but since this program is not as well known as the Choices for Care program I want to describe that this program is one that allows people with significant disabilities to continue to work and live independently without going through a process of becoming impoverished by providing personal attendant services. We believe funding should remain available for these applicants.

VCIL is happy to be able to provide testimony today, but with the very fast turn-around time of this public hearing to receiving the details of the budget rescissions yesterday we hope that you decide to extend the timing of making decisions that will allow for other Vermonters access to providing public comment to this committee.

We are also willing to provide any follow up details regarding these programs or other programs that affect people with disabilities to help in your decision making.

Thank you.

Contact Information:

Sarah Lauderville, Executive Director

802-224-1817

slaunderville@vcil.org