



Testimony On S.206

Presented to

Vermont House Committee on Government Operations and
Military Affairs

April 2026

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Chair Birong, Vice-Chair Hango, Ranking Member Evans, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this legislation. My name is Hayden Dublois, and I am testifying on behalf of FGA Action, which promotes policy reforms in a number of issue areas. As a former Vermonter myself, I always appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on proposed legislation in the Green Mountain State. For the reasons outlined below, I would encourage the committee to oppose S.206.

Vermont is currently ranked as one of the most burdensome states in the nation for childcare regulations.¹ Meanwhile, the cost of child care in Vermont is incredibly expensive, including compared to neighboring states. The average annual cost of infant care in Vermont is \$18,836, and the average annual cost of care for a four-year-old is \$18,336.²

This legislation would add to Vermont's regulatory complexity by creating a new state regulatory board, along with stricter requirements for childcare workers.³

Vermont should be leaning in the exact opposite direction by simplifying its current regulatory structure. More to the point, Vermont should consider easing its very burdensome childcare staff-to-toddler ratios. The overwhelming consensus of the research indicates that reducing the burden of childcare ratios significantly lowers the cost of care.⁴ In fact, for certain age groups, allowing just one additional child per staff member can lower costs by up to 20 percent, on average.⁵

Even childcare advocacy groups in Vermont, such as Let's Grow Kids, have acknowledged that the state's "low ratios translate into relatively high costs per child in care, especially for infants and toddlers" in Vermont.⁶ Vermont used to have more flexible ratios, before they changed in the latter years of the Shumlin administration.⁷ Furthermore, a meta-analysis of 29 different studies on childcare ratios and outcomes concluded that "variations in ratios have small, if any, associations with concurrent and subsequent child outcomes."⁸

Vermont should reject the provisions of S.206 and instead explore ways to modernize and streamline its regulatory process for childcare—specifically through more flexible childcare ratios.

¹ Flowers et al, "State Childcare Regulations Index 2026," Archrbridge Institute (2026), <https://www.archbridgeinstitute.org/state-childcare-regulations-index/>.

² Economic Policy Institute, "Child care costs in the United States: Vermont," Economic Policy Institute (2025), <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/VT>.

³ Vermont General Assembly, "S.206," State of Vermont (2026), <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2026/S.206>.

⁴ Council of Economic Advisors, "Work and the Cost of Child Care," The White House (2019), <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/articles/work-cost-child-care/>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Let's Grow Kids, "Child Care Is Everyone's Business," Let's Grow Kids (2022), https://letsgrowkids.org/client_media/files/2022EconomicImpactReport.pdf.

⁷ Author's analysis of historical ratios relative to current ratios in Vermont, which changed in the later years of the Shumlin administration.

⁸ Perlman et al, "Child-Staff Ratios in Early Childhood Education and Care Settings and Child Outcomes: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," PLOS One (2017), <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0170256>.