JUNEAU
YOUTH COURT
Restorative Justice

Juneau Douglas High School
10014 Crazy Horse Drive
Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: 523-1594
Fax: 523-1616

juneauyouthcourt@jsd.k12.ak.us

February 12, 2010

The Juneau Youth Court Community Advisory Board supports House Bill 331 and Senate Bill 257, *"an Act relating to funding for youth courts; and relating to accounting for criminal fines".* This legislation would appropriate 25 percent of the court fines imposed under AS 12.55.035 to established and operating youth courts. Federal funding will not be available after this year and the future of the Alaska Youth courts depend upon state and local ownership.

A recent study shows Alaska Youth Courts to be among the most effective in the nation. According to the Urban Institute's Evaluation of Teen Courts Project, which was based on four teen court programs studied in four different states (Alaska, Maryland, Arizona, and Missouri), the six-month recidivism figures among the programs ranged from 6 percent to 9 percent. Alaska's recidivism rate was the lowest of these four states, and compared to the recidivism rate of 18 percent for the regular juvenile justice system, shows that youth who go through youth courts are significantly less inclined to re-offend within the following year.

The primary function of youth court programs is to determine a fair and restorative sentence for young offenders. Youth courts are programs in which youth sentence their peers for minor delinquent and status offenses and other problem behaviors. According to the National Youth Court Database, in 1994 there were only 78 youth court programs in operation; as of October, 2006, there were over 1127 youth court programs in operation in 49 states and the District of Columbia.

The Alaska Youth Courts is a vital form of community justice and reweaves the fabric of community by forging a partnership between local governmental entities, the private sector, and community groups to facilitate the performance by private citizens of the functions that were once performed by the extended family, neighborhood, and school.

Sincerely,

Cindy L. Cashen
President
Juneau Youth Court Community Advisory Board

Darlene Turner February 15, 2010

Kodiak Teen Court
610 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, Ak. 99615

Dear Darlene:

I am writing to you today to express my heartfelt thanks and continued support for Kodiak Teen Court. Since the program started in 1995, it has enjoyed tremendous success in our community, giving hundreds of youthful offenders over the years an opportunity to have their cases taken out of the traditional juvenile court system and instead dealt with in a more informal, less intimidating and more meaningful atmosphere, as the teen defendants are literally tried by their own peers serving as teen prosecutors, represented by their own peers as teen defense attorneys and sentenced by their own peers serving as teen judges. Besides being dealt with in a courtroom where everyone else is their same age (who they can relate to more than adult judges and attorneys), the teen defendants are given an opportunity to come out of Teen Court with a clean record if they comply with the sentence given them by the teen judges. It is no wonder, then, that the rate of re-offending in youth courts in Kodiak and in other parts of the State is significantly lower than with those teens who stay in regular juvenile court. Additional benefits to our community include an emphasis on restorative justice, making the victim feel "whole" again, and the imposition of a meaningful amount of community work service that many non-profits organizations in Kodiak find very helpful. Finally, I have been told by all the juvenile probation officers throughout the last 15 years, past and present, that they appreciate Teen Court because it allows them to divert less troublesome teens from the regular juvenile justice system into Teen Court, thus giving them more time to devote to the more serious teen offenders on their heavy caseload that *really* need their help in the formal, structured setting of the traditional juvenile court system.

The Kodiak Teen Court is an asset to our community in another, very big way. As the program celebrates its 15th year in existence this year, I have had the distinct pleasure over these years to work with hundreds of fine outstanding teens at Kodiak High and in our middle schools who have served as teen judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys. These students are given a unique perspective on how our justice system works, they are tremendous ambassadors of the program and great role models to teens who have gotten themselves into trouble and come into the program. Many of these former Teen Court judges and attorneys have kept in contact with me, and are already doing well in their chosen field, whether it's teaching in graduate school at Notre Dame, working as a detective in Portland, serving as a soldier in Iraq or attending good law schools and medical schools across the United States, many of whom intend to someday return to Alaska and work.

Again, I thank you for the wonderful program!

Sincerely yours,

STEVE COLE
Superior Court Judge, Kodiak

AJJAC

ALASKA JUVENILE JUSTICE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee
P.O. Box 110635
Juneau, AK 99811-0635
Phone: (907) 465-3855
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Carol Brenckle
Chair
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Phone: (907) 283-4343

Vicki Blankenship
Vice Chair
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Fairbanks, AK 99709
Phone: (907) 479-9511

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Secretary
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Fairbanks, AK 99708
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Members
Chris Aldridge
Jeff Budd
John Combs
Michael Jeffery
Beverly Jenkins
Larry LeDoux
Sue Lovekin
Judy Norton-Elledge
Laura Ogan
Michael Reed
Lisa Typpo
Samantha Wheaton
Tina Woods

March 12, 2010

Alaska Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Legislators:

Whereas the Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee is an appointed committee by the Governor to advise legislative officials on appropriate juvenile judicial matters;

Whereas AJJAC recognizes and supports youth court programs as valuable and effective deterrent agencies;

Whereas the federal earmark slated by Senator Ted Stevens is expiring in 2012 providing crucial funding for youth court programs;

Therefore be it resolved that the AJJAC urges the Legislature to pass House Bill 331 and Senate Bill 257 providing for long term funding for Youth Courts in the State of Alaska.

