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Date of Testimony: 1/19/2023

Committee: Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs

Remarks:

Hello, my name is Cara Tobin. I have lived this situation from both sides as a mother and a business owner. The toll it has taken on my family is intense. I am the owner and operator of Honey Road and Grey Jay in Burlington. I am a mother of two, seven and three, and we are in this crisis. We spent time in other states and our goal was to move back to VT and raise our kids here and live the Vermont dream. We did that, and very quickly learned that some things weren't go as we thought. I started looking for child care since I was starting Honey Road. During the time it took to open the restaurant, I was also looking for child care. As the opening date approached, I still had no child care. Not for lack of trying! There was nowhere for me to bring him. We struggled to piece it together; we had no choice because we couldn't get in. It was easier to open Honey Road than it was to find child care. And it was really hard to open a restaurant! With our second child I tried to get ahead of the game, got on all the wait lists long before he was born. Again we couldn't find anything until he was two and a half. And then it was only part-time. It has been incredibly difficult. From a business standpoint, I see my employees going through the same thing and it breaks my heart. We are not operating at full capacity in either restaurant because we can't, we don't have the staff. Part of that is because people don't have child care. Restaurants operate on such small margins that I can't afford to solve this for employees. It would be incredibly beneficial to us to have help with the child care situation. I would be able to open more hours, I could employ more people, I could pay more taxes to the state. It would benefit the VT economy.

When I talk to my child's teachers and hear about their income, and I come back to the restaurant and think about what my employees are making... my line cooks are making double what my child's teachers are making. I'm entrusting someone with my child and they're making such a low wage that they question whether or not they want to stay in the industry. It's heartbreaking. We clearly need a solution – we need help.

I would absolutely support a payroll tax to help support our communities. I would love to help my community. We need to ask, why aren't we doing this? Why aren't we taking care of our community members?