

To Whom It May Concern,

In July of 2020, my husband and I had our first born son. We knew that in order to keep finances stable in the household we had to send him to childcare. We were lucky enough that the childcare center of our choice was expanding, and our son received a spot. His spot ended up being delayed almost four months, due to staffing shortages, resulting in my mother moving in with us so we could continue to work. While grateful that she was able to support us, it was a stressful time for all of us.

In April of 2021, our first-born started school. We started calling it school from the get-go- because that is exactly what it was. A place to learn. Surrounded by wonderful teachers our son quickly began to flourish. Three plus years later he is still in the same program and every classroom he has been in at least one teacher has had their Masters; some teachers their doctorates. Their education, to put it simply, has been fundamental in his success. Their clear knowledge of childhood development and norms has also been an incredible support for us as parents. Despite their degrees, these teachers are barely scraping by financially. They love their job, and it is clear they are there for the kids and not the paycheck.

In April of 2024 I became pregnant with our second child. My husband emailed the school when I was five weeks along despite me wanting him to wait till after the first trimester. He reserved the LAST spot for a vacancy more than a year in advance. Soon after we got an email about raising the rates at the school. My husband crunched the numbers, we made a savings plan and knew that we would be able to just get by until subsidy would start in October of 2024. We decided that if we did not qualify for subsidy, my husband would leave his job in human services- serving some of the most vulnerable people of Vermont- to be a stay at home dad.

Last month we got another email from our childcare stating that in March the rates would be going up again in hopes to expand hours and give staff a needed raise. We support both of these for the betterment of the school/program but without ACT 76 we would be paying a little over than \$4,100 dollars a month for our kids to attend this school and my husband would need to resign from his job. ACT 76 is the only reason why both my husband and I both can work full time jobs while having both of our children surrounded by highly educated and caring staff that in conjunction with us as parents are helping build a strong future for our children. I see other families who are not able to find child care or receive CCFAP support the way we are—we have much more work to do as a state. Please don't support the Governor's proposal to reallocate funds from Act 76 to other purposes in the budget.

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