

My name is Sebastian Lury. I am the President of Higher Education of AFT Vermont. AFT Vermont has long endorsed Healthcare as a Human Right and has advocated for Vermont to ensure access to primary care for all Vermonters.

We represent over 12,000 healthcare and higher education workers across the state, a number that continues to grow. One of the most common needs identified at the bargaining tables across the state is access to affordable healthcare. It is a driving factor of economic issues. This expenditure impacts businesses as much as individuals. Businesses would save on premiums, yes, but also see more revenue from residents no longer having to choose between a trip to the store or ensuring their health.

In my union roles, in my role as an employee of the Vermont State Colleges System, and as a citizen of Vermont, I know and I see the myriad of Vermonters that live paycheck to paycheck, who put off needed care because they have to choose where to spend their money, who are one bad injury or illness from losing everything they've worked for.

If we were to de-couple healthcare from employment and guarantee it as a right to all people, paid for through taxes according to ability to pay, individual budgets and business budgets would have much more flexibility to pay for other important things, such as putting the money they would have spent on healthcare toward buying homes, or ensuring access to daycare, affording higher education, and, from the business side, higher wages to attract the quality of talent this great state has

Ensuring access to affordable healthcare would give Vermonters the financial freedom and flexibility that would improve the lives and livelihoods of individuals, families, businesses, local communities, and the state of Vermont.

Thank you