It is the mission of the Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee to provide support, advice and guidance to the government and citizens of the State of Alaska, in accordance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, to help reduce and prevent juvenile crime, while ensuring that Alaska's youth are provided meaningful opportunities to succeed.

Sincerely,

Carol D. Brenckle

Carol Brenckle
AJJAC Chair

February 5, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to emphasize the importance of the Mat-Su Youth Court to the welfare of the Mat-Su community and to express my support for that organization.

In my almost 20 years on the bench, mostly as a magistrate and superior court master, recently as a district court judge, I have presided over literally thousands of cases involving teenagers. As the Mat-Su Valley population grew, the ability of the juvenile probation office (JPO) to handle all the cases involving teenagers was greatly diminished. Rightfully so, the JPO has to concentrate on the more serious crimes, such as burglaries and felony level assaults, that were committed by teenagers. As a result, many teens who committed lower level crimes, particularly shoplifting, either merely got a warning letter or their crimes were ignored all together.

Participation in lower level crimes leads to a disrespect of the law, of other people's rights in their person and their property, costs local storekeepers significant amounts of money, and often leads to greater criminal behavior if left undressed. Into this gap stepped the Mat-Su Youth Court. Many crimes that would not have been addressed because of the caseload of JPO are being handled by the Youth Court. The imposition of sanctions including restitution, community work service and letters accepting responsibility and apologizing for committing the crime all serve both the victim and the community as well as the defendant, who is more likely to grow to be a responsible citizen from the experience.

Over the years the Mat-Su Youth Court has added a program for first time offenders under the age of 18 convicted of Minor Consuming Alcohol. Not only is the program educational, but being run by a peer group, it sets the example that being clean and sober is an acceptable lifestyle that is respected by one's peers. Given that not only locally but nationally roughly 80% of adult crimes are somehow related to alcohol abuse, getting the message to an offender earlier in life may keep them from becoming part of that statistic as they grow older.

I wholeheartedly support and recommend the Mat-Su Youth Court program and urge others to do so, also.

Sincerely,

David L. Zwink
District Court Judge, Palmer, Alaska

Larry Dickerson
Chief of Police

WASILLA
POLICE
DEPARTMENT
City of Wasilla

1800 E. Parks Hwy.
Wasilla, AK 99654

907.352.5401
Fax: 907.357.7877
www.cityofwasilla.com

Vernon Rupright
Mayor

February 9, 2010

Bill Stolze,
State Representative
600 E. Railroad Av
Wasilla, AK 99654

Dear Mr. Stoltze,

I would like to express my support of HB331 and SB257 which would provide continued funding of State wide Youth Court Programs.

I fully support youth courts as statewide diversion programs that address first time juvenile offenses. These programs operate in twelve communities around the state. My current experience with youth courts is with the Mat-Su Youth Court (MSYC) program, which falls under the umbrella of the Wasilla Police Department and is funded wholly through grants. The Wasilla Police Department supports the MSYC with in-kind donations by providing office space and some supplies.

It is my firm belief that without MSYC operating in the Mat-Su Valley the police department would continue to see increased juvenile crime. Young offenders who do not suffer consequences as first time offenders will continue to commit crimes according to recent statistics.

Wasilla Police officers know that when they complete a report on a juvenile first time offender who has committed a low-level offense, that juvenile will not simply be given a letter from the State or a verbal warning from a Juvenile Probation Officer. Virtually every first time offense that is referred to the Division of Juvenile Justice office in the Mat-Su Valley gets referred to MSYC. MSYC takes action to insure the juvenile offender is made aware of what he/she did, who it affected in the community, and what to do to avoid repeating their conduct.

I support these bills to allow youth courts around the state to work on sustainability of their programs and to insure that they continue to address juvenile crime in the State of Alaska.

Greg Wood
Deputy Chief of Police

Larry Dickerson
Chief of Police

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Sincerely,

Cindy L. Cashen
President
Juneau Youth Court Community Advisory Board

Mary P. Treiber
MAGISTRATE

Alaska Court System

415 Main Street
Ketchikan, AK 99901
(907) 225-3195; FAX (907) 225-7849

February 5, 2010

Margaret McCloy
Executive Director
Ketchikan Youth Court
2417 Tongass Avenue, Suite 215
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Dear Ms. McCloy:

As the Magistrate for the Ketchikan Trial Courts, I am the judicial officer who most frequently deals with school age teenagers charged by the State of Alaska and the City of Ketchikan with violations of laws or ordinances prohibiting possession or consumption of alcohol by minors, establishing curfews, and prohibiting possession or use of tobacco products by minors. The existence of and the programs offered by the Ketchikan Youth Court provide me with a meaningful sentencing alternative in dealing with these cases.

