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**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND**  
**WELFARE**

February 23, 2022

Charity Clark and Amanda Herzberger, Co-Chairs  
Junior League of Champlain Valley (JLCV)  
P.O. Box 4418  
Burlington, VT 05403

John Sayles, Executive Director  
Vermont Foodbank  
33 Parker Road  
Barre, VT 05641

Sean Brown, Commissioner  
Department for Children and Families  
280 State Drive, HC 1 North  
Waterbury, VT 05671

Donna Bailey, Co-Chair  
Vermont Parent Child Center Network  
126 Monroe Street  
Middlebury, VT 05753

Morgan Crossman, Executive Director  
Building Bright Futures  
600 Blair Park, Suite 160  
Williston, VT 05495

Dear Early Childhood Care and Education Partners:

This year, the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare (Committee) was referred S.198, an act relating to the Diaper Need Working Group. As its title implies, the bill proposes to establish a working group for the purpose of systemizing the distribution of diapers to families in need. The Committee has heard testimony from both the Junior League, which is currently operating a volunteer-based diaper bank, and the Vermont Foodbank. While the Committee does not believe a statutory working group is necessary to systematize the distribution of diapers in Vermont, it recognizes how essential diapers are to young families and asks the recipients of this letter to come together on their own initiative to develop and implement a plan for statewide diaper distribution.

According to the findings and testimony from S.198, the need for diapers has skyrocketed during the pandemic. In 2019, the JLCV Diaper Bank distributed 100,000 diapers in three counties and over the past year has distributed more than 1.3 million diapers in 13 Vermont counties. There are 17,000 Vermonters under three years of age, 24 percent of whom live in families earning between 100 and 200 percent of the federal poverty level and may not be able to adequately afford diapers. Clean diapers are crucial for the health and comfort of young children, and most child care facilities also require that parents provide diapers for their child while at the facility.

The current arrangement for distributing diapers to families in need through the JLCV Diaper Bank is not sustainable. The JLCV is a fully volunteer-run organization that does not have the staffing, infrastructure, or facilities to maintain a distribution system at the current level. The Committee understands that other measures for supporting young families are necessary; it is also important to ensure that Vermont has a better system for diaper distribution.

We hope that each of you will work together to build a better system for such distribution. John Sayles of the Vermont Foodbank testified that he would be willing to call such a group together. The Committee thanks the recipients of this letter for their myriad of efforts to assist Vermont families in need. Committee members welcome any recommendations for legislative action that the group may propose while developing a plan.

Sincerely,

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Sen. Virginia “Ginny” Lyons, Chair