

Theresa Utton

Subject: FW: Vermont Interactive Technologies

From: Lyons, Rebecca L. []

Sent: Friday, March 13, 2015 10:21 AM

To: Theresa Utton

Subject: Vermont Interactive Technologies

To House Appropriations Committee: Chair Mitzi Johnson & Committee:

My name is Rebecca Lyons. I am a first year LPN student in the nursing program at Vermont Technical College. I attend through the extended campus at Springfield. This coming fall I plan to continue on for my ADN.

I am very disappointed to learn that you have cut funding for Vermont Interactive Technologies (VIT). VIT is a wonderful program that allows Vermonters in more rural areas, like me, to attend college without living on campus or driving hours every day.

The majority of my classmates in the PN program, including myself, are adult learners. We have jobs, families, houses, and other commitments that make it so we could not live on a college campus or drive hours each day to classes. VIT allows us to attend classes much closer to where we live. I myself live right in Springfield. If I had to travel an hour or more each day to classes my studies would suffer. I may even have to cut back even further on the hours I work, which would cause considerable financial hardships. I know I am not the only one in this boat.

VIT sites help students save time and money. I know several classmates who would be unable to continue on with their education due to money/time lost in traveling to a physical VTC campus. Vermont is a rural state and to find a college in Vermont, where I can continue my degree in nursing, would require me to drive considerable distances. VIT brings the classroom to us and makes it possible for students in more rural areas to get a great education in or near their hometown.

By cutting VIT funding you will be cutting jobs. Not only for the VIT techs who will lose their jobs when this occurs, but also for future students. Vermont, being such a rural state, has a considerably large lower to lower-middle class community. VIT provides opportunities for Vermonters to acquire a good education at a reasonable price. By cutting VIT, Vermont will risk losing future, educated workers. The people who use VIT graduate to become nurses, respiratory therapists, dental hygienists, engineers, computer and IT specialist, and many other things. VIT gives working class families in rural areas the opportunity to earn a decent living.

If you cut VIT you will also be cutting down on Vermont's future middle class. In order for this state, this country in general, to succeed we need a strong middle class. Without easy access to educational opportunities you are risking the future success of Vermont. VIT is an essential part of Vermont's educational system. By cutting funding to this essential program you will be risking the future success of Vermonters.

I sincerely hope that our pleas change your mind. I have spent hours contacting local papers, hospitals, and businesses spreading the word about this unfortunate loss to my community. VIT is a part of Vermont we cannot afford to lose.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Rebecca L. Lyons