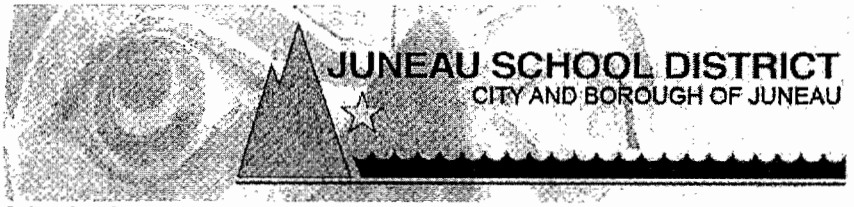
The KYC process teaches teens referred by the court to KYC about the court process itself, and provides a group of same-age and same-interests teens for these youthful defendants to work with. The resolution of cases through KYC requires engagement of both the defendant and that teen's parents, ultimately strengthening the family abilities to deal with problems a defendant is having as expressed through these quasi-criminal charges. The Court System sees fewer recidivists among those teens who are referred to and who successfully complete the KYC program.

KYC has added the Prime for Life alcohol information classes, and has agreed to make the class available to teens other than those actively participating in the full KYC program. This is a good program, and adds significantly to the resources available within Ketchikan.

I fully support Ketchikan Youth Court.

Sincerely,

Mary P. Treiber
Magistrate



Office of the Assistant Superintendent • 10014 Crazy Horse Drive • Juneau, Alaska 99801 • (907) 523-1704

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of legislation that would provide sustainable funding for youth court programs in Juneau and other communities in Alaska. For over a decade Juneau Youth Court has provided a vital and important service to the City and Borough of Juneau.

Juneau Youth Court is a diversion program that removes young people who are first time offenders from the traditional juvenile justice system and handles the case in a court of peers. The program works with families to ensure that teens are held accountable for their actions and that consequences are constructive and tailored to the individual youth thereby benefiting both the young person and the community at large. Last year Juneau Youth Court ordered over 600 hours of community work service that were completed at Zach Gordon Youth Center, the American Red Cross, Meals on Wheels, the Glory Hole, the Salvation Army, and at schools throughout Juneau School District.

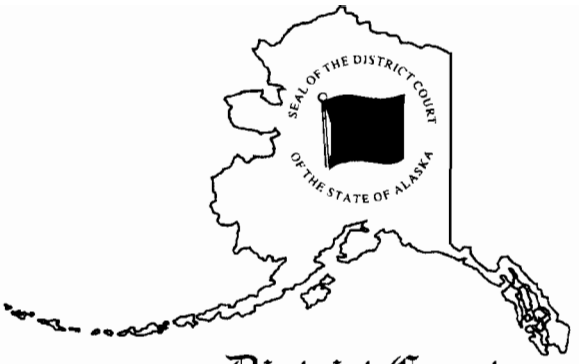
On average Juneau Youth Court serves 50 youth each year handling referrals from both District Court and Juvenile Justice Probation Officers. This frees up the court and probation officers to handle more serious offenders and helps to reduce their large caseloads. Youth Courts have the additional advantage of educating the youth who volunteer for the program. Youth Court advocates reap the benefits of learning about the legal system, performing meaningful community service, and gaining the opportunity to help their peers.

Juneau Youth Court operates on a very small budget of $35,000 per year with one part time paid staff person, two dozen volunteer student advocates, a community advisory board including representatives from the Police Department, the Division of Juvenile Justice, the legal community, and community partners. The program offers an important service to the community at a very low cost.

Juneau Youth Court is just one example of a successful diversion program known as youth court. Around the state Youth Courts are doing important work for Alaska by addressing juvenile crime in its earliest stage. I strongly urge you to support legislation that would provide sustainable funding to support these community-based programs.

Sincerely,

Laury Scandling



District Court

State of Alaska

FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

KEITH B. LEVY
Judge

P.O. BOX 114100
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-4100

(907) 463-4730
FAX (907) 463-3788

Juneau Youth Court/JDHS
10014 Crazy Horse Drive
Juneau, AK 99801
Attn: Beth Leban-Coordinator

Tuesday, January 26, 2010

Dear Beth:

I am writing to express my appreciation for the work done by the Juneau Youth Court. The Youth Court is an integral sentencing option for students under the age of 18 who are charged with consuming or possessing alcohol for the first time.

As you know, students who choose the Youth Court option are given the opportunity to have their District Court case dismissed if they successfully complete the Youth Court requirements. For some, this brief involvement in the criminal justice system is a turning point. Those who choose Youth Court and succeed are far less likely to return to District Court on other criminal charges. The students benefit because they end up with no conviction on their record. And the community benefits because the Youth Court graduates are contributing to the community rather than causing harm to themselves and others.

