

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Fool baby <foolbaby@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 09, 2016 6:33 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** SAVE DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

As the parent of a child who receives books from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and it's partners, I ask that you please save this program!

Thank you,  
Lynette Ramos

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE smartphone

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Jase Klein <jaseinak@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 09, 2016 6:57 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Education First!

Please do not cut education. This is one of the sole purposes of government and our trust. The importance of schools are community-wide, morning to late evenings. Our teachers and associated staff are one of the greatest resources we Alaskans have. Funding restrictions will have profound effects for many years and deprive current students of much vital resources at critical junctures in their life.

I am willing to pay for other services. I support our revenue alternatives including income tax, PFD reduction and taxes on industries and other users.

Thank you for your efforts and challenges in this difficult decision, but please do not cut education.

Respectfully,

Joe Klein

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Emilee Sawyer <biggirlbuddy@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 09, 2016 7:12 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Imagination library

I am writing in about the funding of this crucial program. Not only has it positively impacted our family, but to many families in our community. My daughter absolutely loves to read and I feel it is because of this program. I am hoping this program can continue and have the same impact on my 16 month old son as well. Reading is so important in a child's development of speech and vocabulary, the most vital piece of communication in our lives socially and professionally. Please help find the money to keep this program afloat so it will keep enriching the lives of millions of children nationwide. Thanks for your time!

Sincerely,

~Emilee Sawyer~

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Sarah Thigpen <s\_thigpen@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 09, 2016 7:25 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** SAVE DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

As the parent of a child who receives books from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and it's partners, I ask that you please save this program!

Sent from my iPhone

**Do Niece Gott**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 09, 2016 7:27 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Alaska's Budget

Dear Senators, as a lifelong Alaskan I wanted to convey my opinion of Alaska's current budget situation. The current oil slump has greatly affected Alaska's yearly income, and as such is starting to slump the economy. What we as the population yearn for more than anything else is economic stability. Being that Alaska has extremely limited private industry (healthcare and then grocery stores make up the first 4 of the top private employers in Alaska), the oil companies are also downsizing, which leaves the remaining spending to the government, which has also begun downsizing. I can attest that at the Dept. of Law we have already begun shuttering remote offices, cutting employees and freezing spending and hiring. Just as importantly, small businesses which service state government agencies are having a proportional impact. Just this week, I've worked with a local cleaning company and AC repair company to service our Anchorage datacenter, I spoke to both of them regarding their revenue base and they admitted they will likely start layoffs when the state tightens its budget further, since departments are starting to forgo all but extremely necessary costs. The boom/bust cycle is very dysfunctional to operate under both with government as a service and living day to day as a state resident.

I would like you to seriously consider Gov. Walker's plan to close the budget gap. Frankly it's hard to see those around me, including some family members lose their jobs with few if any job alternatives in state due to its limited industries, forcing them to move and maybe come back when the bust cycle ends. Creating a more stable and consistent government budget is in the best interest of all Alaskans, and the permanent fund among other things is an obvious choice to achieve this. Polling last and this year show it to be well supported. Please consider this email during future hearings regarding the state budget.

Thank you  
[REDACTED]

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

The following pages are written testimony in regards to supporting funding for Early Childhood Education programs that we received from our website. We gave this option to our partners, parents, grandparents, concerned citizens, etc. as an alternative to taking the time to send written testimony directly to the Finance Committee. A total of 138 testimonies were submitted as of 7:40 p.m. Please take the time to read through these comments to see how important Early Childhood Education programs are to Alaska's citizens. Thank you.

Sarah Geary  
Office Manager  
Best Beginnings Alaska  
3350 Commercial Drive, Suite 104A  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
907-297-3300

Parent , Concerned Citizen, Education Professional ,Business Professional  
Delta Junction

I support State investment in Early Childhood Education Programs because I believe that a child's best preparation for a healthy view of school and life-long learning begins at home, in the loving arms of their mother or other caregiver. Of course, there are many factors that undermine a parent's ability to relax and spend that one-on-one time with their child. Programs such as Imagination Library and Best Beginnings help raise awareness for parents and caregivers, and encourage them to take the time for that personal attention that children crave. In the stress of daily life, a parent needs to be reminded how to make it work, to be inspired that it's worth the time and effort spent creating a loving atmosphere where young children can be nurtured and given the attention they need to develop a love of learning. I've witnessed both of these programs providing that for parents, giving the impetus and inspiration that they need. I strongly advocate for State investment in Early Childhood Ed Programs for the welfare of our next generation of healthy Alaskans!

