

I'm Elaina Vitale, a mom of two living in Bradford. My partner Matt and I are both working parents who love our jobs, and public investment in the child care system from Act 76 has helped us to stay in the workforce, give our kids a great early education, and prepare for the future.

This is why I'm writing to express my concern about the FY26 budget proposal to reallocate child care funding to nonrelated government expenses.

Access to child care has been critical for our kids —We've seen so much learning and development since our daughters started going, and we're confident that they're safe and cared for by their early childhood educators.

But affording child care hasn't been easy. We haven't been able to save money since our second child started child care, and we've had to consider the option of Matt leaving the workforce.

Thanks to Act 76, we don't have to make that decision. **We recently qualified for child care tuition assistance due to the income eligibility expansion. It's saving us \$1,500 a month in child care costs.** I can't explain how significant this is for us — we no longer have to live paycheck-to-paycheck. We'll be able to pay off the car and start building savings for our kids.

We're so grateful to our local representatives who worked tirelessly on this legislation, and it was very easy to cast our votes for them in November. But you must continue the job we elected you to do— which is to continue building on our child care progress so even more Vermont families benefit in the way ours has. It's up to you to protect child care funding and continue to invest in our children, our families, and our early childhood educators.

Thank you for your time and consideration.