

My name is Deb Snell and I am the president of AFT/Vermont. We represent 4,000 higher education and health care professionals across the state.

I am here to speak with you tonight about the importance of increasing the funding of the Vermont State Colleges. I urge you to support Chancellor Spaulding's request for \$4million with an annual inflator as reflected in the bill put forth by Rep. Hill.

There was a time when the Vermont State Colleges were supported by the state. In 1980, state appropriations covered 51% of the costs of the VSC.

In 1961 the enabling legislation that created the VSC said the state would support it in "whole or substantial part".

Today less than 16% of the VSC revenue comes from the state while more than 84% comes from student tuition.

Vermont public colleges currently rank near the bottom in terms of state support for higher education,

The results are one of the highest tuitions in the country for public higher education, leaving Vermont families in economic crisis.

This means our students on average graduate with more student debt than students from other states, while our VSC employees earn less than employees in comparable institutions.

The Mission of the VSC states that the VSC is "For the benefit of Vermont, the Vermont State Colleges system provides affordable, high quality, student-centered, and accessible education, fully integrating professional, liberal, and career study, consistent with student aspirations and regional and state needs."

57% of our students are first generation college students. The students at the VSC face a future of debt and struggle to stay in school, often at great sacrifice to themselves and their families.

Hunter, a Castleton student from Barre writes:

"The rising cost of tuition has greatly burdened my family. Both of my parents now work longer hours in order to pay for my college. My father works 7 days a week which means I barely get to see him when I'm home. My mother works 5 days a week and is also never around. My parents are making great sacrifices so I can get an education. However, I fear paying for it is running them into the ground."

Here's a few sentences from a Junior named Tucker, also attending Castleton:

"Coming from a single parent family I have experience the stress and hardships of watching my mom put two children through college. Currently, my mom is resorting to selling my childhood home because of the two tuitions."

Dylan, another VSC student writes this:

"The dept I expect to accumulate is upwards of \$20,000 despite attending Castleton for only 2 years and coming from a low income family. I am a first generation college student, and my parents will be unable to assist me with paying off my debt. Because of this, my ability to contribute to our state's economy will be severely hindered for several years after my graduation..."

Writes Tijana, a Johnson State College Student:

"What happened to the American dream? I thought that in America everyone should have a chance for education, for success, to make their lives and their children's lives better. Everybody in this country deserves a chance."

We need to end the cycle of saddling our students with a lifetime of debt. We, as a state, need to invest in our future. On behalf of our members and the students they serve, we are asking that you begin to fund the Vermont State Colleges as the enabling legislation intended. Please support Chancellor Spaulding's request and H. 122 so that we can reclaim the promise of affordable higher education here in Vermont.

We have collected testimony and would like to present it to you as hard copies, as well as a flash drive.

Thank you for allowing me to address you today.

My name is Beth Walsh and I am the Coordinator of Career Development at Johnson State College and the President of the Vermont State Colleges United Professionals, AFT (American Federation of Teachers) Vermont, local 6217, AFL-CIO.

I want to speak to you about the bill H122, sponsored by Matt Hill and co-sponsored by 26 of his colleagues. This bill proposes to increase the annual appropriation for Vermont State Colleges by \$4,000,000.00 in fiscal year 2018 and to adjust future year appropriations for Vermont State Colleges in relation to changes in the "Total General Government" section of the State budget. The Vermont State College United Professionals and AFT-Vermont wants to thank each of the legislators who have shown their commitment to the Vermont State Colleges by co-sponsoring this bill. On January 24th of this year, Governor Phil Scott also proposed an increase of \$4M to appropriations for the VSC. His proposal, however, was complicated by his efforts to tie this increase to his proposed decrease in the K-12 funding. While it doesn't appear that that part of his proposal will be successful, it is imperative that the State of Vermont, our Governor and our legislators provide the support that our college-seeking Vermonters require. In 1961 the enabling legislation that created the Vermont State College System said the state would support it in "whole or substantial part."