Parent , Concerned Citizen, Business Professional  
Eagle River

I support them because children are the future. That should be enough. What kind of state government cuts funding to children's programs instead of to their own salary?



Parent , Concerned Citizen, Education Professional  
Delta Junction, Alaska

As a parent of three young children and an elementary school teacher, I have repeatedly seen the overwhelming fruit of investing in young children, particularly in the 0-5 year old range. During this time, children's brains are developing faster than at any other time in their life, and the experiences and interactions they receive then shape their future to a startling extent. Studies have shown that a child's personality is largely determined by the age of five years -- another reason to cultivate as early as possible a passion for learning, a love of reading, and a sense that the child can succeed when presented with a challenge!

Sadly, so many parents do not realize how crucial this pre-school window is, or have the information and support to create the rich learning environment that they could provide so easily; hence, almost 50% of our Alaskan children are entering Kindergarten without the skills and confidence they need to excel. There is much need for early education groups like Best Beginnings and local Imagination Libraries who provide hands-on information, equipping mothers and fathers as our next generation's first teachers, and providing books and resources to help them.

On behalf of my own children, on behalf of the 350 children I serve in Delta Junction & Fort Greely, and on behalf of our future state-wide, I urge you to reinstate funding for Early Childhood Education programs, specifically Best Beginnings, in the FY2017 budget.

Thank you,

Julia Phelan

BS Elementary Education

Teacher, private schools, 7 years

Homeschooling mother, 5 years

Corporate Administration, 12 years

Delta Imagination Library board, 3 years

Parent , Grandparent, Concerned Citizen, Education Professional  
Fairbanks

Please reinstate the funding for Parents as Teachers, Best Beginnings, and PreK grants. A child's first 3 years of life are critical. 85% of a child's adult brain is reached in the first 3 years of life. Early preventive intervention is more efficient than paying for prisons later. 71% of Alaskans support investment of state dollars in early childhood programs as a strategy for ensuring Alaska's long term prosperity, even with the current difficult economic times. Best Beginnings leverages State funding with funding from corporate, foundation, and individual donors to support Imagination Libraries and other services across Alaska. Without State funding, these private dollars may be lost. We need to invest in Alaska's children NOW!

Parent  
Anchorage

My name is Temeka and my daughter's name is Cammi and she is 4 years old. We have been using rural cap services since my daughter was born on the Peninsula, then transitioned to Parents as Teachers since she was 14 months old in Anchorage. We have had the same teacher Nicole Hunter since 14 months. Parents as teachers is there for everyone. It's not income based, so it allowed my family to participate whereas most other services did not allow us to qualify. I have recommended PAT to anyone with children under age 5 who will listen.

If it wasn't for the PAT program I don't know where we would be. Because of parents and teachers my daughter learned colors, alphabet, numbers sight words, patients in taking turns and was socialized with other people. They also offer free hearing screenings which is great considering getting my daughter to a doctors office is a screaming match, reserved for emergencies.

I have a very intelligent daughter who has always been above average when filling the ages and stages questions. She was doing great until a month after turning 3. Nicole spotted it, and gently told me and gave many resources. Before I accepted that my daughter could be on the spectrum, PAT offered me numerous handout pages with options, websites to read and we tailored our visits with PAT to helping my child.

When we finally came around to acceptance and needing help, PAT was there for us. Nicole made all the calls, got us referrals, walked us through the system and not only helped my daughter, but my husband and myself as well. It was a difficult time for our family, no one wants something to be wrong with their child, no one. However, Nicole from PAT was there to provide invaluable resources and help to us.

