

5 Cedar Glen North
South Burlington, VT 05403-7334
January 30, 2024

Vermont House of Representatives
Education Committee
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05633

Re: Testimony 1-30-2024 11:30am SNAP DAY; importance of food assistance

Good Morning House Education Members,

Firstly, I wish to thank you for taking time today to listen to my testimony.

My name is Katherine LaPrad. I have owned a home here in Vermont since September 1983 and currently live in South Burlington, Vermont. In 2013, I went to live and work in China, where my two children were working.

Due to COVID-19, on August 24th 2020, I returned with my young granddaughter, Aroha Tian WILDE, to the United States after working as a primary school teacher in Beijing, for many years.

This was an extremely challenging transition for us. We had great difficulty securing a flight to exit China, due to the limited number of flights permitted per airline to enter and exit China by the government. Our flight was canceled 13 times over an 8 week period.

This transition home to Vermont hit our family particularly hard financially. We were in danger of losing our home here after all these years. We lived off one credit card and a small IRA, until I was able to secure assistance through SNAP with the assistance of Ariana Matthews-Salzman, Program Specialist at the Vermont Foodbank. Without this assistance, we would have had to sell our small family home. We are so grateful for this help. Hunger in Vermont is REAL. I have gone to bed hungry many nights so that my little granddaughter could eat.

I ask that you approve additional funding for food purchasing and distribution for the Vermont Foodbank and food shelves so that they can continue to meet the needs of our neighbors and to support the upcoming bill to create a higher 3SquaresVT minimum benefit. It is imperative for families on fixed and lower incomes to survive here in Vermont.

Thank you for listening and for your compassion.

Respectfully,

Katherine LaPrad
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