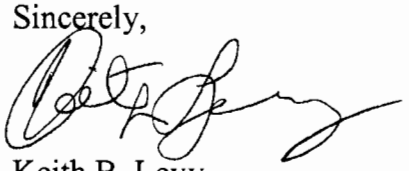
The Youth Court is the only diversion program available in District Court to enable individuals to have their cases dismissed without resulting in a criminal record. The trust the program has earned from both the District Court and the prosecution is a testament to the value and integrity of the program.

I apprcciate that you or another representative of the Youth Court always attends the arraignment hearings for minor consuming. The information you provide to the students about Youth Court is invaluable and helps them understand their options in the justice system.

Finally, the Youth Court program provides an opportunity for students to be judged by their peers. I believe this is valuable because the students in the program have far more information about the defendants than is provided to me in formal sentencing proceedings. The Youth Court is able to impose consequences that are more meaningful than the limited options I have when sentencing.

Thanks again for the important service the Youth Court provides to the community.

Sincerely,



Keith B. Levy

My name is Courtney Enright and I have been a member of Ketchikan Youth Court for the past seven years, further I've been involved with the Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee as a youth member, the past two years. I have found the youth court programs to be a positive experience for me, personally, but also for the other youth involved. Youth court programs provide an amazing opportunit, for youth to learn about our judicial system, be in a position of responsibility. It has greatly impacted my personal and professional growth in a positive manner. It has meant a great deal to me to be able to be a part of changing the path of many of my peers. The numbers speak clearly - only 10.6% of youth court defendants reoffend as opposed to 23% that reoffend at district court. The results are clear - peer involvement is an effective deterrant to recidavism. Youth court programs benefit th individual communities in which they reside as well as the state as an entirety, through reducing crime rates, saving the courts and the State of Alaska over $10,000 per client that utalizes our program, and providing thousands of hours of community service.

SB257

PO Box 1841
Nome, AK 99762
February 15, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support of the Youth Court program in Alaska. I moved to Nome, Alaska from South Royalton, Vermont to work as a clerk and deputy magistrate at the Superior and District Court and had no idea I would also be involved with the Youth Court program. When I found out that I was to serve as Youth Court Legal Advisor I was ecstatic. Youth Court excited me because, as a former social studies teacher, I saw a program that raises students' knowledge of the law, legal process and their civic rights and duties and excites a new generation of responsible, active and thoughtful citizens.

Youth Court gives students many unique opportunities and learning experiences. Just the personal responsibility required by participants makes this program invaluable. Students between the ages of twelve and eighteen literally participate in the court process representing clients and handing down legally binding sentences. In doing so they acquire many social skills and thinking strategies. Students learn empathy and professionalism when dealing with clients. They learn public speaking and writing. They learn how to separate facts from belief and emotion, how to see all sides of an issue, and how to logically and carefully present these issues. Through zealous representation of clients students grow as citizens, people and community members.

Perhaps the most important part of Youth Court is the clients themselves. Youth Court is a diversionary program targeting at risk youth, who, if thrown into the court system at such an early age, hazard becoming the repeat offenders I often see at my job. Youth Court gives these young men and women a second chance. Anybody who has worked with teenagers knows how much weight is placed on the opinion of their peers. In the Youth Court process, defendants are tried and sentenced by their peers, not a mysterious adult. This reinforces lessons learned and allows defendants to feel that they have been fairly judged.

Most importantly, Youth Court is not about punishing these young offenders. Sentences are not handed out in retribution. Instead, sentencing is designed to show the defendant the error of their ways, to intervene and work with the defendant's specific personality so they may see the connection between their actions and the effects of those actions, and finally to benefit the community. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The Youth Court program is many ounces of prevention.

The Alaska Youth Court program is one of the best and most innovative programs in the entire United States. Creating future active, intelligent, informed and free-thinking citizens cannot be measured by dollars or statistics. It would be a shame to see such a program falter for lack of funding. I fully support keeping this wonderful program alive and active.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Davis, Esq.

Darlene Turner February 15, 2010

Kodiak Teen Court
610 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, Ak. 99615

Dear Darlene:

I am writing to you today to express my heartfelt thanks and continued support for Kodiak Teen Court. Since the program started in 1995, it has enjoyed tremendous success in our community, giving hundreds of youthful offenders over the years an opportunity to have their cases taken out of the traditional juvenile court system and instead dealt with in a more informal, less intimidating and more meaningful atmosphere, as the teen defendants are literally tried by their own peers serving as teen prosecutors, represented by their own peers as teen defense attorneys and sentenced by their own peers serving as teen judges. Besides being dealt with in a courtroom where everyone else is their same age (who they can relate to more than adult judges and attorneys), the teen defendants are given an opportunity to come out of Teen Court with a clean record if they comply with the sentence given them by the teen judges. It is no wonder, then, that the rate of re-offending in youth courts in Kodiak and in other parts of the State is significantly lower than with those teens who stay in regular juvenile court. Additional benefits to our community include an emphasis on restorative justice, making the victim feel "whole" again, and the imposition of a meaningful amount of community work service that many non-profits organizations in Kodiak find very helpful. Finally, I have been told by all the juvenile probation officers throughout the last 15 years, past and present, that they appreciate Teen Court because it allows them to divert less troublesome teens from the regular juvenile justice system into Teen Court, thus giving them more time to devote to the more serious teen offenders on their heavy caseload that *really* need their help in the formal, structured setting of the traditional juvenile court system.

