



nami

Educate — Advocate — Support

Juneau

National Alliance on Mental Illness

To: House Finance Committee Members

From: Crystal Bourland, Executive Director of NAMI Juneau

For: Written Testimony on Operating and Mental Health Budgets (HB 256/HB 257)

Date: February 29, 2016

Please support behavioral health treatment and services so that more Alaskans can get the help they need to stay out of crisis and costly emergency or institutional care.

NAMI Juneau is the local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. As an organization that educates and supports individuals living with mental illness and their family members, I urge you to support behavioral health treatment and recovery grants so more Alaskans get the help that they need.

I have seen what happens when individuals do not have access to adequate services such as inpatient and outpatient mental health and substance use disorder treatment, medication management, peer support, individual and group therapy, and case management for adults experiencing serious mental illness. NAMI Juneau's members benefit immensely from community behavioral health centers so they can manage their illness, live independently, and maintain employment. When community-based services are reduced, the most vulnerable Alaskans are at risk for revolving through expensive emergency rooms, psychiatric hospitals, jails, prison or other institutional care.

The behavioral health system is essential to realizing the savings expected from justice reinvestment. Criminal justice reform will only be achievable if we have adequate community-based services to support individuals reentering Alaskan communities and their families. Community-based services are critical to a functioning behavioral health system.

The proposed cuts in the House Finance Committee will affect vulnerable Alaskans. I urge your support of behavioral health treatment and recovery grants by not reducing more than the Governor's proposed budget. Continue to invest in community-based services now, rather than expensive institutional care later.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Telephone: (907) 463-4251 Fax: (907) 500-9914 Email: namijuneau@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 9000 Glacier Hwy, Suite 201, Juneau, AK 99801-8032 Website: www.namijuneau.org

From: [Andrea Nelson](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Fwd: Funding radio in Alaska
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 9:22:04 AM

Hearing the House Finance Dept. of Administration recommending a 100% cut to public broadcasting is terrifying news to me, a resident of Haines, AK. Public radio in my community (KHNS) is my primary source for local news and statewide news and my only source for nationwide and international news. KHNS is also a lifeline for decimating pertinent information to our community. This includes emergency information as well as day-to-day weather, calendars, community events, job opportunities, and listener personals communications. It is the main hub for organizing and decimating this type of information, without it that core, communication and networking is lost, and a foundational part of our town functioning is compromised. Beyond the basic necessity of radio, KHNS is also a part of my, and my community's, basic quality of life. Hearing local news casts, local DJs, and local voices is just a highlight to quality music and programing. Widespread support is seen in the huge volunteer and member base. I myself have been a volunteer DJ for over 10 years. Please do not compromise what is part of the basic infrastructure of a functioning community and the quality of life it contributes to. In the long run, compromising communication will not save money, on the State, local or private levels.

Andrea Nelson
Haines resident and volunteer DJ

From: [Dennis Geasan](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Please protect small-town public radio!
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 9:22:09 AM
Importance: High

To the "Alaska Legislature's House Finance Committee",

Please. Do not cut funding for public radio. I live in the community of Haines Alaska and the local public radio station KHNS is an essential service to the communities of Haines and Skagway. The station is the primary means of communication to citizens of both communities in regards to news about local events, government issues, emergency notification, land and sea weather, and national events. In addition, it provides a wide diversity of music styles that is a means of education about different cultures of the world and our own country. It may sound corny but KHNS is a service that provides a means of community bonding. Before moving to Haines I lived in Anchorage and there the public radio stations provided the same kind of services. Living in Alaska is by default a somewhat isolating experience and I find that public radio is an essential service that helps link together the citizens of Alaska by providing the means to share our experiences and better discuss the issues we all face with living in Alaska. There are no commercial radio stations that provide the same kind of service. So please, I ask that you not cut the funding. Thanks for your time.

Dennis Geasan

Lot 5 Letnikof Estates

PO Box 1212

Haines, AK

907-766-2650

Cell: 775-750-1619

From: [ROBERT SHUMAKER](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Cuts to the outreach programs of the university system.
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 9:28:03 AM

Look somewhere else. Outreach is the place that the public can benefit directly from the university system that they fund. :) Thank you

From: [Thom Ely](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [Kay Clements](#)
Subject: Please protect public radio funding in Alaska
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 9:36:40 AM

Dear House Finance Committee - I get all of my news and entertainment from our public radio station KHNS. I have the radio on just about every waking hour. I don't have a TV or stream internet radio. I have no other source available for local information and emergency broadcasts. KHNS has been a part of my life for 30 years. I have also volunteered for 30 years, putting countless hours into the station free of charge. Please do your part and continue to fund this vital resource for the full appropriation to maintain current services.

