

Alexandra L. Timmins
02-15-19
S. 38 Testimony

Vermont is Losing Students

Hello, my name is Alexandra Timmins. I am a resident of Vermont and a VAST (early college) student. Before entering the VAST program, I enrolled in courses at Vermont Tech as a dual-enrollment student. I live in Bethel Vermont, and love my home state, but am writing to add my voice to the growing many, who must seek higher educational choices elsewhere. I have always been a science-minded student and am interested in studying Biology. Most careers in Biology require a minimum of a four-year science degree as a core, and often a Master's degree. So far, I have been able to take a good amount of coursework through the VSC, but after this semester, I will need to move on.

These Green Mountains hold history and abundant beauty, along with the second highest tuition rates in the country. Incentives for the Vermont student to stay are nominal, and cost of living is amongst one of the most expensive in the USA. As a result, I have sought a solution out of the United States. I researched and visited many Colleges and have decided on Bishop's University in Sherbrooke, QC. Much like some of states in the US, Canada has prioritized their students and kept quality higher education affordable. Bishop's education is renowned and of the English speaking Canadian Colleges, up to a third of the student body is from New England, including my home state of Vermont. My guess is that Vermont high school graduates head across the border, in part, due to higher education costs at home.

Solutions for the future are necessary to keep our best and brightest residents in state, and to foster Vermont's future, including a skill and trained workforce. If we expect students to stay, Vermont needs to invest in higher education and take an active role in Vermont student's education. Valedictorians and Salutatorians should not be the few to get free education in our state. State initiatives to reward students to be educated in Vermont must expand to compete with the ever-growing numbers that leave the Green Mountains. Thank you for allowing me to share my story and I hope that my voice echoes change in these Mountains.

~Alexandra L. Timmins, Bethel, VT