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Again, I thank you for the wonderful program!

Sincerely yours,

STEVE COLE
Superior Court Judge, Kodiak

KODIAK
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

100 E. Marine Way, Suite 300, Kodiak Alaska 99615 • (907) 486-5557 • FAX: (907) 486-7605
www.kodiak.org • Email: chamber@kodiak.org

February 11, 2010

Senator Dennis Egan
State Capitol, Room 510
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Egan,

The Kodiak Chamber of Commerce fully supports SB 257 "An Act relating to funding for youth courts; and relating to accounting for criminal fines"

The United Youth Courts of Alaska provide an extremely important function in the communities they serve. Their handling of approximately 900 cases per year reduces recidivism and crime rates in our State. In addition, savings to the State of Alaska is estimated at $10,145 per defendant. Youth courts in Alaska generate over $100,000 worth of Community Work Service product annually, at no cost to the communities or the State.

The juvenile population of our State is expected to increase by 27% by 2015. With this dramatic increase in the juvenile population, juvenile crimes will likely also increase, and thus the sustainability of youth courts is even more critical.

Thank you for the support of Senate Bill 257.

Sincerely,

Debora King
Executive Director

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February 11, 2010

Senator Gary Stevens
State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Stevens,

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February 11, 2010

Senator Linda Menard
600 E. Railroad Ave., Ste 1
Wasilla, AK 99654

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February 11, 2010

Representative Chris Tuck
716 W. 4th Ave., Ste 370
Anchorage, AK 99501-2133

Dear Representative Tuck,

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February 11, 2010

Representative Max Gruenberg
716 W. 4th Ave., Ste 350
Anchorage, AK 99501-2133

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Sincerely,

Debora King
Executive Director

KODIAK
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

100 E. Marine Way, Suite 300, Kodiak Alaska 99615 • (907) 486-5557 • FAX: (907) 486-7605
www.kodiak.org • Email: chamber@kodiak.org

February 11, 2010

Representative Scott Kawasaki
1292 Sadler Way Ste 306
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Dear Representative Kawasaki,

The Kodiak Chamber of Commerce fully supports HB 331 "An Act relating to funding for youth courts; and relating to accounting for criminal fines"

The United Youth Courts of Alaska provide an extremely important function in the communities they serve. Their handling of approximately 900 cases per year reduces recidivism and crime rates in our State. In addition, savings to the State of Alaska is estimated at $10,145 per defendant. Youth courts in Alaska generate over $100,000 worth of Community Work Service product annually, at no cost to the communities or the State.

The juvenile population of our State is expected to increase by 27% by 2015. With this dramatic increase in the juvenile population, juvenile crimes will likely also increase, and thus the sustainability of youth courts is even more critical.

Thank you for the support of House Bill 331.

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February 11, 2010

Representative Alan Austerman
State Capitol Building
Room 434
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Austerman,

The Kodiak Chamber of Commerce fully supports HB 331 "An Act relating to funding for youth courts; and relating to accounting for criminal fines"

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February 11, 2010

Representative Beth Kerttula
State Capitol Building
Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Kerttula,

The Kodiak Chamber of Commerce fully supports HB 331 "An Act relating to funding for youth courts; and relating to accounting for criminal fines"

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February 11, 2010

Representative Cathy Munoz
State Capitol Building
Room 434
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Munoz,

The Kodiak Chamber of Commerce fully supports HB 331 "An Act relating to funding for youth courts; and relating to accounting for criminal fines"

The United Youth Courts of Alaska provide an extremely important function in the communities they serve. Their handling of approximately 900 cases per year reduces recidivism and crime rates in our State. In addition, savings to the State of Alaska is estimated at $10,145 per defendant. Youth courts in Alaska generate over $100,000 worth of Community Work Service product annually, at no cost to the communities or the State.

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Thank you for the support of House Bill 331.

