

Mark Snelling

House Commerce and Economic Development

February 28, 2023

The Snelling Center Early Childhood Leadership Institute

Chair Marcotte and Members of the House Commerce and Economic Development Committee.

Thank you for this opportunity.

I am Mark Snelling Volunteer President of the Snelling Center. The Snelling Center is a non-partisan, non-profit (501(c)3) corporation. Established in 1992 in memory of Governor Richard Snelling, who many in this building knew and worked with. The Snelling Center is committed to his vision of government that works for the people of Vermont.

Today, the Snelling Center is requesting \$130,000 to restart our Early Childhood Leadership Institute in FY 2024.

For over 30 years The Snelling Center for Government has been training Vermonters to enhance their leadership skills, helping them take on our toughest challenges and find innovative solutions for their communities and stakeholders. In fact, there are 13 graduates that sit in your ranks, with six as Committee Chairs.

These leaders, like you, are actively working for a better Vermont. Since the beginning of the Snelling Center, the number of new alumni leaders is now over 1,100 individuals. Each of them experienced a substantial personal journey that increased their leadership skills and has created a strong network of peers around the state.

The Early Childhood Leadership Institute was created in 2014 and funded by the Early Learning Challenge - Race to the Top Grant. Total funding over the four years was \$646,000, which included startup funds. The Institute was funded for four years, and, due to its success, it received additional Federal money and the program continued until June 2019.

The program has been highly successful and highly rated by the participants and by the Early Childhood community. Reeva Murphy, the previous Deputy Commissioner for the Vermont Department for Children and Families has been a strong supporter from day one.

The legislature has put forth a vision for Early Childhood education in Vermont this session and the Governor has supported unprecedented additional funding for early childhood. This area is a great challenge and one that may define Vermont's economic future.

And we believe for your efforts to be successful, we must continue to grow a group of professionals trained to be better leaders. That is what we do.

The Blue-Ribbon Commission on Financing, High Quality, Affordable Childcare recommended that Vermont "Permanently establish a leadership institute or program for strong, ongoing, committed leaders in the early childhood system."

We are that leadership institute. We are the only ones doing this kind of work.

As more policy focus and funding is invested in Early Childhood, Vermont needs trained leaders to administer these key programs

efficiently and effectively, while working with and in their communities. We work hand in hand with these new investments. The Early Childhood Leadership Institute provides a network of these leaders who have all had similar training and are excited about the future in this field.

We see this program as a workforce development project. This program will add 25 innovative and excited leaders to the field. Early Childhood is in desperate need for more leaders who will work with others in the field to help sustain the early childhood workforce.

We are requesting \$130,000 for the year beginning in July 2023. This would allow 25 more graduates to join 126 previous graduates of the program. Thank you.