(<http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/16/072/02171>). Appropriations from the state have fallen from 50% in 1980 to the current 16% (<https://29dj2p23zy5gsrxeee4mso9d-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/VSC-Financial-Statements-2016.pdf>) . This puts Vermont near the very bottom of several lists measuring state spending on higher education in our country

(http://sheeo.org/sites/default/files/project-files/SHEEO_FY15_Report_051816.pdf). As you can imagine, the Vermont State Colleges have done much over the last 3 and a half decades to tighten our belts, while maintaining high quality educational experiences for our students. In fact, the insufficient funding of the Vermont State College System is of great concern to those of us who work there and for Vermonters who are concerned about the sustainability of our public higher education system. In fact, the most recent accreditation report for Johnson State College submitted by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges states that, although Johnson State College has much to commend it, including a strong commitment to student success, our student leadership development, and our campus-wide voice in governance and planning, "nothing poses a more serious threat to the College's long-term ability to meet the Standards for Accreditation than a lack of sufficient financial and human resources." The many decades of insufficient state appropriations have taken their toll, and it is time for the state to live up to its promise of supporting the Vermont State College System in whole or substantial part. The Vermont State College System depends on it, as do the communities where these institutions reside, and the well-being of our young people and our state.

Thank you for listening. Please support H122.

Beth R. Walsh, beth.walsh@jsc.edu, 802-635-1377

My name is Dr. Julie Theoret. I am a Professor of Mathematics at Johnson State College. I have been a full-time faculty member at JSC since 2008. I was a full-time faculty member at Lyndon State College from 2000 until 2008.

I wholeheartedly support Chancellor Spaulding's request for a \$4 million increase to the Vermont State College System with an annual inflator. I urge you to support Representative Hill's bill H122.

When I began teaching at LSC, I came to realize how poorly funded the Vermont State Colleges were. It has progressively gotten worse. Today, less than 16% of the VSC revenue comes from the state. This means more than 84% comes from student tuition. Nationally, we rank at the bottom in terms of state support for public higher education. This results in one of the highest tuitions in the country. On average, our students graduate with more student debt than students from other states. On average, VSC employees have lower salaries than employees in comparable institutions.

In 1961 the enabling legislation that created the VSC said the state would support the VSC in "whole or substantial part". You don't have to be a mathematics professor to know that 16% is neither "whole" nor "substantial". The last time state appropriations represented more than 50% of the VSC's revenue was in 1980.

Over half of all VSC students are first-generation college students; 83% are Vermonters, and 84% stay in the state to live and work after graduation. We need more young Vermonters to stay and work in this state, not less. Vermont is aging. Who will do the jobs we already have when people retire? How will we attract companies that will bring new jobs, if we don't have an educated workforce in the state?

Investing in public higher education is not just about helping students. It is about helping Vermont. We cannot afford to ignore this problem any longer. Vermont's vitality and economic future are at stake.

In recent years, the VSC has undertaken many cost-cutting measures, while trying to maintain a high-quality education for our students. This is getting more and more difficult. Recently, the VSC Board of Trustees voted to unify JSC and LSC into one institution, Northern Vermont University. This is a huge undertaking that has come about because of the lack of state funding. Both LSC and JSC provide an invaluable service to Vermonters. NVU will surely do the same. With this unification, the VSC is once again trying to cut costs without sacrificing academic quality. It is time for the state of Vermont to start investing in the Vermont State College System once again. Waiting is not an option. Representative Hill's bill H122 is a great place to start.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share something I feel so passionately about.

My name is Hans Christian Haverkamp. I am an Associate Professor of Health Sciences at Johnson State College. I am currently in my 10th year as a faculty member at JSC.

I support Chancellor Spaulding's request for \$4 million increase to the Vermont State College System with an annual inflator. I urge you to support Representative Hill's bill H122.

The Vermont State College mission statement reads as follows:

"For the benefit of Vermont, the Vermont State Colleges system provides affordable, high quality, student-centered, and accessible education, fully integrating professional, liberal, and career study, consistent with student aspirations and regional and state needs."

In brief, given the lack of appropriate state funding to support the VSC, it is simply not the case that we provide affordable and accessible education. As is well known, our tuition is among the highest in the country, which is completely (not in part) due to the lack of state funding. It is entirely unethical to promote a mission that is so inconsistent with reality.