Sincerely,

Debora King
Executive Director

February 9, 2010

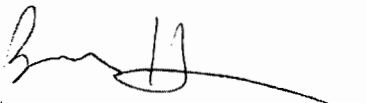
Wendy Leach
North Star Youth Court
800 Cushman St., Suite 101
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Dear Wendy,

I am writing to compliment you and the rest of the North Star Youth Court on the great job you are doing with Minor Consuming and Minor Operating After Consuming cases that are referred to the Youth Court by our court. It is important for our society to have a variety of options for the administration of criminal justice in order to promote rehabilitation and public safety, and to decrease recidivism. Youth courts are one such option. As you know, our referrals to your court are good for both the offender and for the public. I have seen that the confidentiality of your program is a real benefit to young offenders. Similarly, the public benefits in many ways, including through a reduced financial cost to the court system and law enforcement, through the Youth Court's focus on service to our community, and through the high rate of successful rehabilitation for offenders who complete the youth court program. It is my experience that offenders who are referred to your court are unlikely to return to ours.

Thank you very much for the work done by the young people and the adults of the North Star Youth Court. I would be happy to continue to work with the Youth Court to provide training for your judges, so please let me know when there is a Youth Court Judge who would like to shadow a Magistrate in the Fairbanks District Court or when you would like me to speak at a Youth Court Judge's training session.

Cordially,



Bethany Harbison
Magistrate

Hi, my name is Fred Becker V, I am the loss prevention manager for the Abbott Road Fred Meyers in Anchorage, and a active board member for the
Anchorage Youth Court.

I have worked in the Loss Prevention Profession for over 26 years in the Anchorage Area. I became concerned with the consequences the youth were receiving very early on in my career as I was apprehending the same individuals over and over again. After discussing with those that I did apprehend a second and third time what had happen to them after the first and second time I found that many had not had any contact with anyone in the judicial system. Most stated they received a letter from McLaughlin Youth Center advising them to stay out of trouble, and some said then did not hear from anyone.

Since the inception of the Youth Court in Anchorage I rarely apprehend a juvenile a second time. I strongly believe that Anchorage Youth Court has provided the consequences necessary to deter individuals from re-offending, and prevented many young adults from having a adult criminal recorded. Because without the Anchorage Youth Court most juveniles would continue with their criminal behavior into their young adult life.

I believe in the successes of AYC as a highly-effective juvenile alternative justice program and that we do transform the lives of over 600 anchorage youths per year. The 300 plus youth volunteers are trained and receive extraordinary experiences in real live judicial matters. The 300-350 juvenile offenders referred to Anchorage Youth Court each year are given an opportunity to make amends to the community and are held personally accountable for their actions. This is why I am honored to be a AYC board member.

As a member of the retail industry I am happy to be part of a program that is also a benefit to our ability to continue to employ

about 300 employees per location with a total of about 3,300 employees in the state of Alaska. The Youth Courts around the state provided a restitution program that did not exist and by providing a deterrent program for juvenile offenders results in less individuals using the five finger discount at our locations. My board membership has also resulted in the financial backing of Fred Meyers to help support our community.

As a board member I feel that some times we are not afforded the opportunity to address some issues because we spend a lot of our productive time finding ways to raise funds to support the financial requirements of AYC. With a stable source of funding I feel the board could focus more of our efforts on making Anchorage Youth Court as beneficial to the community, members, and offenders as possible.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to discuss further my personnel or business involvement with AYC to you.

Fred Becker V
Fred Meyers Loss Prevention Manager
907-365-2026
Emai: fred.becker@stores.fredmeyer.com

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

SEAN PARNELL, Governor

Kodiak District Probation
204 Mission Road, Room 131
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
(907) 486-4788

February 16, 2010

Kodiak Teen Court
Darlene Turner, Program Manager
610 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, AK 99615

Letter in support of the Kodiak Teen Court,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Kodiak Teen Court and its ongoing efforts to enhance the court's sustainability.

As we all know, Juveniles are highly influenced by their peers. The Kodiak Teen Court takes advantage of this by having juveniles stand in judgment by their peers. Kodiak students make up the membership of the court and act as both attorneys and judges. In doing so, they learn valuable lessons about the legal process while have an opportunity to help their community. In addition, low-level, first-time offenders are given opportunity to have their case diverted from the juvenile justice system. This is a win-win situation.

Over the years, my office has referred a number of cases to the Kodiak Teen Court. The feedback I have received from the juveniles and their parents has been very positive. Few of these juveniles ever return to the system. This has allowed me to focus my attention on those juveniles who pose a more serious risk to the community.

I look forward to continuing the relationship between my office and the Kodiak Teen Court and strongly support your efforts to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Respectfully,

Paul Caldentey
Juvenile Probation Officer II



January 7, 2010

To whom it may Concern:

Wrangell Youth court is an innovative alternate traditional justice system and is empowered by the Alaska Statute 47.12.400 to make a positive difference in Alaskan communities.

Youth Court programs are rapidly advancing in goals of Restorative Justice, by developing programs that are not only cost effective but promote youth accountability by involving youth in obligations of taking an active role in their community. Youth are encouraged to connect in our community and in our State, where youth partner together, encourage and share information that enable youth with critical decisions making skills.

