

Dear Members of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations,

My name is Mahala Largent and I am a resident of Vermont and a mom of two young children. I am a survivor of domestic violence and a school nurse. I'm writing to express my concern about the proposal to reallocate funding intended for child care.

CCFAP has been a crucial piece for me in the process of rebuilding my life after leaving domestic abuse. When I left, I had to leave my home and job without time to plan or save money. I was overwhelmed with finding housing and work to support my family. I was unable to find work without childcare in place. I was also unable to pay for childcare without assistance because I had no income at the time. I qualified for assistance and was eventually able to find a school nursing position that worked as a single parent of young children with sole physical custody.

Once I was able to accept a full time position, and found housing; I was faced with a new problem. I was unable to find any before or after school slots to use my subsidy. So in order to get to work, I had to meet the school bus at stops that were early enough and late enough to allow me time to get to and from my job. My young children rode the bus for almost 2 hours every day, because I had no options for care.

I was so relieved when my children finally got a childcare slot 6 months later and I knew they were safe and cared for and not on a school bus for hours a day. Both of my children have suffered the trauma of abuse and they needed the support of childcare and not the stress, uncertainty, and isolation of the school bus for their after school care plan.

Now as I continue to rebuild my life from abuse, I am faced with significant fears about how to continue to find and afford childcare. CCFAP has been a huge help for me and my children, but there are still not enough child care spaces for all the families who need care. We must keep making progress to ensure that all Vermont families can access affordable child care.

Please consider the impact that reallocation of this funding will have on the many families that still can't find the child care they need to continue to work in our state, contributing to the overall health and wellbeing of our economy and the future we have for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration for this crucial funding and investment into our children.

Sincerely,

Mahala Largent