Hans Haverkamp, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Health Sciences
Johnson State College



Castleton University

15 February 2017

Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am Brendan Lalor. I've been a dedicated member of the Castleton faculty for going on 10 years. As our institution's only full-time philosopher, I consider the Legislature's 1961 statement of commitment to "substantial" support for the VSC's member institutions to be a distinctively *ethical* imperative. That was a commitment made by our "better self," one we must recommit ourselves to honoring more now than ever.

As it is, the less than 16% of funding that the System receives from our State leaves a burden on our students that our better "collective self" of roughly 55 years ago would have considered shameful. About 83% of our students are Vermonters; about 84% of them remain in Vermont, contributing to our communities after graduation. Compared to what we endeavored to provide for these young people, they bear an undue burden of educational debt. In effect, these cubs are being called upon to bring home an (unsustainable) lion's share of sustenance.

I've seen many students' performance suffer significantly under this unjustifiable financial burden which our State has, in effect, assigned to them. Within the last year alone, the burden on at least two of those students resulted in serious crises.

I urge the Committee to support H122, and to communicate to the Legislature the gravity of the situation. If we don't support tomorrow's Vermonters, we will *all* lose.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brendan Lalor, Ph.D.
Philosophy Program Coordinator
Brendan.Lalor@castleton.edu
802-688-5627

My name is Louis Palmer. I am a professor at Castleton University, where I have taught since 2000.

I am speaking in support of Chancellor Spaulding's request for \$4 million increase to the Vermont State College System with an annual inflator. I urge you to support Representative Hill's bill H122.

We recently changed our name from Castleton State College to Castleton University. I hope that this name change doesn't mean that we will be adopting the funding model of the University of Vermont, which has come to rely on bringing in out-of-state students as the majority in order to support its programs.

In the sixteen years that I have taught at Castleton, Vermont has consistently been at the bottom in national comparisons in terms of support for higher education, and the percentage of support has steadily declined. We have a chart that we call the crocodile because it shows constantly rising student costs against constantly declining state support since the early 1980's when the two were about even. The ascending line of expenses and the descending line of support look like the jaws of a crocodile with its mouth wide open.

This crocodile is devouring the future of Vermont. Many of my students would like to stay here, but feel that they must leave because of the high debt burden they carry and the fact that they can make more money out of the state.

These students are the lucky ones have been able to stay in college for four years and graduate, despite Vermont's lack of support. Staying behind are the ones who didn't get a college degree.

57% of our students are first-generation college students. Currently, 83% of VSC students are Vermonters, and 86% of them stay in Vermont for their careers. Vermont needs to encourage its educated young people to stay. I would hate to see the day when Vermont State Colleges serve only affluent Vermonters and out-of-staters.

Chancellor Spaulding's request is only a first step in reversing these trends and investing in Vermont's future. I urge you to support it.

Louis H Palmer, III
English Department
Castleton University
6 Alumni Drive
Castleton, VT 05735

802-468-1341
louis.palmer@castleton.edu

February 10, 2017

Christina Cotnoir
Assistant to the Dean of Students
Lyndon State College
PO Box 919
Lyndonville, VT 05851

Dear Appropriations Committee:

I have worked at Lyndon State College for 5 years and have held three different positions. I began as the Assistant to the Dean of Students, then spent 3 years as the Assistant Director of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. When that position ended, I accepted my current position in the Student Affairs Office. I have three children, two graduated from college in 2015 and 2016, and my youngest is currently a sophomore in college.

I fully support Chancellor Spaulding's request for a \$4 million increase to the VT State College System. It is woefully overdue and I urge you to support Representative Hill's bill H122. The VSC is very successful in educating Vermonters and preparing them for the workforce and to become productive and successful members of the community. But it's an embarrassing reality that Vermont has one of the **highest in state tuition rates in the country for public higher education**. And this results in our students graduating with higher debt than students from other states. We are doing our students a grave disservice. In my position in the student affairs office at Lyndon State College, I often see students before they withdraw from the school and I try to ask them why they are leaving and what their plans are moving forward. By far the most common reason I receive is that they cannot afford to continue. This means students are leaving without a degree, now carrying debt and will be trying to find a job to support themselves. This is not a recipe for success!