The purpose of the program is to decrease juvenile crime and the recidivism amongst juvenile offenders as well as to involve students in implementing restorative justice. Youth Court members learn valuable experiences in assuming the role and responsibility of a judge, prosecute or defend first-time juvenile offenders in a court of their peers.

The Wrangell Youth Court program eases the caseload of the district and superior courts, juvenile probation offices and schools district. We have found that this program is cost effective when you compare to the cost of one incarceration of a juvenile offender. Cost can be greater than $40,000 for a first time offense. If Wrangell Youth Court prevents one student from attending a youth detention facility it has paid for the entire year of the Wrangell Youth Court program.

In the year of 2000 the community of Wrangell, Alaska had a high juvenile crime rate and an even higher rate of minors consuming alcohol. In fact our community was 30% higher than another community similar in size and location. Since Wrangell Youth Court was established in 2001 the crime rate and rate of minors consuming alcohol has decreased greatly.

This program is a community base form of restorative justice that builds ties between youth, victims and other members of the community, offering youth the option to learn from their mistakes. Youth volunteers that participate, explore a variety of short and long term consequences of substance abuse, including cost to the individual and the community and its relation to other types of crime.

The Wrangell Youth Court has been nothing less than a success and has provided our youth with the opportunity to be involved and vision other career paths that they may had never seen. The training provided in the areas of legal and court procedures have offered a better opportunity to understand our Constitution and Bill of Rights and to actively give them a voice and feel valued, while at the same time engaging and bringing about social change.

Wrangell Youth Court not only mentors peers, has developed a positive relationship with the community, schools, business and other local communities.

Sincerely,

Dorthea Rooney
Wrangell Youth Court Coordinator



KETCHIKAN DISTRICT COURT

TO: WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

FROM: KEVIN G. MILLER, JUDGE

SUBJECT: KETCHIKAN YOUTH COURT

DATE: 2/11/2010

CC:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter supporting the Ketchikan Youth Court's efforts in Ketchikan.

I am a District Court Judge and have referred many cases to the Youth Court since its inception. The majority of the cases referred relate to minors consuming alcohol or tobacco.

Alcohol related crime and crimes committed by persons that are alcohol dependant make up the majority of criminal cases that come before the District Court in Ketchikan. Thus a coordinated approach between the Court System, treatment monitors and providers is the only practical response to assure public safety, rehabilitation and meaningful consequences for offenders.

The Ketchikan Youth Court is a vital tool in a coordinated approach to youth offenders. I am impressed with the dedication of the Youth Court members as well as the results. Youth that complete the Youth Court Program are much less likely to reoffend than those youth offenders that do not enter or complete the program.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this support letter, if you need any further information, please let me know.

City of Kodiak
KODIAK POLICE DEPARTMENT
Office of the Chief of Police

February 12, 2010

Representative Cathy Munoz
Regional Affairs, Co-Chair
State Capitol, Room 409
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Youth Court Program

Dear Representative Munoz:

Our department supports legislative funding by money obtained from court fees to support the twelve Youth Court programs in the state of Alaska. These programs offer an option for youth who have had their first experience breaking the law – by having their cases removed from the traditional juvenile justice system by referral from juvenile probation officers and district court judges and diverted to a court of their peers.

The mission of the youth court programs in Alaska is to work in partnership with Alaskan communities and the formal juvenile justice system to develop and sustain innovative youth courts programs. Services offered by the programs in which youth are sentenced by their peers for minor delinquent status offenses and other problem behaviors frees state employees in the court system and the Juvenile Justice division.

The funding of the Youth Court program will serve the needs of Alaska citizens, state agencies, and law enforcement. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Charles "TC" Kamai
Chief of Police

City of Kodiak
KODIAK POLICE DEPARTMENT
Office of the Chief of Police

February 12, 2010

Senator Dennis Egan
Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room 150
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Youth Court Program

Dear Senator Egan:

Our department supports legislative funding by money obtained from court fees to support the twelve Youth Court programs in the state of Alaska. These programs offer an option for youth who have had their first experience breaking the law – by having their cases removed from the traditional juvenile justice system by referral from juvenile probation officers and district court judges and diverted to a court of their peers.

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The funding of the Youth Court program will serve the needs of Alaska citizens, state agencies, and law enforcement. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Charles "TC" Kamai
Chief of Police

Trial Courts
State of Alaska
Box 869
Wrangell, Alaska, 99929

To Whom It May Concern: Date: January 8, 2010

Re: Wrangell Youth Court

The purpose of this letter is to express the continued support of the Wrangell Trial Courts for the Wrangell Youth Court program.

Since its inception ten years ago, the Wrangell Youth Court has been widely accepted and respected in the local community. Having youthful offenders appear before a group of their peers has had a very positive effect in this community. Most individuals appearing before the Youth Court successfully complete their requirements and never return to the court.

The youth court provides the added bonus of "hands on" knowledge of the justice system and public service opportunities for its members. They graduate with solid ethical standards and a commitment to public service and the administration of justice.