If funding is cut from the program parents such as myself and children such as Cammi will miss out on a much needed program. I understand that there are programs that will need to be cut from the budget, but I urge and beg you not to cut \$500,000.00 from Parents as Teachers. Please consider that the funding you are wanting to take is from a program that helps educate young children. These same children are our future leaders of tomorrow. If we do a disservice to them by not providing all the educational opportunities to them now, how can we expect them to be positive influences to our society tomorrow.

Thank you for your time,

Temeka

Parent , Education Professional  
Anchorage

All Alaskan children deserve quality early childhood and development opportunities. Children's brains are developing rapidly in their first 5 years as they build a foundation for all future outcomes in school and in life. Research shows that investments in quality early childhood programs generate an average annual return of 7-10 percent on every dollar invested.

Despite what we know about the importance of high-quality early childhood opportunities, far too many children in the United States lack access to quality care, especially poor children and other vulnerable children who stand to benefit the most. Access to high-quality early childhood opportunities is all too often determined by parental income and geography; and federal programs designed to support high-quality early learning and development are too underfunded to serve all eligible children.

(See more at:  
<http://www.childrensdefense.org/policy/earlychildhood/#sthash.HwmGKmGP.dpuf>)

Parent  
Anchor Point

I know these are tough budget times and cuts must be made. I am willing to pay income tax and reduce my pfd to \$500 to keep programs like these to help Alaskan families be strong.

Julie Engebretsen, Anchor Point

Parent , Education Professional  
Willow and Kotzebue

As a parent and as a professional working in education I see children struggling more all the time. Children have more challenges being thrown at them all the time, and curricula in school becomes more and more developmentally inappropriate, so many children struggle at home and at school. We need to support parents and children before they get to school and help them be ready to face challenges if we want them to succeed in our communities!

Parent , Concerned Citizen, Business Professional

Competent leaders, workers, parents and teachers start as young children - and more often than not they start as young children who are cared for and nurtured by their community. We cannot expect to reduce spending on prisons, public assistance, and other social welfare programs for adults if we do not maintain our support for the youngest Alaskans. You actively can view this as not just spending - but as saving money in so many other areas of our state government that go towards necessary support of adults who perhaps wouldn't need that support had they been more fully supported as children. This report from M.I.T.

(<http://web.mit.edu/workplacecenter/docs/Full%20Report.pdf>) highlights the large returns on investment realized in both short- and long-terms when it comes to funding early childhood learning and care. Please take this into serious consideration when looking at both the cuts needed and the revenue generation required to keep Alaska a strong place to raise children.

Parent  
Anchorage

I'm a mother of four. I believe that our future lies with our children.

I've seen a great impact with Early Childhood Education programs.

Children absorb everything around them. With the right tools, guidance and materials given, both parents and children are better able to connect with each other. Through the use of child growth education parents are able to see what where their child is at different stages. Children have hands on learning in a positive, safe, loving environment. When a child is loved they grow.

If we take away these vital programs, what will our future look like? We have working parents, parents looking for work and or getting education while their children are in good hands.

Our children deserve to be a priority, as they will be taking care of you when they become adults.



Parent  
Wasilla

I support the state investment in early childhood education program because it is important for our children to learn and grow. Reading is a vital part of child development and it is highly valued in our household.

Concerned Citizen  
Anchorage

Early childhood funding is important for my 3 yo foster child. Since she has been in it the last three months there has been significant improvement. If this program is stopped die to funding her and many others will not be getting a head start before they reach kindergarten.

Sincerely,

Kristin whitson

Parent, Concerned Citizen, Education Professional  
Anchorage

Investing in Early Childhood Education Programs is investing in Alaska's future. As of right now, Alaska does very little to support early childhood education, which is a shame considering our substantial at-risk and disenfranchised population. Please consider funding the programming that we do have so that Alaska's children are given the tools they need to succeed in our ever changing and challenging future.

Parent, Concerned Citizen  
Anchorage

I am writing to ask that funding for Early Childhood Education programs be restored. These programs are critical for ensuring that Alaskan children begin school ready to succeed. They are an investment in the future of Alaska--its children-- which should not be discounted, even in tough economic times.

