

Dear Members of the House Committee on Human Services:

Thank you very much for your hard work at this critical time for Vermonters.

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 \$500,000 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. I 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 practices.

Specifically, I am asking that you allocate \$500,000 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. My kids are now school age, but I remember well the acute challenges of finding good childcare in the Burlington area so I could work. I cannot imagine the hardship now. This is a great center. It is oversubscribed. With support and time to reorganize, potentially in the future it could provide for even more children. Please consider this important allocation to Vermont families.

Thank you,

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