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I am Brian Kravitz, from Waterbury, Vermont, affiliated with Central Vermont Adult Basic Education.

I respectfully ask that you, to address budget deficits due to COVID, please support the statewide Adult Education and Literacy provider network with an appropriation of \$350,000 for fiscal year 2022.

The Adult Education and Literacy providers serve adults in Vermont who need help with basic skills in order to access other educational or career opportunities. The AEL Network has not received any support from the state during the entire COVID-19 pandemic.

We know that increasing literacy (reading, writing and/or math) will open up opportunities for students, including better jobs, furthering their education, developing new job skills, having a better family life, and being able to do basic tasks for themselves.

I think of Chelsea and Shainne, sisters from Orange County, both single parents, one with profound learning disabilities, and neither with a high school diploma. Both have historically struggled to find and keep sustainable wage jobs, all too common for those who drop out of high school. Frequent school closures and lack of childcare, due to COVID, have greatly intensified these struggles. Knowing that under-education was holding them back, they came to us, in despair and with nowhere else to turn. Their dreams are to break the cycle of poverty and move to sustainable careers in healthcare. They will be the first in their family to have high school diplomas, the first to even have the chance for real careers, and perhaps even college. The diplomas and skills these young parents gain, through CVABE, will open doors, and will have profound effects on themselves and their families. For Chelsea and Shianne, and thousands more like them, Adult Education and Literacy is the only place they can turn to for the assets and skills that will change their lives.

On behalf of all of our students, we ask that you, to address budget deficits due to COVID, please support the statewide Adult Education and Literacy provider network with an appropriation of \$350,000 for fiscal year 2022.

Thank you for listening.