

February 8, 2021

House and Senate Committees on Appropriations
c/o Joint Fiscal Office
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Committee Members,

I was born and raised in Vermont, went to College in Vermont, joined the work force in Vermont, and started a family in Vermont. Vermont, if you couldn't tell, is an important place to me, which is why it's important for me to see the appropriate steps towards its improvement.

My husband and I work for two reputable Vermont companies. I work in finance and my husband works in marketing. We have two young children in child care. I feel child care has always been quite expensive, and I don't know that many families that have more than one child in child care at a time based on the associated cost because presumably they can't afford it. With two children in child care at once, over 25% of our household income goes towards child care costs. It was and still is our greatest expense, more than our mortgage.

Throughout our child care experience, we have seen a lot of turnover and our current center doesn't seem to be able to get the qualified teachers they need. Our center has also changed owners multiple times as one of the owners wasn't financial able to justify keeping the center open.

Recently, during the pandemic, when child care was shutdown, we were asked to pay half the tuition to maintain our spots and support the current program, but with two kids and other concerns associated with the pandemic and a lot of unknowns ahead, we had to pull them out of the program altogether to save money for anything unexpected.

I do feel there is a better solution to the current child care issues throughout Vermont and ultimately, although I feel I'm very fortunate, many improvements can be made and the Governor's proposed investments in child care is a great place to start.

Thank You,

Kelley