

I'm Teigue Linch. My husband and I are raising our twin girls in Essex Junction – and they are quickly approaching their second birthdays. I'm writing as a parent to express my concern about the proposal to reallocate funding intended for child care as part of the FY2026 State Budget.

When John and I began family planning, we decided one child made the most sense because it's really challenging financially to raise a family in Vermont right now. We were blessed with our twins.

Having two kids in need of child care at the same time was especially difficult: Before we qualified for child care tuition assistance from the state, half of our monthly paychecks went straight to our child care bills—even with both of us working full-time.

Thanks to Act 76, we now qualify for child care tuition assistance. **This tuition assistance has given our family the ability to better plan and save for the future.** We've gone from paying \$3,000 per month for child care to just over \$1,000 each month — nearly a third of what we had been paying!

We're still in disbelief. But we know this new stability will have a tremendous impact on our family and thousands of other Vermont children and their families. Compared to this time last year, 1,900 Vermont families have newly qualified for and accessed reduced child care tuition.

The best part of that is the child care programs we love and depend on benefit from increased state aid too. Through Act 76, they receive increased reimbursement rates from the state for each family using tuition assistance — which means greater stability for families *and* for the programs.

But the child care crisis isn't over – thousands of Vermont families still struggle to afford child care, while many families, especially in our rural communities, still don't have access to a nearby program. **This is why it's so important in the FY26 budget to build on our child care progress and use every dollar from Act 76 for its intended purpose – to solve Vermont's child care crisis.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.