Sincerely,

Thom Ely
POB 1014
Haines, AK 99827

From: [James Alborough](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Alaska Public Broadcasting is like Oxygen
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 9:38:23 AM

Dear Legislators,

Living in a small town without TV service or a daily newspaper, I am writing to tell you how critical public radio is to me and my family. KHNS and APRN are my only sources of Alaska news.

In the 20 years since moving to Alaska, nothing has more shaped me as an 'Alaskan' as APRN (brought to me by my local station KHNS). Without the local and statewide news (including what's going on in Juneau during the session) provided to me by these public broadcasting outlets we'd be adrift and disconnected.

Please keep financial support for public radio in the budget. They are as essential as the air we breathe!

Sincerely,
James Alborough

James Alborough
907-766-2082

From: [Leslie Ross](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Fwd: Restore Community Radio
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 9:42:34 AM

Hello and thank you for your time and great effort put into trying to work out the numerous pieces of the Alaskan budget puzzle. I am sure it is not an easy job, nor any decision for cuts an simple one.

I am writing to encourage the Finance Committee to reinstate funding for public broadcasting. As a resident of Haines, Alaska and former Development Director of station KHNS - I know first hand the impacts this cut will have on KHNS and similarly other stations. To zero out funding to community radio stations like KHNS, will put them at risk of losing all federal funding as well. The proposed cut will take approximately \$109,000 from the KHNS funding and put the station below the requirement to receive Federal funding (approximately \$122,000).

Looking back at my time at the station I want to say that this is over half of the KHNS budget which could easily force them to close their doors to community radio or to be a repeater with no local content or local news. I would not be dramatic to say it would be devastating.

For rural communities such as Haines, Skagway and Klukwan- that KHNS serves - radio is not just a source of entertainment. For many it is a connection to town, to safety, to community notices, road closures, calendars - it is essentially a life line to the communities. Our small radio station offers, the only daily news source in the Upper Lynn Canal. KHNS often has one of the highest ratios of members to population than any other small station. I state this fact to emphasize how important community radio is to rural towns. However, being such small communities, membership cannot possibly pay the bills alone. KHNS is the only station serving Haines, Klukwan and Skagway. There is no way to make up for a loss in this essential service. As I have worked with many stations across Alaska, I can say, not guess, that there are numerous other stations across Southeast and interior Alaska, that would face these same issues if faced with such drastic cuts.

I understand cuts need to be made to the Alaskan budget, this one however, is very extreme and impacting to all communities across Alaska and particularly to rural towns. Please reinstate the funding to Public Broadcasting.

Thank you for your time, effort and dedication to the State of Alaska.

Sincerely,
Leslie Ross
Resident of Haines, Alaska for 22 years.

[907-314-0543](tel:907-314-0543)
POB 1646
Haines, AK 99827

From: [Elizabeth Van Burgh](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Please protect public radio funding in Alaska
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 9:46:26 AM

Dear Finance Committee,

I recently received the news of how deep the cuts may be for public radio in our State. This could be devastating for our small community in Haines, as well as the rest of the State. Being such a huge State where communities are spread out, our radio stations are extremely important to all of us. It brings us important local, State, and world news, weather, emergency alerts, community information, live broadcast of our assembly meetings and discussions on local issues, as well as entertainment. I can not imagine living in Haines and not having KHNS available to me. Our local community has shown how important the radio station is to us by having fund drives that bring in much needed money. However, it is unlikely that we can raise enough to cover the loss that would occur if your budget passes. We would also lose our Federal funding because of your actions.

Please rethink this issue and opt to continue to fund public radio in Alaska. There are a lot of people in this State that relies on radio that live in rural areas. Please don't think everyone lives in Anchorage, Fairbanks or Juneau and have other choices. We have no other choices..internet is not always available to us as another choice.

Thank you for your time. I hope you realize how important KNHS is to your small community.

