

Testimony from Rebecca Givan, February 8, 2018.

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Vermont's schools continue to provide outstanding education- we looked at the people who provide this education.

The typical Vermont teacher:

Is a woman with a master's degree.

She makes \$60,000 per year, which is below the basic needs budget for a family of four.

She is the primary breadwinner.

She has significant student loan debt.

She sees health insurance coverage for herself and her dependents as a key reason for taking this job or remaining in the profession. However, she does not feel confident that she can afford the care she needs if she or a family member becomes seriously ill.

She directly feels and sees the impact of the opioid epidemic on schools.

She has seen an increase in need and poverty at school, including violence and behavioral problems.

She feels concerned that teachers are blamed for numerous social and financial problems in the state and in her community.

She believes her local collective bargaining agreement provides essential voice and protection, and that it allows teachers to address local needs such as professional development programs focused on their specific concerns, and common planning time. She believes the union provides crucial protection at a time when teachers are in financially, professionally and sometimes physically precarious situations.

She continues teaching because she is dedicated to the work and to her students.

She works significantly more hours than she is scheduled each week- often 10-20 hours at school and at home.

She spends hundreds of dollars per year on classroom supplies, as well as food and clothing for students in need, covering field trip costs, and providing snacks.

She seeks out opportunities to address special student needs such as the effects of trauma, and opportunities to use technology to improve both student learning and communication with families.

She feels that teachers don't receive the respect they deserve because they are women and that their work is undervalued by key decision-makers.

She is committed to providing high quality education, but this commitment is taking a toll.