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## Early Learning Program

March 30, 2015

Alaska State Legislature  
Mr. Burt Stedman  
Sitka Legislative Information Office  
201 Katlian Street, Suite 103  
Sitka, AK 99835

Dear Senator Stedman,

I am a Developmental Specialist here at the Early Learning Program (ELP) in Sitka. I work primarily with children birth through three years at-risk for developmental delays and their families. I have also been a partner of the Pathways Coalition, Sitka's prevention coalition for domestic violence and sexual assault for the past 4+ years. Although I work in early intervention, I know that primary prevention is equally important in the work that I do. Research has shown that when we focus on prevention, we will actually save money in the long run. The national model *Strengthening Families*, which we infuse into our program, also shows that when we build protective factors in families, we prevent maltreatment and promote healthy outcomes for our children. I facilitate a few prevention programs through the partnership with Pathways such as: the local Teach Your Children Well Playgroup, Parent Cafes: Changing the Lives of Children through Conversations that Matter, and Triple P (evidence-based Positive Parenting Program).

Over the past 4+ years, we have made significant progress in our prevention programming, not only with the ELP, but with other partnering agencies in our community. Pathways enabled organizations to team together and work seamlessly to promote respect and healthier relationships across all people in Sitka through prevention strategies. Overall, we are starting to see a shift in social norms towards a healthier community. We have made so much progress in a short amount of time. Although slow at first, we are now gaining momentum in our work and seeing change in our community! On behalf of the Pathways to a Safer Sitka Coalition, we encourage the senate to reinstate prevention funding to further our efforts in shifting social norms around domestic violence and sexual assault.

I was born and raised here in Sitka, and my son and daughter were both born in Sitka. I want to continue to make Sitka a healthy and nurturing place for them to grow and develop. With your support, we will continue to contribute to society and make a difference in the lives of many.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Lisa Hodges, MA, IMH-E (II)  
Developmental Specialist/Infant Family Specialist