

Good morning, Thank you, Morgan.

And thanks to Let's Grow Kids, the Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance and Building Bright Futures for the opportunity to say a few words at today's Early Childhood Day!

I also want to take a moment to welcome you, virtually, the Lt. Governor's Office where I am working each day. I look forward to the day we can welcome you all back to the building, but for now please know my virtual door is open!

VERMONT WOMEN ARE IN ECONOMIC CRISIS! For so many of you here today, this is not news. Even before this pandemic you witnessed the struggles of working families to make ends meet and to afford childcare in Vermont.

This pandemic has laid everything bare, and the data is grim. 74% of the unemployment claims filed in recent months, were filed by women -- that is the highest percentage of women filing claims of ANY state in the nation.

The economic future of women, working families and our state depend on us acting NOW. As the second oldest state in the nation with a shrinking tax base and work force, we cannot afford to lose more women and working families in the work force.

We must act NOW to ensure no Vermont family spends more than 10% of their income on childcare.

We must act NOW to expand eligibility for families under the Vermont Child Care Financial Assistance Program.

We must act NOW to fairly compensate and support some of our most essential workers: our early childhood educators.

We must act NOW to end generational poverty, structural racism, and social inequity by making early childhood education available to all.

I'll close with this: We are in a moment. The future of our state depends on the success of our children.

I want to thank you for taking the time to come to the State House virtually today. Your voice matters and we are listening.

I sincerely look forward to working with all of you to ensure we come out of this pandemic stronger and that means ensuring quality childcare is accessible and affordable for all Vermont families.