Sincerely

Betsy Van Burgh
Haines, AK

From: [Ed Hays](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Please reconsider cuts to Public Radio
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 9:59:29 AM

To: Alaska House Finance Committee
From: Ed and Yuko Hays
P.O. Box 98
Haines, AK 99827
Tel: 907-766-3798

We are writing to ask that you reconsider budget cuts to Public Radio in Alaska. Our local Public Radio Station, KHNS is very important to us. We do not have television, however we depend on KHNS for our news, listening to Morning Edition in the morning and All Things Considered in the evening. We also listen for local news/community information, weather, and emergency alerts, which the radio station does a good job of covering. Many of our community members volunteer at the radio station, to make this the wonderful station it is-- showing how important it is to us and our community.

Please don't cut the funding of our Public Radio stations. This funding also helps us to receive matching grants from other sources. Public radio is very important, especially to rural Alaskans.

Thank you.

Ed and Yuko Hays
Haines, AK

From: [Genie Hambrick](#)
To: [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Dan Saddler](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Lance Pruitt](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#); [Rep. Scott Kawasaki](#); [Rep. Mike Hawker](#)
Cc: [Rep. Paul Seaton](#); [Rep. Mike Chenault](#); [Rep. Kurt Olson](#)
Subject: Who will lead Alaska if our state university system is gutted by budget cuts?
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 10:19:21 AM

Dear Representatives:

If you, the legislators we elected, do not adopt Governor Walker's lean, but forward-thinking budget for the University of Alaska system, we can't sustain a world-class center for research in our state. Who then will inform and guide your decisions about Alaska's economy and natural resources, about our strategic, international position in the Arctic, about our indigenous people and their cultures, about wildlife and all the animals and plants that share this place with us humans?

Without a strong university system, who will inform and guide your decisions about Alaska? It won't be faculty scientists working in and for the state of Alaska through our land grant university system.

If you do not adopt Governor Walker's budget, in-state higher education can't be good enough to attract our most promising young people, and when we lose them to out-of-state institutions, we most likely lose them as Alaska residents. We lose them as our future leaders.

I urge you to support the Governor's budget for higher education. I want the brightest and best Alaskans, well educated in Alaska, to lead Alaska.

Sincerely,

Genie Hambrick
Homer, AK

From: [Leslianne Grencio](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Letter
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 10:19:23 AM

Good Morning:

We have program participant who does not have email and had asked me to send this to you.

My name is Elizabeth Carlo and I am a strong supporter of the services offered by the Arctic Women in Crisis in Program. This agency provides necessary emergency housing and support services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault throughout the North Slope. It is our understanding that currently the Dept of Public Safety subcommittee has recommended to the House Finance Committee that the grants line within the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault be funded at \$12,652,700. While this represents a decrease from FY16, it will allow the agency to continue to provide key necessary services for victims to attain safety and support. We thank you for recognizing the need for these services to victims throughout Alaska by making funding for grants to programs a priority in this challenging budget.

Thanks,

Leslianne Grencio

Counselor III

NSB Department of Health & Social Services

Arctic Women In Crisis

PO Box 69

Barrow, AK 99723

Phone: (907) 852-0261

Fax: (907) 852-2474

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From: withoff@acsalaska.net
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: public testimony to the House Finance Committee on the operating budget
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 10:27:08 AM

I wish to offer my testimony to the House Finance Committee on the operating budget, but will be unable to attend the the public comment sessions today, and so I am submitting my comments by email.

I live in Alaska Senate District B, Alaska House District 4.

I am writing in support of the recommendation from the House Finance Subcommittee on the University of Alaska to provide no more than \$300 million in unrestricted general funds for the University of Alaska. I especially support the language reducing state funding for research at the University of Alaska, and encouraging the University of Alaska to concentrate on its educational mission.

Nearly all of the research funding at the University of Alaska already comes from outside sources, and so eliminating state funding would have little impact. Contrary to claims by the University of Alaska, very little of this outside funding is contingent on state matching funds.

Also, again contrary to claims by the University of Alaska, a close look at actual work that is classified as research by the University of Alaska reveals that very little of this work has any specific relevance to the State of Alaska. In many cases the work has no research or educational purpose at all, and the University of Alaska is simply functioning as a government contractor, operating equipment or collecting data for the funding agency.

In times of limited state budgets I see no reason that the State of Alaska should be subsidizing a generic government contractor -- hence my support for funding only the educational mission of the University of Alaska.

