

KENAI LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Kenai_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

Phone: 907-283-2030 / Fax: 907-283-3075

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

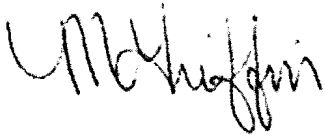
NAME: Margaret J. Griffin
REPRESENTING: Soldotna High School
BILL # or SUBJECT: HB284
COMMITTEE & DATE: SFIN 032812

I am very concerned that the Senate currently has plans to cut funding for the Alaska Performance Scholarship, so that only the Class of 2011 has funding.

I am working with a number of students who have done their part in taking a fourth year of Math, Science, and Social Studies and/or foreign language to qualify for APS. I also have students who took the WorkKeys test a second time so that they would be sure to qualify for the Vocational track of APS and are planning on accessing that scholarship.

My students are counting on this scholarship and many will change their college plans if the APS is not funded. Some students who had planned to stay in Alaska because of the APS may leave Alaska for schooling if the APS is not funded.

Please re-consider the funding for the APS, Alaskan students are counting on it.



Margaret J. Griffin, School Counselor
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Soldotna High School
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NAME: Rachel Uopnen
REPRESENTING: Independent Living Center
BILL # or SUBJECT: HB284
COMMITTEE & DATE: SFIN 032812

My name is Rachael Uponen and I work at the Independent Living Center in Soldotna. We also have offices in Homer (our main office location) and Seward.

The majority of Alaskans will experience disability at some point in their lives. Disability can be found in virtually every demographic, be it age, financial situation, or gender. Disability can become part of a person's life at any given moment, without warning—for this reason, many disability rights advocates refer to those without disabilities as TAB—"temporarily able-bodied."

An overwhelming majority of people with disabilities wish to live their lives in their homes and as independently as possible. Those of us who work at Centers for Independent Living (CILs) assist people with disabilities (the numbers of which include myself and others in our staff) with our services.

I can personally attest to how the center where I work has helped me with independent living. I have obsessive-compulsive disorder, which has made such things as living by myself and holding down a job difficult. The ILC allowed me to participate in job training *and* job coaching, which ended with me working here. In addition, I learned skills for independent living such as cleaning and paying rent. I now live on my own, away from my parents, and couldn't be happier.

In addition to *seeing things* from a consumer's perspective, I have also seen them from a staff member's perspective. As the receptionist at the ILC, I am often the first person a consumer meets. This gives me an insight regarding who requires assistance, and for what reasons. Our most popular program is the taxi voucher program, where a consumer may purchase vouchers for a reduced cab fare rate. Consumers on this program are either disabled or over 60, and they are either unable to drive or do not have a car. So many people have joined the program that we have had to stretch our budget more than we had expected. Consequently, the number of vouchers we can sell has been reduced, which in turn places a financial burden on many of our consumers. This is only one example of how necessary funding is for CILs across the state.

My experience at the ILC has taught me that independent living is absolutely essential to everyone living with disabilities. I fully support any additional funding for IL services in Alaska.

Rachael Uponen
Receptionist
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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME: Terri Zopf-Schoessler
REPRESENTING: Parent/self
BILL # or SUBJECT: HB284
COMMITTEE & DATE: SFIN 032812

Dear Senator Dennis Egan and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

As a parent, a long-time Alaskan, and a teacher, I insist that you keep the promise you made to the students of this state and restore ALL of the money promised for the Alaska Performance Scholarship program.

As a parent, I have watched my senior daughter work hard to assure that she qualifies for the APS program: She has turned down opportunities to apply out-of-state, scheduled retakes of the ACT, taken—and paid full-price for—25 semester credits through Kenai Peninsula College, and scored 56/60 on her intake interview for the pre-med program at UAA. As a 29-year resident of the state, I was incredibly appreciative of the foresight and long-term planning represented by the APS program. As a teacher, I have watched my daughter and many of her classmates take challenging classes including AP classes taught here as well as college release classes at KPC in order to prepare themselves to be successful in college. I have seen our school counselors urge all students to take additional math and science classes to help qualify for the program *as well as encourage* students interested in more hands-on training to find out how the APS program applies to them.

All of these things were done with the understanding that, if they kept their part of the bargain, the legislature would keep their part. Not *only* are you currently planning to renege on your responsibilities, but you have waited until the last possible minute to do so—and that leaves 2012 graduates in an impossible situation.

I cannot express my disgust with your short-sighted and devastating political maneuverings. The young people of Alaska have done their work; I insist you do yours and restore all funding for the Alaska Performance Scholarship program.

Sincerely,
Terri Zopf-Schoessler
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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME: Loretta Knudson-Spaulding
REPRESENTING: Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
BILL # or SUBJECT: HB284
COMMITTEE & DATE: SEIN 032812



As the Career Guidance Liaison for the KPBSD I have promoted this heavily to most Freshman and other classes in the Borough. When I do the students really become engaged in planning for a career and education after high school. To not fund this is a big mistake. I think it will keep lots of students in the State and give opportunities to students who would not have them in traditional academic settings. Please – please continue to fund this important scholarship.

Loretta Knudson-Spaulding
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
Career Guidance Liaison
907-283-2141

"The concept of not "following" one's passion, but of instead bringing it along wherever one goes, never ceases to awaken me."