

**Good morning, I am testifying today in support of the requested increase for The Governor's Institutes of Vermont as a parent of program alums, a school board member, and a legislator.**

**As a parent:** three of my four children participated in the Governor's Institutes. I witnessed the solidification of their career paths as a result of their experiences at GIV. My fourth child would also have participated had there been a Medicine Institute at the time; now that there is one, I understand that the demand for it is more than double of its capacity. As of this year, students in the Health & Medicine Institute will also be able to leave with a certification to begin working on local ambulance crews immediately.

**As a legislator:** I see the requested increase for FY24 as an investment in our future workforce - training and retaining hundreds of motivated young Vermonters. A substantial amount of the dollars invested will go right back into our Vermont colleges and universities, with the Governor's Institutes acting as a recruiting funnel for these local institutions.

**As a school board member:** I have witnessed several local students achieve their career goals as a direct result of their GIV experiences. I have seen students whose exposure to college life and career paths through GIV opened doors that would have forever remain closed had they not attended one of the Institutes on a sliding scale scholarship.

**I can't overstate enough how the Legislature's support of the requested increase for FY24 creates transformational educational opportunities that will remain accessible to low-income families.** The Governor's Institutes needs stable funding to plan for long-term growth. In 2022, 732 students applied for 450 slots. The demand is obviously increasing and as awareness becomes more widespread, especially in rural areas, it is our responsibility to ensure that it remains available regardless of a student's economic situation. More than 84% of students receive financial assistance to attend the Institutes; this increase would help to serve 117 additional students while continuing to meet that need.

**For some students, this is an essential opportunity they can't get elsewhere:** in 2022, 50% of students were from rural areas, 11% were first generation to college, and 15% identified as having disabilities.

The Governor's Institutes of Vermont is a nonprofit organization which was founded 40 years ago under Governor Snelling in partnership with the State. Each year they work hard to match the Legislature's appropriation 4 to 1 by engaging in an aggressive and on-going fundraising campaign.

**After 17 years without an increase in state funding, an increase in our investment in youth is an investment in our future workforce.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.