

Hi, My name is Micayla Wheeler.

I'm a 26-year-old Vermonter, born and raised, and I've lived here my entire life. My family goes back to the Green Mountain Boys, and Vermont isn't just where I live—it's my only home. I'm not going anywhere, I couldn't if I wanted to, and I don't want to be forced into poverty from the place that made.

I'm deeply concerned about my future here. This state is all I know, and right now it feels like staying is becoming financially impossible for people like me who are doing everything "right" and still falling behind. To be honest with you, I can't always do the right thing to make ends meet either which concerns me more.

I make about \$60,000 a year. I have no kids. I'm not married. I'm a working adult, and yet between taxes, housing costs, utilities, and basic necessities, I feel like I'm being taxed and overcharged straight into poverty. I'm not living extravagantly—I'm just trying to survive and build a stable life here.

I'll be honest: I don't know much about politics. Not because I don't care, but because I don't have the luxury of time. My partner and I share one car, and I work three jobs just to keep up. Most days, it's work, commute, sleep, repeat.

I'm a renter, with dreams of buying a home. However, even with my partner we don't bring in enough to afford a home in Vermont. I AM the next generation of Vermont. As it stands right now, I cannot afford to buy a house or have kids. This might be my reality forever if something doesn't change within my home state. What is to come for Vermont if the majority of my generation can't do these things?

Showing up at the State House is intimidating, and I'm nervous even writing this because I'm not very educated in politics, but I feel like staying silent isn't an option anymore.

So here are my unpolished, "brain-rot" thoughts from someone living this reality every day:

Tax Policy Reform

- Shift property taxation to be income-based rather than asset-based.
- Eliminate property taxes on year round owner-occupied homes.
- Exempt elderly residents and Social Security recipients from all state taxes.
- Eliminate state income tax on Social Security and public assistance.

- Eliminate state income tax for individuals earning under \$100,000.
- Remove all taxes on purchasing a home, property, or vehicle within the state if you're a current resident.
- Eliminate vehicle registration taxes for renewals.
- Eliminate interest, penalties, and fines on past-due or underpaid taxes. (I'm in tax debt from the state)
- Residents who do not work in Vermont due to lack of local industry should not be subject to state income tax.

Sales, Food, and Utility Taxes

- Eliminate sales tax on food statewide except hot meals.
- No sales tax on locally purchased food for residents or schools.
- Eliminate taxes on electricity and utilities for state buildings, schools, and residents.
- End emissions testing and vehicle inspections, or make them free and repairs can be the cost of the user.

Housing and Cost of Living

- Lower income limits for first-time homebuyer programs to improve accessibility.
- Reassess renter rebate programs on a county-by-county basis. (I don't qualify because I "make too much" for the county I live in, but there's more renters than homeowners in south royalton.. actual fact!)
- Eliminate tax benefits for households with children earning over \$100,000

Education and School Funding

- School supplies (paper products, cleaning supplies, classroom materials, and basic technology) should be provided at no cost to schools.
- These supplies should come from businesses operating within the state, including both large corporations and locally owned small businesses.
- "Donations" should be incentivized through tax credits for goods or services provided to schools.

- All school buildings should receive free heat, electricity, paper products, and cleaning supplies things that tax payers shouldn't have to pay for. Heat and electric should be incentivized by tax credits.
- School buses should receive free fuel and maintenance, tax credits
- HVAC systems, technology upgrades, and computer maintenance for schools should be fully funded and provided at no cost. Tax credits
- Goods and services should be sourced in-state whenever possible!!!! For the tax credit
- Existing out-of-state contracts should be reevaluated and transitioned to in-state providers or replaced with direct government funding where feasible.

Government Spending and Compensation

- Salaries for politicians and elected officials should be capped.
- All political and state office roles should be paid hourly only.
- No overtime should be permitted for politicians or state officials.
- General funds should not be used for routine operational supplies such as paper products, cleaning supplies, or similar items. There's sooooo much waste in life in general when it comes to little things like this. Reuse reuse reuse!
- These basic needs should instead be met through donations or in-kind contributions from businesses operating within the state.

Budget Oversight and Reform

- Conduct a full audit of general funds to identify inefficiencies and areas for reform. Seriously. The people need to see it.
- Restrict the use of general funds more aggressively.
- Implement stricter controls on non discretionary spending within general funds and discretionary cause why not.

Local Economy and Business Impact

- Offer tax credits for state and school purchases from locally owned or operated businesses.
- Increase property tax rates on short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnbs) due to their impact on housing availability and town livability.

Infrastructure and Maintenance

- Adjust winter road maintenance practices to reduce excessive salt use where safe and appropriate.

- Eliminate the Clean Water Fund; clean water should already be a guaranteed public service honestly what is that...

Thank you for taking the time to read my email

Best regards,
Micayla