Katy Soden, Anchorage

Parent, Concerned Citizen, Business Professional  
Fairbanks

I support state investment in early childhood education programs to foster a healthy communities and futures for our communities. Even minimal funding is better than no funding at all. I urge you to reconsider your defunding of these important early childhood education programs.

Parent, Concerned Citizen, Education Professional, Business Professional  
Alaska

There are many children that do not have the funds within there family to obtain kids books. Literacy is fundamental in our lives and essential to create productive members of society.

Parent  
Anchorage

I have two toddler sons that would greatly benefit from an early education program. I think it's important to introduce education early

Parent, Concerned Citizen, Education Professional  
Anchorage

Please, please do not cut these very important programs!!! I am the mother of a three year old girl who absolutely loves reading the books she gets from Imagination Library! Looking into her public education future is a terrifying thought with all the funding cuts the legislature is proposing. You, as adults, and representatives of Alaskans, should cut your own salaries before you cut my child's future!!!



Parent  
Fairbanks

Please restore funding for Early Childhood Education programs to the amount in Gov. Walker's amended FY2017 budget. I am a parent of two kids under 5yrs old, they and their peers are literally the future of Alaska. I know that budget shortfalls mean difficult choices need to be made across the board, but crippling the workers of tomorrow is the very definition of short-sighted.

Parent  
Wasilla

This is an investment in our States future! By giving our states parents these extra tools, and our children these extra advantages they will be that much more ahead when starting school.

Parent  
Anchorage

I have 3 kids and they all love reading because of this program.

Parent, Concerned Citizen  
Homer

An investment in education is an investment in our future.

Parent  
Salcha

It is wonderful to see my children faces light up when I read a book and when they in turn can describe what they see.

Parent  
Fairbanks

Education should be the most important thing in our community. With education we can bring so much value to our community, including greater investment and smarter decisions. We need to support our young children at an early age in their development to continue their education and to promote strong values. Too many children drop out of school and become start surviving on government handouts instead of supporting themselves. In the long run, we, as a community and a nation, would be richer and better off if we supported our children's education from the start, instead of supporting them through government handouts later.

Parent

North Pole/Interior Alaska

I am currently a student in the Early Childhood Education program at UAF. Literacy is one of the most vital aspects of learning for children. This is an amazing program and there would be many children, especially in my area that could greatly be affected by removing the funding. I recently opened a Little Free Library in North Pole to help further promote the opportunity for literacy and there are Imagination Library books that get cycled through the box. As a parent, I want to see the future generation excel and providing literacy services needs to be a focus at every level. There must be compromise in the budget!!!

Parent, Education Professional  
Anchorage

This is the best long term investment that we can make. When we educate young people we teach them how to make choices in life that will continue to make our communities better. Smart youngsters equals less money spent on all sorts of programs that deal with the symptoms of under educated citizens.



Parent  
Homer

My family has battled poverty for the last few years. After our son was born and my husband started a new entrepreneurship venture, we found ourselves struggling to provide the most basic of necessities, such as food. During this time, we began utilizing early childhood education programs, such as the library storytime and Best Beginnings Imagination Library. It has been and continues to be such a joy for my now toddler to receive monthly, free books to in the mail. At almost two years old, "reading" books are one of his most beloved pasttimes. I account much of that to the help we received, the books we got, from the time he was born. There was no way we would have been able to provide them ourselves and I am grateful for the help. I believe they were a worthy investment for my son's future and his love of learning. Please don't cut the funding that supports such Early Childhood Education Programs. Most every family I know with small children utilize some program associated with the funding.

Parent  
Juneau

My family has loved being a part of Early Childhood Education programs. We have enjoyed in-particular Dolly Parton's book program. Many of the books we have received have been enjoyable to read by both myself and my children. The funding is helpful because books are really expensive and though we are by no means poor, it would be difficult to purchase all on our own. If it is challenging for my family how much more difficult will it be for those with less?

