

Mark Foley Jr.
Budget Testimony ~ Rutland
Rutland Public Schools, Longfellow School Building, Board Room
February 25th, 2019
6:00-7:00pm

- My name is Mark Foley and I am the owner of Foley Services, a Rutland based company, that along with our families other companies employ over 150 Vermonters. I also serve as the current Chair of the Vermont Business Roundtable, and have the pleasure of serving on several other local Boards.
- I speak to you today as a business owner, and fourth generation Rutlander. I was born and raised here and my wife Kelly and I are raising our three children here.
- I am incredibly proud of Rutland and am committed to ensuring a vibrant future for our city and region.
- Rutland's size and demographics offer a unique window into the problems and potential that all Vermonters face. I know these struggles and opportunities well.
- At Foley Services, our employees are the heart of our company. Their ability to show up as productive team members directly impacts our success and ability to contribute to the greater economy.
- Over the past decade, I have become more and more aware of the impact that child care – more specifically the lack of high-quality, affordable child care – has on my workforce.
 - It impacts our ability to recruit and retain the best employees and our employees' ability to stay at work and be productive.
 - This month alone I have had multiple conversations with my managers about absenteeism – overwhelmingly the cause is a gap in reliable child care.
- Supporting the child care needs of my employees today also supports the workforce of tomorrow.
 - Like many employers, my workforce is aging faster than I can replace them. I need a skilled, reliable workforce to ensure my business can grow and succeed.

- My business is not alone in these struggles.
- The Vermont Business Roundtable has long supported early childhood education, and recently formed an Early Child Care and Learning Task Force because we believe that investing in high-quality child care for all Vermonters is one of the smartest investments Vermont can make for our economy.
- 90% of a child's brain develops before age 5. The hours they spend in high-quality care sets them up for success in our K-12 system and beyond as skilled, reliable employees and neighbors.
- Most importantly, supporting high-quality child care gives our youngest citizens the opportunity to succeed. It levels the playing-field for all children, and especially benefits those caught in a cycle of generational poverty.
- I urge you to support, champion and fully fund H.194.
- As innovators and entrepreneurs, the business community can take steps to support our workforce, but we need the state to meet us. I don't believe there is a one-size-fits-all solution of how employers can support their employees' child care needs. But as we tackle this problem together, businesses should be supported in their efforts. H.194 does this.
- I often think about what it will take to ensure a vital future for my business, for Rutland, and Vermont. Child care is a crucial piece of the economic development puzzle.
- You have many worthy issues to tackle and fund but addressing the child care crisis is the only one that gets to the root cause of so many of our problems and future remediation costs.
- When I envision a workforce with access to high quality child care: I see a future where I can fill my open positions, grow and sustain my business and contribute to the state's economy. I look forward to working on this together.
- Thank you for your time, consideration and service to Rutland and the people of Vermont.