

Rebecca Buck

From: Deb Snell <snellrn@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 04, 2018 8:57 AM
To: Rebecca Buck
Subject: Fwd: Advocacy Testimony

Advocate Hearing Testimony

Good Afternoon, my name is Deb Snell and I am President of AFT-VT.

As a union that represents healthcare, I am asking that the Senate support the House restoration of healthcare funding and to fund the cost sharing subsidies for Vermont Health connect given that high copayments prevent people from going to the doctor and accessing the care they need. We were happy to note that the house voted to restore the funding of the Green Mountain Care Board, the Health Care Advocate and the AHEC loan reimbursement and we urge the Senate to support these measure as well.

We are also a union that represent Higher Ed professionals at our state colleges. In terms of funding the Vermont State colleges, we ask for the \$1,000,000.00 additional dollars for next year with an annual inflator. We also support the \$500,000.00 allocated to the University of Vermont. We are laying off instructors when our state needs to invest more in public higher education. This is happening, in part because of the high cost of post-secondary education in Vermont--in fact, we charge our students the most out of all 50 states. In his state of the state address, Governor Scott spoke of the need to keep young people in Vermont to grow our economy. Students who continue their education in state are more likely to stay, work and raise families in Vermont.

I hear the term workforce development being used frequently and want you to know that AFT-VT takes this issue very seriously. We are bringing our higher ed and healthcare professionals together to address the nursing shortage in this state. We understand the impact this shortage will have on the people we serve and worry for their safety. Our state colleges offer amazing nursing programs, but will be unable to do so unless we invest the time and money into our state colleges.

Vermont has underfunded its public colleges for years which results in inadequate resources for instruction and academic support. Vermont should rate high on many things, but being a state with one of the highest tuitions in our country should not be one of them. We can not let these institutions fail, and the funds we are asking for will help but not solve the hardships our state colleges face.

Thank you

