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I'm Amanda Hass, from Montpelier and a teacher at the Montpelier Learning Center of Central Vermont Adult Basic Education. We have 6 learning centers in Washington, Orange and Lamoille counties and are one of the four statewide non-profit organizations in the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) network.

I'm here to ask you to support our network's request for an additional appropriation of \$1.5 million added to base funding to address historic underfunding, increasing enrollment, and rising costs.

Our network serves Vermont's most vulnerable adults and teens who need help with basic skills and obtaining a high school credential. We are serving more immigrants than ever – doing our best to open opportunities for them to have jobs, have a better family life, be able to do basic skills for themselves, and integrate into their new communities.

For example, a student of mine from Afghanistan came to the US with his family to escape the violence there and provide a better life for them, especially his daughter. His beginning English skills made him shy at first, but now he has improved his language skills and self-confidence. Through our lessons, Shah was able to buy a car by using the skills he learned to negotiate with car salesmen (in English!), navigate bank loans, and create a budget. Having a car has given him and his family freedom.

As a result of better English skills, he has been promoted at his job and is now on track to return to school and become a teacher to impact others as I have with him. Our services have helped him and his family integrate well into our community and gain agency in their life here. We will do this for over 90 immigrants this year.

Please support the statewide Adult Education and Literacy provider network with an additional appropriation of \$1.5 million added to base funding to address historic underfunding, increasing enrollment, and rising costs.

Thank you for listening.