This high tuition also results in our students going out of state for their education because in many cases, it's actually **LESS expensive!** I saw this personally when my own children were applying for college. They had offers from both public and private out of state institutions which were less than the cost of attending a Vermont State College. This is a shame! We should be making it possible for **ANY VERMONT**ER who wants an education, not only to obtain one **HERE IN VERMONT**, but to graduate without the burden of staggering debt.

The truth is the VSC educates more Vermonters who then stay in Vermont after graduation to live and work. It is our responsibility to ensure they receive an affordable, high quality education, our future depends upon it.

Thank you for your consideration of support for H122.

Respectfully,

Christina Cotnoir

My name is Eli Stone,
I am a student at Castleton University.
By the time I graduate I am looking
at about \$20,000 worth of debt.

I am lucky to have my parents to pay
for my tuition and to stay on campus.

I feel that the price of the college is putting
a financial burden on my parents.

I'm a first generation college student
and getting my degree is very important
to me; because of this I support
the H~~100~~ Bill.

elisstone17@gmail.com
(cell) (802) 770-2274

TOWN voted in: Danby, VT

My name is Jess Gallo

- 1) \$ 60,000 - 65,000 - amount of debt
- 2) 10 hrs a week - hours of work per week to pay for school
- 3) very important - how important education is to her.
- 4) not a first generation college student, both of my parents have professional degrees.
- 5) my parents still work to put me through school, and will for at least 5 more after I graduate.

I support ~~the~~ H-122

I am a senior @ castleton University

email: jlg07091@castleton.edu

phone: 802-272-4087

Barre, VT

My name is Theresa Butts, I'm a student at Castleton University. I expect to accumulate \$60,000 of debt. I have two children and it will be difficult to repay my debt. My education is important to me to earn a living while giving my children a positive role model throughout their lives. I support H-122 fully.

Theresa Nutts @ yahoo.com

802-353-1549, 802-446-7877

Tinmouth, Vt. 05773

My name is Kyle Burns, I am a Student
at Castleton University. I expect to
have \$20,000 in debt. In order to help
pay I will work over the summer. I
am a first generation college student.
My family is making sacrifices to help me
pay. Because of this I support H-122

802-310-3872

Kpb08140@castleton.edu

Town of Williston

My Name is Deshae Norris. I am a student at Castleton University. I expect to have \$26,000 in Debt when I graduate. I work over the summer to pay for school. My education is very important to me. My Family is making a lot of adjustment to help me pay for college.

Because of all these reasons I support H-122 to help reduce tuition

Waringtown - Shelburne, VT

dn07280@castleton.edu

802-355-1415

My name is Skylar McNally I expect to have \$90,000 in debt over the summer I work 45 hours to pay for school my education is very important to me I expect my tuition to be a burden to contributing to the states economy I am a student at Castleton University. Because of this I support H-122.

5VM09180@castleton.edu

(802) 535-8529

Woodbury VT

Waris Hassan

02/15/17

Castleton University

Hi, my name is Waris Hassan. I'm 21 years old and I attend the University of Castleton. I'm double majoring in Sociology and Social Work, and hoping I get a job here after graduation. I'm an immigrant and lived in Vermont half of my life; I grew up here. I live with my parents and five siblings but my dad is the only one who works and supports us all. He cannot support me with school tuition, but he tries to help me with other expenses whenever he can. I work a part time job so I can put myself through school, but it is so hard because the tuition is high. I'm a sophomore now and I thought of dropping out of school plenty of times. I love learning and I want to stay in school but thinking of tuition all the time makes me want to give up. Sometimes I feel like I'm putting a lot on my parents. I'm the first person in my generation to attend college and I'm hoping to graduate here.

- fgs.mohamed9@gmail.com

- 802-363-7301

- Windoski, VT

Reclaiming the Promise

Only 16% of revenues for Vermont State Colleges comes from the state and our in-state tuition ranks among the highest in the nation! In fact, 84% of VSC revenue comes from tuition, placing an unfair burden on Vermont students and families.

