

Why We Should Allocate Greater Funds to Higher Education

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2/15/2019

Vermont ranks fiftieth out of fifty states for state funding for higher education. It is perhaps no surprise then to know that Vermont also has one of the highest rates in the country for students leaving the state to go to college. Once they leave, they are unlikely to return. Vermont is also consistently in the top ten states with the highest cost of living and wages which haven't increased in years. Since Vermont is the second oldest state in the country we desperately need to keep our young people here.

By funding public higher education young Vermonters would graduate with much less, or no debt at all. That lack of debt will make it easier for them to remain in state, able to afford the high cost of living here. Greater funding for the public colleges will also make them more appealing when those same young Vermonters are deciding where to go after high school graduation. It could be the deciding factor between one of our schools or one out of state. Investing in higher education is an investment in the future of Vermont.

I am nearly three years into a social work and sociology double major at Castleton University. I got lucky. With scholarships, loans, and grants, my family and I are managing. So many people I know are not. I have friends from high school who would have gone to college, but were unable to afford it, even with financial aid. One of them wanted to be a music teacher. Three years on they still haven't been able to move towards that goal. Over the last three years at Castleton I have seen so many of my friends struggle to pay, unsure if they will be able to afford another semester, or unable to do so, and dropping out. Many have yet to return to higher education, and may never do so.

Thank you for your time.