

Dear Members of the House Committee on Human Services

I am adding a personal voice 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. We therefore believe 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.

Specifically, we are 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.

As you are aware, many childcare centers in Vermont are closing due to the effects of COVID. We 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. **In particular, the loss of the childcare center disproportionately affects young women faculty – young, because parents of small children are likely to be under 45, and women, because the job of childcare still falls largely to mothers. This increased burden comes at a time when the university is requiring all faculty to make massive adjustments to their teaching, from learning how to teach online to teaching 'dual' in-person and remote courses this fall. To do this well, while also caring for one or more small children is next to impossible, and may cost many women the opportunity to gain tenure and succeed in an academic career.**

A commentary written by a former Dean Miller and former Associate Dean Seguino at UVM provides further background on the context of this challenge here at UVM, and has been widely circulated to legislators.

Sincerely,

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