When the Vermont State Colleges were created in 1961, the enabling legislation explicitly stated that the state would support the VSC "in whole or substantial part." This is no longer true. We urge the legislature to increase funding THIS YEAR, and to make an ongoing commitment to returning to that level of support for Vermont families and our communities.

The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

As a student who is graduating, I fear the amount of debt I will have to pay off. I wonder if I will ever be able to live by myself while being financially stable. I am truly scared for my little brother's future and the stress and issues he'll have financially. It's terrifying.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name BreAnna Morse Voting Town Castleton

Home email brm14136@castleton.edu Cell Phone # 802-989-2382

I am a Senior at Castleton University

Reclaiming the Promise

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The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

I have been fortunate enough to have my parents pay for my education. Some of my friends rather do not. I am so upset at seeing my friends that are extremely intelligent and productive drop out because of the cost of school. There are too many kind, smart, and good people that could have changed the world if they were given the opportunity to get a degree. Please hear me out, Help us.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Corey Alberico Voting Town Castleton

Home email alberico58@gmail.com Cell Phone # 603 401 6164

I am a Senior at Castleton University

Reclaiming the Promise

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The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

Many of my peers and I struggle on a daily basis to remain full time students due to lack of money. The lack of state funding that we receive seriously hurts and affects us to the point of dropping out all together. Remaining in an Undergrad program is crucial to getting a decent paying job in the future, and we all need to work to survive. We are in fear that none of this will come true and that dropping out is the only solution.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Lyss Eaton Voting Town Tinmouth

Home email are12280@castleton.edu Cell Phone # 802-393-4314

I am a Sophomore at Castleton University

Reclaiming the Promise

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When the Vermont State Colleges were created in 1961, the enabling legislation explicitly stated that the state would support the VSC "in whole or substantial part." This is no longer true. We urge the legislature to increase funding THIS YEAR, and to make an ongoing commitment to returning to that level of support for Vermont families and our communities.

The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

I am a first year student who fears for my financial future because I will be so much in college debt. My older brother, who was at Castleton ~~and~~ Vermont Tech for his degree, but transferred to ~~VT~~ so my family could afford both of us to get a college education. He is willing to sacrifice ~~but~~ but even at a tech school we struggle with other expenses. I would love my brother to be able to join me at Castleton, ^{he should be}

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Sarah Robbins Voting Town Williston

Home email _____ Cell Phone # (802) 383-8777

I am a CU student at Castleton University

Reclaiming the Promise

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When the Vermont State Colleges were created in 1961, the enabling legislation explicitly stated that the state would support the VSC "in whole or substantial part." This is no longer true. We urge the legislature to increase funding THIS YEAR, and to make an ongoing commitment to returning to that level of support for Vermont families and our communities.

The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

In my experience, the state of Vermont is suffering economically. The best way to stop the loss of Vermont workers, would be to keep Vermont students here. The other side of this coin is the fact that most of Vermonters are suffering. The biggest obstacle ~~for~~ ~~there~~ in the way for most students is the ~~amount~~ debt.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Mitchell Robert Stowell Voting Town Lyndon

Home email M1508270@CSU.VT.edu Cell Phone # _____

I am a sophomore at Castleton

Reclaiming the Promise

Only 16% of revenues for Vermont State Colleges comes from the state and our in-state tuition ranks among the highest in the nation! In fact, 84% of VSC revenue comes from tuition, placing an unfair burden on Vermont students and families.

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The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

As of right now I expect to have over 50 thousand dollars in debt once I graduate. During the summer I work full time to pay for a portion of my college loans. My parents both work full time as well to help me pay for school. Sometimes it feels like them working as much as they do it's not enough to pay for my loans. I am not a first generation college student so my parents know as well that college is getting harder and harder to pay for compared to when they went to college.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Dillon Danyew Voting Town Windsor

Home email dd09090@castleton.edu Cell Phone # 802-230-8138

I am a Senior at Castleton University

Reclaiming the Promise

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The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

Coming from a single parent family I have ~~seen~~ experienced the stress and hardships of watching my mom put two children through college. Currently, my mom is resorting to selling my childhood home because of the two tuitions. Even though this isn't the ideal situation, I saw this coming because of the rising cost of college across the country. We knew what we were getting into.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Julia S. Sorenson Voting Town Newport VT

Home email tjcollin@castleton.edu Cell Phone # 802-323-9751

I am a Junior at Castleton

Reclaiming the Promise

Only 16% of revenues for Vermont State Colleges comes from the state and our in-state tuition ranks among the highest in the nation! In fact, 84% of VSC revenue comes from tuition, placing an unfair burden on Vermont students and families.

