

Good afternoon, my name is Cynthia Glenn and I have been an educator in Vermont for 23 years.

From 2001 to 2015 my family and I lived in Chittenden County and I worked in the Colchester School District. In January of 2012, my husband took a job at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center which had a commute of 1 ½ hours each way. This was a hardship on our family and we knew we needed to move. We also knew when we moved, I would need to secure a job as well since we were a two-income household and I carried the family health insurance.

However, securing a teaching job was trickier than expected since the window of opportunity was so small. It was nearly impossible to find a job, interview, and sign a contract with another school before signing my next school year contract with Colchester. This left me and my family in a precarious position. If I signed my contract with Colchester, my husband would continue his long commute. If I didn't sign my contract, I could possibly be unemployed.

I thought the only way to make this work was to ask for a leave of absence for the 2015-2016 school year. This would give me the time needed to explore job opportunities in the Upper Valley region. In March of 2015, I submitted my request for a leave of absence for the 2015-16 school year and it was granted in April.

By the end of May, I found a few teaching positions in the Upper Valley area and applied. I interviewed for several different jobs, did a couple of teaching demos, and by June was well on my way to securing a position for the following school year.

Unfortunately, I quickly learned that I was not going to have any of these opportunities. The superintendent from Colchester reached out to my potential employers and informed them that I was on leave. Unbeknownst to me, that meant I was under contract and not able to seek employment in another school district in Vermont unless I resigned. I was also informed that if I did seek employment in Vermont as a teacher while on leave, I could lose my license. Ironically, I was told I could work across the border in NH without a problem.

Ultimately, I ended up resigning from Colchester and I was unable to secure a job I wanted as a direct result of this current employment practice. In addition, my teaching career was completely derailed, which I am still recovering from, due to my superintendent's interference. It should be stated and recognized that this current employment practice does not work. There is not enough time to adequately seek new employment if life circumstances demand it, as was my case.

Currently, I am working in Randolph and have an hour commute each way. I very much enjoy my job, my colleagues, and my students in Randolph, but if I ever want to change jobs again, the same system that I found so challenging 7 years ago remains in effect. If I were to change, I would, once again, have to seek permission from my superintendent to look for a new job or do again what I did then, quit my job without another teaching position waiting for me. That risk is too great and has a negative effect on me and my family. Please allow teachers the freedom to look for and find a new teaching position as all other professionals enjoy.

I appreciate being invited to share my testimony and welcome any questions.