

Coretta Scott King said, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

Parent Child Centers are very tangible ways that we can, as a community, exercise compassion and care for some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. Working with children and parents, surrounding them with resources and opportunities, provides a focus on prevention that is proven effective in creating healthy communities.

Parent Child Center programs and services help to make individuals, families, and communities and our economy stronger. When families are supported, children are less likely to be at risk and are more likely to grow up happy and healthy. Investing in building healthy communities reduces the demand on our health care system. The work of Parent Child Centers deals with issues that are timely and relevant: adverse childhood experiences, addiction, family safety and stability, and many more.

Prevention work saves money. As the Master Grant does not adequately fund the state services it requires the Parent Child Centers to deliver, **please invest in prevention by increasing the Parent Child Center Master Grant by \$1.5 million AND allocating a one-time investment of \$1.5million** so PCCs can pay for needed projects that have been put off because of chronic underfunding.

Stop the proposed state budget cuts specific to Parent Child Centers including Reach Up and VCFCR -- this would deny on a monthly basis 120 vulnerable and high-risk families in Rutland County access to case management and wrap around supports.

Parent Child Centers should be the home for supports and services for Vermont families. Please do not allow the administration to end the PCC Reach Up Case Management Contracts.

Parent Child Center staff wages and benefits are continually 30% below market rates to comparable positions in education and state government. If Parent Child Centers are to continue to provide high quality state services, wages and benefits must sustain the highly skilled people who do the work.

May your vote on these important issues demonstrate compassionate action for the betterment of our community.

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