

From: Kate Logan

Sent: Monday, April 15, 2019 1:07 PM

Below, please find written testimony to enter into the record, from Sonia Launder of WRJ, in support of S.23.

Sonia Launder works at Aurora Day Care in White River Junction and is a single mother to a 6 year old son. Sonia makes about \$12 an hour now, but was making even less until recently.

Here's Sonia's story:

A couple of years ago I was working at a daycare and wasn't making enough to cover all my expenses.

Between rent, groceries for me and my son and trying to keep up with monthly student loan payments on more than \$10,000 in loans—something had to be skipped. I couldn't maintain the upkeep of my car or afford to pay for the inspections. Little things would break in the car and I couldn't afford to fix them. So, I would try and wait for my tax return to have some money to fix and keep my car.

About a year and a half ago I was pulled over because I had a brake light out and that led to a ticket for the light being out and also for not having a current inspection. The tickets ended up costing more than \$700 and while I tried to make a plan to save up and pay, I just couldn't do it quick enough and ended up losing my license. While this happened I still couldn't pay to maintain my car and more things went wrong with it. I had a tire blow and my muffler broke as well. Since I couldn't fix I got pulled over *another time* for the loud muffler and got more tickets for that and another because I had no inspection.

I just can't get out of the cycle of fixing my car and paying off the tickets and now my car just sits and that means that now I don't have transportation. I know my story is not unique in Vermont, which raises the question for me—why do we keep letting this happen?

Like so many others in my situation, I need a raise in pay, but the only way I can do that is with a degree and with the student debt I already have I can't get new loans and I don't have a vehicle to get me to classes.

For now, though, I just want to be able to pay my bills, pay rent, buy groceries for me and my 6 year old son, and have a car that I can drive to get me to work and hopefully school.

I work hard and I'm doing all I can to care for my son and meet his needs. Raising the minimum wage to more of a livable wage would allow me to meet our basic needs and plan for the future.