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Date of Testimony: 1/19/2023

Committee: Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs

Remarks:

My name is Eric Sorkin and together with my wife we run runamok Maple. We are a syrup manufacturer with about 100 employees at three facilities in Fairfax, Cambridge and Bolton. I am also speaking today as a parent. I am thrilled to be testifying today on the urgent need for robust public investment in the child care sector. The number of business owners who are in support of addressing child care now speaks volumes to just how important this issue is. I want to clearly state that the lack of quality, affordable child care greatly impacts my business and our employees. The situation has deteriorated significantly since the onset of COVID. It would be negligent not to respond to this issue now. Our employees are struggling to prioritize their economic health and wellbeing while simultaneously prioritizing their children's healthy development. The choices they have to make are incredibly challenging. The lack of quality, affordable child care is keeping Vermonters out of the workforce. I've seen it firsthand and it's a definite drag on our business. We know it's costing working families millions of dollars that they can't afford. We know it's keeping employees out of the workforce. We know it makes it harder for employers to accommodate parents' needs. And now we also know how much it will cost to solve the problem, and we have data to show that it will produce a positive return if we choose to make the public investment. It seems the only relevant question left is what we plan to do about it. As a business owner, I will readily submit that I don't believe every problem needs a government solution. However, in this case, if we don't take legislative action, there's no reasonable hope this will get better unless the government steps in.

As a business owner, a parent, and a tax payer it is a resounding yes to a payroll tax to help solve this issue.