

**From:** Ashley Moore [mailto:ashley@mainstreetalliance.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 23, 2018 3:51 PM  
**To:** Kayla Dewey  
**Cc:** Dimitri Garder  
**Subject:** Additional Witness Comments

Hi Kayla,

Dimitri Garder, a witness from this morning, asked that I pass along the following additional comments, research, and suggestions that he and Jonathan Cooper from the Bennington County Regional Commission put together. Submission of additional comments was recommend by Chair Sirotkin.

Thank you,  
Ashley

Suggestions for remote workplace options in Vermont:

- Connecting existing Vermonters with employment opportunities.
  - The draft bill, particularly with respect to the remote and flexible workplace tax credit, focuses on this segment. One issue, however, is the inducement offered to companies is modest enough that it is unlikely to be the "last-mile" that convinces companies to go for coworking. If they aren't already doing it, a \$250 tax credit per FTE per year, plus ten percent of employer expenditures on equipment and that "25 percent of childcare costs" isn't going to get them over the top.
  - There might be more interest if the tax credit was either bumped up or was reallocated to up to 50 percent of equipment expenditures.
- Attracting new Vermonters who want to work for employers attuned to the cultural benefits of teleworking on at least a partial basis.
  - Our existing employers who utilize coworking with out-of-state employees might be the best ambassadors for this. Where coworking exists, there is a tether to Vermont. The legislature may wish to consider reaching out to these employers to develop materials or some platform for inducing these remote employees to move to or return to Vermont.
  - As mentioned today, departing high school alumni should ideally be engaged on an ongoing basis in the same way that colleges keep constant contact with their alums. Recruiting from a population who were born and raised in Vermont, when they're ready to raise a family, could be low hanging fruit.
  - The legislature may wish to consider developing a relocation assistance pilot program in lieu of a tax credit. This option would limit eligible employers to those currently employing remote workers, and who agree to partner with the state to share relevant but anonymous data pertaining to the occupational skills and demographic profile of the remote workforce. Instead of tax credits or reimbursements for equipment expenditures, these employers would be able to offer remote employees living out of state up to \$1,000 (in addition to their own relocation assistance programs) to help offset relocation expenses or to secure housing. The state would more than recoup the outlay in the form of tax revenue and local spending.

Background:

- Workforce recruitment without retention is a lose/lose for Vermont employers: time and talent is spent on bringing employees in, and then productivity is throttled when recent hires move away for whatever reasons, and the HR cycle for that position must begin anew.
- A study by GlobalWorkplaceAnalytics.com found that 80 percent of employees consider telework to be a job perk, 95 percent of employers say telework has a high impact on employee retention, and 46 percent of companies that allow telework say it has reduced attrition.
- Enhancing the opportunities for remote work may help Vermont companies counteract the troubling demographic loss of workers in the state born after 1970. This is a difficult workforce sector to grow: a survey of hiring managers has found that Gen Y'ers are more difficult to recruit (as reported by 56% of hiring managers) and to retain (as reported by 64% of hiring managers), but they are particularly attracted to flexible work arrangements (ranked as 8 on a 10-point scale for impact on overall job satisfaction).
- This demographics' stated preference for work-life balance is an exceptional opportunity for Vermont. According to a recent survey, 84 percent of millennials said they wanted more work-life balance; 67 percent said they wanted flexibility in order to spend more time with family; 60 percent want to save more time; and 48 percent wanted to reduce commuting stress. These are the comments of people who would enjoy living and working in Vermont. They are the comments of people we all know in that age demographic who have come to Vermont to work.

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