

Dear Members of the House Committee on Human Services

I write to ask you to invest a portion of the \$1.25 billion stimulus package into UVM's childcare center. UVM's president announced last week the closure of the center, with all employees laid off and families who had counted on that childcare now without. The administration argued that the COVID epidemic worsened UVM's finances and that it could no longer afford to subsidize the center at a cost of \$550,000 per year.

The center's deficit had already been reduced by half with a variety of structural and other changes and there were plans in place to continue to reduce this deficit. Bridge funding could help preserve this childcare center, a model center that pays teachers well and is renowned for its teacher education and best practice. Our own two children attended the Campus Children's School so I can personally attest to the excellent care and education they received and what a terrible loss to our community the closure of the School would cause.

Specifically, I am asking that you allocate \$550,000 of the stimulus money to support UVM's childcare center for one year, contingent on the agreement that UVM will use that year to work with faculty and staff, and the College of Education and Social Services to reorganize to get the child care center to a place where it is financially sustainable and that UVM use further relief funds to make structural adjustments as needed to comply with the new regulations for childcare in the COVID-19 era.

As you are aware, many childcare centers in Vermont are closing due to the effects of COVID. I believe working families cannot afford to lose more slots because it will result in parents not being able to work to provide for their families.

I attach to this letter a commentary written by a former Dean Miller and former Associate Dean Seguino at UVM who provide further background on the context of this challenge here at UVM.

Chris Burns

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