

HB10
Senate Finance Committee Hearing
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Testimony of:

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Chairmen Stedman and Hoffman, I really appreciate the opportunity to speak about HB10 today. I am Rick Eckert, President Elect of the Alaska State Elks Association. I live in Homer.

There are only 17 Elks Lodges in Alaska but they have contributed \$2.2 million per year in time, travel and direct money contributions to our communities, on average, over the last five years. These contributions are made to families in distress, students, youth programs and veterans. The ASEA contributes additionally significant money and support to youth camping and wounded veterans, the funds for which come from the hard work of our individual Lodges.

Our community programs are jeopardized by the rising cost of energy and a lagging economy. Property tax is a significant additional cost for which volunteers must raise money to pay. That money would be put back into our communities if approved by the municipalities.

HB10, if made into law will allow our communities to make an informed decision on the value provided by fraternal organizations. Value in great part created through volunteerism, value that will disappear when a Lodge fails to exist due to financial burden. In a time when so much is asked and expected of government, I firmly believe the opportunity to provide stimulation for volunteerism is worthy of your consideration.

Thank you Senators for your consideration of HB10.