Although the success of a program is frequently measured by the number of cases or clients handled, that is not really an adequate standard in looking at a youth court program, particularly in a small town. If this court never heard another case, it would be a successful program based on the dedication and commitment of its members.

Thank you for your continued support of the Wrangell Youth Court program. We are looking forward to continuing to work with this program for the next ten years.

Chris Ellis
Magistrate

Patty Burley
PO Box 2715
Bethel AK 99559-2715
(907) 543-3098

January 6, 2010

Dear Representative Cathy Munoz:

I am writing to you to request your support in ensuring that Youth Courts remain a part of Alaska's legal system. They are invaluable and give so much more than initially may be seen.

Here in Bethel we have a very small youth court still struggling to get squarely off the ground. We have graduated only a handful of youth but I can tell you first-hand the impact such a small project has had on the youth in this area.

While to date we have only graduated a few students, each of those has at one point or another been enrolled at the Bethel Alternative Boarding School (BABS). Each of those youngsters has a unique learning style that makes it difficult for them to fit in or do well in mainstream schools. One of the youngsters was actually a drop-out. Despite those hurdles these teenagers came week after week to the 2 hour-long classes. They studied hard and took both a written final exam and an oral exam. These teenagers who fight so hard just to finish or stay in school actually excelled. They worked incredibly hard and it showed. Each of those teens gained confidence and a sense of accomplishment. A few were on the road to trouble with the law. They were bored, felt they had nothing to offer, and nowhere to go. Youth court changed that for them. It gave them a sense of purpose, a moral compass and a sense of belonging. These individuals will go further than they would have if youth court had not become a part of their lives.

Today I note that there appears to be a strong correlation between underage drinking and crime(s). There is also a strong correlation between underage drinking and trouble at school. Right now we do the best we can for these students via the Community Diversion Panel (CDP). While that is an amazing program that has provided a considerable amount to the community, it is only catching the tip of the iceberg. For many kids, by the time they come to the CDP their problems with alcohol have spiraled out of control. For others, alcohol comes much later in the process – they instead start with truancy and behavior problems at the school. These are the early cries for help. An active youth court would be able to intercede early enough to stem the upcoming tide. It would give minors an opportunity to start anew with the help and support of those whose input they seek the most: their peers.

There are some wonderful youth courts in other areas of Alaska which are at jeopardy as well: Anchorage, Kenai, and Fairbanks just to name a few. These programs have been around a while longer than Bethel's and have made even bigger impacts on the lives of minors. They have also reached out to lend support to those smaller youth courts still working to get established and on more solid ground. These programs are too valuable to lose.

If funding is an issue, I would urge you to consider a Bill that would add significant surcharges for Minor Consuming Alcohol (MCA) cases. The current slap on the wrist for a first MCA is so negligible that many minors view getting an MCA as a badge of honor and not something negative. The fines come from their PFD's and have little, if any, importance. Perhaps the surcharge, due much sooner, will make a bigger impact – at the very least it will generate income that will allow youth courts to continue operating.

I thank you for your consideration into this matter.

Sincerely,

Patty C. Burley
Magistrate

February 5, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to emphasize the importance of the Mat-Su Youth Court to the welfare of the Mat-Su community and to express my support for that organization.

In my almost 20 years on the bench, mostly as a magistrate and superior court master, recently as a district court judge, I have presided over literally thousands of cases involving teenagers. As the Mat-Su Valley population grew, the ability of the juvenile probation office (JPO) to handle all the cases involving teenagers was greatly diminished. Rightfully so, the JPO has to concentrate on the more serious crimes, such as burglaries and felony level assaults, that were committed by teenagers. As a result, many teens who committed lower level crimes, particularly shoplifting, either merely got a warning letter or their crimes were ignored all together.

Participation in lower level crimes leads to a disrespect of the law, of other people's rights in their person and their property, costs local storekeepers significant amounts of money, and often leads to greater criminal behavior if left undressed. Into this gap stepped the Mat-Su Youth Court. Many crimes that would not have been addressed because of the caseload of JPO are being handled by the Youth Court. The imposition of sanctions including restitution, community work service and letters accepting responsibility and apologizing for committing the crime all serve both the victim and the community as well as the defendant, who is more likely to grow to be a responsible citizen from the experience.

Over the years the Mat-Su Youth Court has added a program for first time offenders under the age of 18 convicted of Minor Consuming Alcohol. Not only is the program educational, but being run by a peer group, it sets the example that being clean and sober is an acceptable lifestyle that is respected by one's peers. Given that not only locally but nationally roughly 80% of adult crimes are somehow related to alcohol abuse, getting the message to an offender earlier in life may keep them from becoming part of that statistic as they grow older.

I wholeheartedly support and recommend the Mat-Su Youth Court program and urge others to do so, also.

Sincerely,

David L. Zwink
District Court Judge, Palmer, Alaska