When the Vermont State Colleges were created in 1961, the enabling legislation explicitly stated that the state would support the VSC "in whole or substantial part." This is no longer true. We urge the legislature to increase funding THIS YEAR, and to make an ongoing commitment to returning to that level of support for Vermont families and our communities.

The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

The rising cost of tuition has greatly burdened my family. Both of my parents have to now work longer hours in order to pay for my college. My father works 7 days a week which means I barely get to see him while I'm home. My mother works 5 days a week and also is never around. My parents are making great sacrifices so I can get an education. However, I fear paying for it is running them into the ground.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Hunter DiAgostino Voting Town Barre, Vermont

Home email hunterdiags@gmail.com Cell Phone # 802 498 8027

I am a student at Castleton

Reclaiming the Promise

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The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

I am a Vermont resident who will have accumulated approximately \$60,000 in debt upon graduation. I receive some assistance from my family ~~but~~ my younger brother will soon start college as well. I come from a single parent household but my father makes just over the amount to receive little to no financial assistance. I work three jobs at just under 40 hours a week to help pay for school on top of being a student. I request that you consider hardworking students and their families from our state. Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Erma Bhiklock Voting Town Woodstock, VT

Home email egbol020@castleton.edu Cell Phone # 802-299-6738

I am a student at Castleton University

Reclaiming the Promise

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The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

Being an out-of-state student, who relies on student loans, the high tuition rates have severely affected my finances. The high cost of school in addition to the ungodly interest rates have left me no choice to make monthly payments towards my loans while in school.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Grace Durcell Voting Town Pownsville, NY
Home email gedp02070@castleton.edu Cell Phone # (845) 453-1802
I am a Student at Castleton University

Reclaiming the Promise

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The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

I have accumulated over 20,000 dollars in debt even after working around 30 hours a week in addition to an 18 credit work load. This education is important to me and my family because as I am a first generation college student it seems to be the only hope I have to progress in life. In addition to this most people are required to have family assistance in order to pay for their education, this not the reality of the situation. My mother who is a single parent of three cannot afford this and because of this the expected help that is supposed to come from her falls back onto my shoulders making my financial burden even harder.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Kyle Gosley Voting Town Arlington VT

Home email Kyrtgosley@gmail.com Cell Phone # (802) 375-4814

I am a Junior at Castleton University

Reclaiming the Promise

Only 16% of revenues for Vermont State Colleges comes from the state and our in-state tuition ranks among the highest in the nation! In fact, 84% of VSC revenue comes from tuition, placing an unfair burden on Vermont students and families.

When the Vermont State Colleges were created in 1961, the enabling legislation explicitly stated that the state would support the VSC "in whole or substantial part." This is no longer true. We urge the legislature to increase funding THIS YEAR, and to make an ongoing commitment to returning to that level of support for Vermont families and our communities.

The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

As a student in the VSC community, I feel that ^{only} 16% of 13 Col family not enough to support a genuine; it not the most genuine in the whole country, population of college students who look to make a difference in this great country.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Thomas Barron Voting Town Roadby VT.

Home email nbarron23@gmail.com Cell Phone # 1802 356 9172

I am a Freshman at Castleton

Reclaiming the Promise

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The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

I haven't accumulated much debt yet, but expect to be in the 15-20K range when I graduate. I currently don't work to pay for school. My education is important to me because it will help me get a good job. I'm a second generation college student (as far as I know).

