

**Name:** Sam Hooper

**Date of Testimony:** 1/19/2023

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

**Remarks:**

My name is Sam Hooper, I am from Brookfield VT and I own and operate Vermont Glove. I am proud that we manufacture our products in Vermont. We are a fast-growing company with a small team – 12 employees in production – and that means that to compete we need to be extraordinarily lean and thoughtful about every strategic move we make. One challenge with being lean and growing quickly has been this child care crisis. We looked at bringing child care in house and figuring out how to do it and staff it, but we couldn't figure it out. We need to stick to what we're good at which is making gloves. But we also need to do everything we can for our workforce to make sure we retain them. We've put a lot of resources into employee retention, but we can't solve the child care problem. If we could just write checks to everyone we would, but we can't and there's also an equity issue for those who can't bring child care in house. I very much believe in a comprehensive, statewide program that's not a patchwork fix but is a robust, well-funded solution that has lasting impact. It's not about immediate ROI, it's about us continuing to invest in this state. We as business owners look every year at capital expenses and what investments we need to make to ensure that our business continues to grow. That's what Vermont needs to do with this issue.