



February 18, 2025

Chairman Alexander
House Committee on Housing
Subject: Testimony in Opposition of New Hampshire House Bill 465

Dear Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in Support of HB 465. For the record, my name is Krysten Evans and I am the Director of Policy for ABLE NH. ABLE is a disability justice organization and we are a non partisan, non profit organization that fights for the civil and human rights of children and adults with disabilities.

I am here today to voice our strong support for House Bill 465 because housing stability is essential for people with disabilities to live with dignity, independence, and full participation in their communities.

New Hampshire's housing crisis disproportionately harms people with disabilities. The statewide rental vacancy rate remains below 1%, and the median rent for a two-bedroom apartment has surged by over 20% in just five years (New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority). At the same time, many people with disabilities live on fixed incomes, which fall far below the state's fair market rent. The result is that thousands of individuals are forced into unsafe, unstable, or inaccessible living conditions or, worse, face homelessness.

When housing programs meant for low-income residents do not properly screen for income eligibility, people with disabilities are pushed out of the very housing intended to serve them. Without proper oversight, higher-income tenants who do not need affordable units can take up limited space, leaving those with the greatest need with nowhere to go. This is not just a policy failure, it is a civil rights issue. People with disabilities already face systemic barriers to employment, transportation, and healthcare. Housing insecurity only exacerbates these challenges, preventing individuals from accessing the services and supports they need to thrive.

For those with mobility impairments or complex medical needs, access to stable, affordable, and accessible housing is not optional, it is a matter of survival. Without stable housing, individuals are more likely to be hospitalized, or placed in settings that strip them of their autonomy. Every time someone loses their home due to rising rents, income restrictions that are not enforced, or a lack of available units, they are not just losing shelter, they are losing their independence, their community, and their ability to participate fully in society.

New Hampshire has a responsibility to ensure that housing programs truly serve those who need them most. Strengthening income verification and accountability measures will help ensure that affordable housing is reserved for those who meet the eligibility criteria, particularly low-income individuals with disabilities. This is not about bureaucracy, it is about equity, fairness, and ensuring that state-funded housing initiatives fulfill their intended purpose.

People with disabilities are not asking for special treatment; we are asking for fair access to the housing that is supposed to be available to us. By passing HB 465, the legislature can take a critical step toward making affordable housing more accessible, ensuring that the programs designed to help vulnerable populations actually do so.

On behalf of ABLE NH and the disability community, I urge you to support House Bill 465 and recommend its passage. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Krysten Evans
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Sources:

New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority. "Rental Cost Survey." NHHFA, 2024, www.nhhfa.org/rental-cost-survey.