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Jacob Peet Voting Town Richmond, VT

Home email jpeetfarm@gmail.com Cell Phone # 802-825-8729

I am a freshman at Castleton University

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The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

I am a first generation student who is expected to have at least 20,000 dollars in debt. I work at least one hour per week for my education, as it is important for me to obtain my degree(s) and pursue my future goals. My family is expected to have to make financial sacrifices, which could be a burden on them. I expect that many of my peers will face the same thing and may take the rest of their lives to pay their college debts.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Marcello Taravella Voting Town Rutland, VT

Home email Mia.Taravella@gmail.com Cell Phone # 802-348-0714

I am a First Year at Castleton University

Reclaiming the Promise

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The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

I have accumulated around \$12,000 in debt after my freshman year of college. I work around 10-20 hours a week during the summer and save for when I go to school. Education is very important to me, I am the youngest of ten siblings and a first generation college student. Without friends pushing me and wanting to attend college - I wouldn't be here.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Sasha Bouchard Voting Town Swanton VT

Home email Sabio300@Castleton.edu Cell Phone # 802-393-2023

I am a Freshman at Castleton University

Reclaiming the Promise

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The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

- 20 thousand
- 20 hrs / week
- education is very important - need my license to teach.
- not a 1st gen college student
- ~~not a~~ My mom had to get a new job to help pay for my college.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Rachael Emery Voting Town Woodstock, VT

Home email 16Emerra@uvsu.net Cell Phone # (802) 291-0280

I am a Freshmen at Castleton

Reclaiming the Promise

Only 16% of revenues for Vermont State Colleges comes from the state and our in-state tuition ranks among the highest in the nation! In fact, 84% of VSC revenue comes from tuition, placing an unfair burden on Vermont students and families.

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The lack of state funding is detrimental to the VSC community in the following way:

The debt I expect to accumulate is upwards of \$20,000 despite attending Castleton for only 2 years and coming from a low income family. I am a first generation college student, and my parents will be unable to assist me with paying off my debt. Because of this, my ability to contribute to our state's economy will be severely hindered for several years after my graduation. I will also likely have to live at home for a few years in order to have the financial resources to pay my debt off in a timely fashion and avoid being buried with interest.

Please support the request for \$4 million increase to the VSC System, along with an annual inflator.

Sincerely,

Name Dylan Blair Voting Town White River Junction

Home email dblair12345@gmail.com Cell Phone # 802-369-4803

I am a Junior at Castleton University

Hello, I am here to urge you all to support Representative Hill's bill H122. This bill is so important because I know many people that cannot afford to go to school in Vermont solely due to the cost. I am not even twenty years old and I am already twenty thousand dollars in debt. My brother left to go to school in California and he will graduate with roughly half the amount of debt I will. I hear people from older generations talking about how they wished younger people would stay and work in Vermont but why would we stay here if no one is willing to invest in our future? I want to be a forensic psychologist and unfortunately that means that I need a PhD. There is not a single graduate school in Vermont that I can go to because I have that specific concentration. My only goal at this point is to die without debt. Thank you for your time and consideration of support for H122.

Audrey Phillip

(802) 782-4142

aep04201@castleton.edu

My name Joshua Sevits, I am an adjunct faculty member at the Community College of Vermont. CCV has 12 centers around the state and is second largest state college after UVM.

I'm here to support Chancellor Spaulding's request for a \$4 million increase to the Vermont State College System and to support Representative Hill's bill H-122.

Today we find ourselves facing the challenges of student retention and, furthermore in the position of waving goodbye to potential college students, academics, and teaching professionals, in part, because the state has not provided adequate funding directly to the state college system.

Colleges in the VSC have no choice but to pass this funding burden onto students. Since I've been teaching at CCV I've worked with many students who take a few classes only to find the road ahead fraught with massive debt and, ultimately, decide an education is out of reach. While some students are savvy enough to take VSAC money out of state to more affordable colleges, others simply drop out.

I'm worried about the affect unaffordable education will have on low-income Vermonters, who rely on the state college system for the education they deserve. We should not forget what happened on a national scale this past November, when citizens who felt they have been overlooked and left behind championed the candidate that gave them attention and hope regardless of the impact on our communities as a whole.

