Rep. Mitzi Johnson, House Speaker  
Sen. Tim Ashe, Senate President Pro-Tem  
Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301  

RE: Reduction in VT-211 after-hours call-in & referral services  

Dear Speaker Johnson and President Pro-Tem Ashe:  

It has been brought to our attention that Vermont 211 has cut back its hours of service to 8am to 8pm, with no service after that time and no service at all on weekends or holidays. The reason for such is financial. Vermont 211 had been subcontracting out its post-8pm, weekends and holiday service to an out-of-state entity, which has decided no longer to provide this service. In searching for another provider, or for Vermont 211 to provide the service directly, the cost of such is coming in at or near $300,000 above the current state appropriation for Vermont 211.  

It is absolutely crucial that 211’s service to Vermonters who are homeless and/or fleeing sexual and domestic violence be restored to 24 hours per day, every day of the week. In calendar year 2018 there were 3,514 after-hours calls to 211 between 8pm and 8am, weekends and on State holidays from people requesting emergency housing, with 75% of those calls coming during the coldest months of the year (November through April). 40% of all after-hours calls were related to emergency housing. The individuals and families calling 211 are truly among the most vulnerable in our state, and with winter only weeks away, it is more important than ever that the Legislature act swiftly and use the budget adjustment process to provide the funding necessary.  

The consequences of doing nothing could be dire: Vermonters experiencing homelessness freezing to death without shelter and people fleeing domestic or sexual violence suffering serious harm without access to emergency housing.  

Any of us are more than willing to come to Montpelier during a future hearing to testify about the importance of restoring Vermont 211 to its full capabilities.  

Sincerely:  

Addison County Community Trust  
American Red Cross - Vermont  
Another Way  
At Wits End Family Support Group  
Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless  
Brattleboro Area Affordable Housing Corp.  
Brattleboro Area Prevention Coalition  
Brattleboro Community Justice Center  
Burlington Police Department  
Buster Caswell  
Cathedral Square Corporation  
Champlain Housing Trust  
Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity  
Committee on Temporary Shelter  
Community of Vermont Elders  
Disability Rights Vermont  
Downstreet Housing & Community Development  
Elizabeth Gilman  
Essex CHIPS  
First Baptist Church, Rutland  
Franklin/Grand Isle Community Action  
Good Samaritan Haven  
Green Mountain United Way  
Groundworks Collaborative  
Help Me Grow  
HOPE
HOPE Works
Housing Vermont
Hunger Free Vermont
Institute for Community Alliances
Jennifer Montagne
John Graham Housing & Services
Katie Ballard
KIN-KAN Vermont
Lamoille Family Center
Lamoille Housing Partnership
Linda C. Vincent
Mayumi Cornell
Montpelier Housing Authority
Morgan W. Brown
NAMI Vermont
NeighborWorks of Western Vermont
Northeast Kingdom Community Action
Pathways Vermont
Peterson Consulting, Inc.
Project Against Violent Encounters
Randolph Area Community Development Corp.
Ren Vanwagner
Rights & Democracy
Robert McDonald
RuralEdge
Rutland County Parent Child Center
Rutland Housing Authority
Safeline, Inc.
Samaritan House, Inc
Sara Kobylenski
Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging
Spectrum Youth & Family Services
Springfield Area Parent Child Center
Springfield Supported Housing Program
State Independent Living Council
Supportive Services for Veteran Families at UVM
Terry Holden
The Housing Foundation, Inc.
The Mentor Connector
Three Generations Collaboration

Town of Brattleboro
Turning Point Center of Rutland
Twin Pines Housing
Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission
United Way of Addison County
United Way of Lamoille County
United Way of Rutland County
United Way of Windham County
United Ways of Vermont/Vermont 211
Upper Valley Haven
Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition
Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences
Vermont Center for Independent Living
Vermont Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs
Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
Vermont Family Network
Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Vermont Foodbank
Vermont Housing & Conservation Board
Vermont Housing Finance Agency
Vermont Interfaith Action
Vermont Legal Aid, Inc.
Vermont Low Income Advocacy Council
Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence
Vermont People With AIDS Coalition
Vermont State Housing Authority
Veterans, Inc.
Vital Communities
Voices for Vermont's Children
Washington County Young Adult Committee, Inc.
West River Valley Thrives
Windham & Windsor Housing Trust
Windham Regional Commission
Windsor County Youth Services
Women's Freedom Center
Wonderfeet Kids' Museum
Youth Services, Inc.