

2/12/18

To: House and Senate Committees on Appropriations

Comment provided by: Sue Furry-Irish

Thank you for letting me speak tonight. I'm Sue Furry-Irish, I've lived in Shelburne for 42 years and have recently retired. I've been an educator and a family advocate all my life, including 2 years as the Child Care Coordinator for the City of Burlington during the Clavelle Administration. During that time I managed the benefits for city employees with children in child care. At that time, managing the costs associated with raising children while working were challenging, as they are today.

I'm here today regarding the family and medical leave bill. I was following the bill last year and was happy to see it pass the House during the last legislative session with strong support. I am anxious to see it move through the Senate this year. A family leave program would do so much to support working Vermonters, and studies consistently show that businesses also benefit due to reduced turnover costs. Encouraging mothers to continue working after giving birth or caring for elderly parents is also a step toward reducing the women's wage gap.

I am aware that there may be some startup costs associated with the program - and that the program may require an initial appropriation. I would gladly have paid a small tax to support family leave for Vermonters when I was working. I am here tonight to encourage the committee to include whatever appropriation is necessary for this bill in the budget. Getting this program started will be beneficial both for families and employers in Vermont. I hope you will do whatever it takes to make sure it moves forward this year.

Thank you,

Sue Furry-Irish