



# 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Brendan Lalor'.

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