Public education is part of the bedrock of our society and state college systems have become part of that bedrock as well. Pursuing a college education does not solely exist to position people for employment and to make a living, it also serves to unite people through common experience. The effects of education are proven to be the only antidote to bigotry and hatred, both on a local and national level.

My colleagues and I teach for embarrassingly low-wages because we know the value of education and the tangible results we see in the classroom and the community.

I urge this committee to find ways to remove the burden of funding higher education from the backs of students, families and faculty.

Therefore I want to ask you to support Chancellor Spaulding's request for a \$4 million increase to the Vermont State College System and to support Representative Hill's bill H-122. Thank you for your time.

Joshua Sevits / 5077 VT Route 14 / East Calais, VT 05602

My name is Barb Flathers and I work as the Assistant to the Dean of Students at Johnson State College. I am also the Vice President of the VSCUP which is one of the unions that has members on our campus. I write this in support of the Chancellor's request and H.122 which is currently under review. Johnson State College is in trouble and needs your attention. All of the Vermont State Colleges do.

The Vermont State Colleges was created in 1961 by the Vermont legislature. The legislature decreed: 16 V.S.A. § 2171) "There is created as a part of the educational system of the State of Vermont a public corporation to be known as "Vermont State Colleges" or any other name that the Board of Trustees, established under section 2172 of this chapter, selects at a meeting duly warned for that purpose, provided that the word "Vermont" shall appear in the selected name. The Corporation shall plan, supervise, administer, and operate facilities for education at the postsecondary level supported in whole or in substantial part with State funds; however, while the Corporation shall maintain cooperative relations with the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College, nothing in this chapter shall give the Corporation any responsibility for the planning, supervision, administration, or operation of the University.

Today, the VSC is in trouble. Among many things, the VSC supports 70x2025vt.org, which says by 2025 70% of Vermont's working aged adults will possess a postsecondary degree. This goal is in trouble and will not be accomplished without help from the state. The VSC have cut programs, cut health care benefits and cut jobs of my coworkers. The VSC has eliminated 100 positions in the past three years.

We at VSC have always thought of ourselves as the extension of the State's public education system. We need to partner together with educators across Vermont who teach Pre-K through 12. Student needs are just as important in higher education as they are along the entire way during the rest of their education years.

In 1980 state appropriations was 51% of the VSC revenue. Since then the burden has transferred to students in the form of high tuitions. Without state support, the board of trustees resorted to raising tuition every year. Today we rank at the bottom in terms of state support which means that today our students graduate with more tuition debt than almost every other state. Currently, less than 16% of revenue comes from the state. 84% comes from student tuition.

I support the Chancellor's request for \$4million increase of annual appropriations. " we've made significant cuts to our benefit programs for employees, our investments in educational supplies and maintenance," he said in a recent VPR story.

I applaud the Governor and his proposed budget that includes the \$4million dollars the Chancellor has asked for. To accomplish education missions such as 70x2025vt.org, we need the State's monetary support.

I urge you to support bill H122. This bill was introduced by Representative Hill of Wolcott, Baser of Bristol, Beck of St. Johnsbury, Bissonnette of Winooski, Burke of Brattleboro, Christie of Hartford, Connor of Fairfield, Dickinson of St. Albans Town, Donovan of Burlington, Giambatista of Essex, Gonzalez of Winooski, Houghton of Essex, Jickling of Brookfield, Lippert

of Hinesburg, Macaig of Williston, Masland of Thetford, Miller of Shaftsbury, Mrowicki of Putney, Noyes of Wolcott, O'Sullivan of Burlington, Parent of St. Albans Town, Poirier of Barre City, Stevens of Waterbury, Stuart of Brattleboro, Sullivan of Burlington, Troiano of Stannard, and Wood of Waterbury.

The sponsorship spans support from one end of the state to the other.

It has been said that if we don't receive this money, eventually we will erode the quality of education at the VSC. I will take that a step further and say that the day is already here, we need help today. Our infrastructure is crumbling and needs work.

We're all looking forward to a Vermont where we can all survive; not just the current workforce but for those to come in the future.

"Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future." JFK

"The future depends on what we do in the present." Mahatma Gandhi