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I'm Amanda Hass, from Montpelier and a teacher at the Montpelier Learning Center of Central Vermont Adult Basic Education. We have 6 learning centers in Washington, Orange and Lamoille counties and are one of the four statewide non-profit organizations in the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) network.

I'm here to ask you to support our network's request for an additional appropriation of \$1.4 million for Fiscal Year 2023 to address both historic underfunding and ongoing expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our network serves Vermont's most vulnerable adults and teens who need help with basic skills and obtaining a high school credential in order to access other education and career opportunities.

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

For example, the immigrants and refugees to this state want to interact with the community and become useful citizens, but often need help with conversation and citizenship skills, as well as acquiring their driver's licenses. We teach them English, and help them acquire the knowledge and confidence needed to have successful integration into our society at no cost to them. Without those barriers for these students, they are able to become an active and central force not only in their learning but also in their own lives.

Please support the statewide Adult Education and Literacy provider network with an additional appropriation of \$1.4 million for Fiscal Year 2023 to address our historic underfunding and ongoing expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for listening.