

Good afternoon,

My name is Jon Kennedy, I am a supervisor in the Economic Services Division of the Department for Children and Families. I live in Addison County, and I work in the Middlebury District Office. I have worked for the ESD for over 10 years. I am here in my capacity as the Chair of the Labor Management Committee for Economic Services.

My goal today is to support S. 96 and to share with you the concerns I have heard from our members about private contracts. While S.96 doesn't prohibit private contracts or privatization contracts, it does add some commonsense guard rails, improves accountability for the taxpayers and the bill goes a long way to reassure state employees that their jobs are secure and the Vermonters they care about will be well served.

Our members top concerns include:

- The loss of state jobs to private contractors
- Repetitive services
- Frustration over doing the hard work with a family, building trust, and overcoming obstacles only to turn it over to a private entity that is just interested in reporting numbers that make them look successful.
- The lack of training and familiarity with Vermont, our policies and with the people we serve, as well as high turnover by contracted employees resulting in a lack of vital consistency. Often our members feel like this situation creates more work for state employees anyway.
- Sitting next to contract employees who do the same job we do, in the same office feels to our members like an attempt to circumvent our union. Our members feel these contracted employees should be state employees, protected by a contract, paid the same for same work.
- The breaking of critical relationships with our clients by the private contractors that state employees have worked hard to nurture.

S. 96 would not solve all these concerns, the Administration could still seek to privatize state services, but this bill could slow the pace and demand accountability by contractors. It would make sure that we aren't losing our jobs or watching our state government exploit workers who are often paid less for doing the same work we do every day. Thank you.