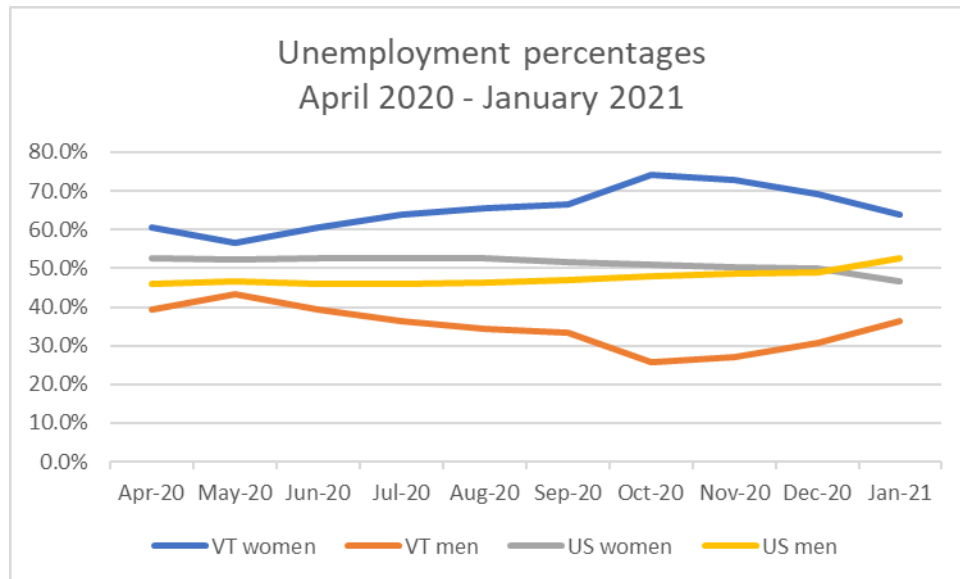


**TO: Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing, and General Affairs**  
**FROM: Cary Brown, Executive Director of the Vermont Commission on Women**

**RE: S10, an act relating to extending certain unemployment provisions related to COVID-19**  
**March 9, 2021**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound and unprecedented effects on working women and their ability to provide financially for their families. Women have been on the forefront of those workers who are putting their health at risk by providing essential services, and they have been the leaders in those whose jobs have been reduced or eliminated by the pandemic restrictions. The already existing disproportionate burden of unpaid caregiving, education, and household labor borne by women<sup>1</sup> has been increased during the pandemic, and the losses of women in the workforce are undoing decades of progress.

In Vermont, women are by far the majority of those filing unemployment claims,<sup>2</sup> and our state has had the unpleasant distinction of leading the country in this disparity.



<sup>1</sup> Pre-pandemic, women spent almost twice as much time on unpaid care as men did:

[https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/employment%20and%20growth/how%20advancing%20womens%20equality%20can%20add%2012%20trillion%20to%20global%20growth/mgi%20power%20of%20parity\\_full%20report\\_september%202015.pdf](https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/employment%20and%20growth/how%20advancing%20womens%20equality%20can%20add%2012%20trillion%20to%20global%20growth/mgi%20power%20of%20parity_full%20report_september%202015.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/chariu.asp>

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Nationally, women are leaving the workforce at 4 times the rate of men. Job losses in the United States are overwhelmingly endured by women of color. Women reduced their working hours by four to five times as much as men when the pandemic hit, and working mothers have dropped their time at work by 50% more than working fathers.<sup>3</sup>

Policy decisions being made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic provide an opportunity to recognize that the unemployment situation for women in Vermont is in a crisis, and that the uneven impact on working mothers demands attention. Applying an equity lens to decisions made about distribution of resources, including unemployment benefits and accompanying dependent benefits, provides an opportunity to target remedies in ways that recognize the disparate impact of the pandemic.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/03/moms-work-and-the-pandemic.html?utm\\_campaign=20210303msacos2ccstors&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/03/moms-work-and-the-pandemic.html?utm_campaign=20210303msacos2ccstors&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)