

**From:** [Diane Herrmann](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Don't cut education at any level--Use the PFD  
**Date:** Sunday, March 06, 2016 4:15:02 PM

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TO: Alaska State Senate Finance Committee

As you consider how to balance the state's spending and revenues, please consider the long-term consequences. Every time there is a cut to Pre-K to 12th grade education, our children get less help to learn the skills they will need to keep them and our communities healthy in the future. As a parent volunteer in the schools for the past 15 years, I have seen the effects of budget cuts. When an elementary teacher must serve more than 20 students in a class, every student suffers. We have long since passed that threshold. Most of my children's classes have exceeded 25 students in recent years, and I see how many needs have fallen through the cracks. Children don't get the individual attention they need to read well or to really understand the math they need to learn. My own kids are some of the lucky ones; they have had an educated, stay-at-home parent to take up some of the slack. Most kids don't have that support. If you want our people to have the skills they will need to hold jobs in the future, don't cut their ability to learn today.

This same principle applies to our university. In today's world, most people need some sort of post-secondary education. Without the University of Alaska, our kids will need to move out of state to get an education. Many will not return. If we want healthy communities and families, we need to maintain the facilities that support them.

I understand that the state's current revenue does not meet these needs. Surveys have shown that the majority of Alaskans are in favor of using a portion of the Permanent Fund and instituting an income tax, equitable ways to raise revenues. State spending is not supporting "bloated government." It is supporting *necessary* services, including our schools, from pre-K to college, which support our people to support *themselves*. This is a legitimate, important role for government. Now we need our political leaders in Alaska's legislature to have the courage to do what is right and raise revenues. Please do what is right.

Thank you *very much* for your service.

Sincerely,

Diane Herrmann  
Fairbanks, Alaska