Thank you for your consideration

David Withoff
Alaska Senate District B
Alaska House District 4
Fairbanks, Alaska

From: [Bill Annis](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Please Protect Public Radio
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 10:30:56 AM

Ladies & Gentlemen of the House Finance Committee: Good morning. I know you have tough decisions facing you. I think you need to know how important my public radio station is to me, and to this community. Relying on the professionals in our news department means we get a critical link to what's happening in our community, state, and nation. It is this community's primary source of on-air local news. It is a part of community that brings friends we know & trust into our daily lives. Without these local voices on air, we lose the very thing that makes KHNS essential to the Upper Lynn Canal. This community would seem so empty without that! There are so many things we gain by having community radio here; parents and family depend on local basketball coverage, entertainment, weather alerts, and so much more. I've listened to KHNS for nearly 20 years here and depend on it so much. Community, as such, deals with people and their living in a particular place. Community radio reaches people in ways that other media can not. Hearing fresh local weather and public service announcements, important messages to or from friends by way of "Listener Personals", and other specific things mean this service is a critically important and highly valued part of our community.

Without state support, my public radio station could not exist as this community's local voice. Please do not cut all funding to Alaska's Public Radio service. Thank you. / Bill Annis

From: [Frank and Sally Rue](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Budget Comments
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 10:31:54 AM

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

I have lived in Alaska for nearly 40 years. I value the things that make life in Alaska so rewarding: good schools; economic opportunities; and the beauty and diversity of our state.

I urge you to develop a budget plan that does the following: uses the Permanent Fund earnings to fund essential public services; reduces state spending in ways that cause the least damage to the health and welfare of Alaskans; reinstates the personal income tax; and, in the spirit of "fairness" and "many hands making light work", raises taxes a little on a lot of activities including the fuel tax; liquor and cigarette taxes; and business taxes.

I believe that if you fail to act quickly and comprehensively on all fronts Alaska's budget options will diminish; impacts to schools, jobs, transportation, health, resource management, etc, etc, will be severe; and the costs to individuals and businesses will become onerous.

Please act now and please take a comprehensive approach to solving Alaska's budget challenge. We have the capacity to deal with the budget issues now. Alaskans will thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Frank Rue
7083 Hendrickson Rd.
Juneau, Alaska

From: [Elizabeth Carlo](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: Virginia.Walsh@north-slope.org
Subject: Budget Supppter
Date: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 10:36:38 AM

My name is Elizabeth Carlo and I am a strong supporter of the services offered by the Arctic Women in Crisis in Program. This agency provides necessary emergency housing and support services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault throughout the North Slope. It is our understanding that currently the Dept of Public Safety subcommittee has recommended to the House Finance Committee that the grants line within the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault be funded at \$12,652,700. While this represents a decrease from FY16, it will allow the agency to continue to provide key necessary services for victims to attain safety and support. We thank you for recognizing the need for these services to victims throughout Alaska by making funding for grants to programs a priority in this challenging budget.

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing on behalf of my friend Carrie, who I also assist by being her guardian. We wanted to advocate for maintaining state grant services for those experiencing disabilities.

Carrie is a delightful woman who experiences Down syndrome. She currently receives grant services from the state and is on the wait list (registry) for waived services, but because she lives with my husband and I and has stability in her life the likelihood of ever receiving waived services is very low. The number of individuals being pulled for waived services has dropped from 200 per year to 50 and those pulled are likely in some type of crisis.

The only state services Carrie receives come from the grant and these supports enable her to have opportunities for socialization with her peers, supported volunteerism, expression and learning classes such as art, drama, cooking, community navigation. These minimal supports enable Carrie to safely participate in community activities.

We are very aware of the state fiscal crisis and want to do our part to contribute through the use of the PFD and taxes.

But we know it's important to see the faces of those whose lives will be diminished as services are cut and to know how much these services mean to those using them.

Carrie was born in a day where doctors told families to "put their disabled children in institutions". Carrie's parents refused -resulting in Carrie always having a place in community.

The grant services provided by the state are life supporting and so impactful for Carrie and others like her needing support to lead a full life in the community.

It's a priceless and cost effective investment, and one we encourage you to continue.

We hear so much about cutting the "waste of government". I can assure you supporting Carrie is not wasteful- but the right thing to do.

Thank you!

Michele Girault

907-223-8401