Parent, Concerned Citizen  
Anchorage

I highly support Early Childhood Education program because with my experience they learn faster and have a better future education. Especially with parents working full time and no baby sitters, it's very handy and also helpful. With your support it will make a change and give us what we need and do for a living. Not only help parents but the community as well.

Parent, Concerned Citizen, Education Professional  
Tyonek

As a rural educator in southcentral Alaska, I have seen how helpful, and powerful, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library has been to our early childhood learners and their families. I, too, appreciate being a part of the program with my young daughters receiving books from birth- age 5 and how they have readiness access like any other child on the road system! I hope there are funds to continue to support our future of young learners to be successful adults for our great state. It all starts from a good foundation and the earlier to education interventions the more successful student for life!

Parent, Concerned Citizen, Business Professional, Other  
Fairbanks

There is nothing more critical to sustaining a rich, mindful and caring culture than investing in our children's future. There is strong scientific evidence that financial investment in the very young reaps financial dividends in the future that far out weigh the financial investment. <http://heckmanequation.org/>

Parent  
Anchorage

This is just a very important thing to offer our children.

Parents  
Fairbanks

Children are our future! Enough said! It is frustrating to see education programs being cut! Why would anyone want to do that?

Parent, Grandparent, Concerned Citizen  
Fairbanks

This is the best program ever for kids! It helps us to encourage reading and imagination.



Parent  
Anchorage

I support Early Childhood Education Programs because children are our future and should have every opportunity to excel and learn.

Parent  
Anchorage

We need to stop cutting funds for our children's education.  
Reading is very important for children from birth to adulthood.

Parent  
Talkeetna

This is a great service to our children to get them books and keep reading present in their childhood.

Parent  
Anchorage

It promotes reading and bonding with my daughter.

Parent, Education Professional  
Anaktuvuk Pass

I am a teacher and parent on the North Slope. In most households the only books the children ever see before starting school are from Dolly Parton.

Parent  
Anchorage and McCarthy

Hello,

My name is Amber and I am a mother of two, soon to be three. The Imagination Library has been a wonderful program for our family since we spend half of the year in rural Alaska where there is minimal access to books. The Imagination Library has helped our collection of books grow and my children love receiving new ones in the mail. Book time has become a special part of our family routine, and since we do not have t.v., my two girls (ages 4 and 2) have made book time part of their own daily routine as well. It is wonderful to watch them explore new book topics and ask questions about book contents ~ it is evidence to me that they are learning about life and values and creativity. We are fortunate enough to be able to buy some of our own books as well, but I know of other families that aren't so fortunate. Early literacy is a wonderful gift to give to our children, and I urge you to keep this program funded for the sake of the children.

Parent  
Anchorage

Stop cutting funds for early education and education period . We need to invest in our  
childrens future not make it harder.

Parent  
Anchorage

Education should be taught from a very early age. Science shows that children should be exposed to reading, books, textures, etc. from birth. Cutting a childhood education program like this one is, in essence, taking books right out of the hands of those who need them, those whose brains are forming and developing.



Parent  
Anchorage

Our children are the future leaders of this State and deserve EVERY opportunity we can provide.

Parent, Educational Professional  
Eagle River

These programs truly make a difference for our youth. Education in Alaska is tremendously lacking, due to lack of parental education and the general population having the parenting skills necessary to produce productive and educated young children. These programs make it possible for the children to receive the education that they need, the exposure to the written word that they need, and greatly improve upon their educational process once they enter school. If you're going to cut funding, perhaps look at cutting welfare, drug testing for ALL welfare recipients, cutting programs for inebriates and drug addicted persons, cut programs for felons and convicted criminals etc. but PLEASE do not cut programs that help our children.

Parent  
Anchorage

I support early childhood education programs because the research is clear - early learning is crucial to success in life and to vibrant, healthy communities. This is one of the smartest, most responsible investments the State of Alaska makes. It is never a bad idea to invest in early childhood education. The fiscal situation is very difficult, and points to ongoing struggles in our state - this makes it even more important to make sure our youngest citizens grow up well and are as prepared as possible to ride out these challenges and, eventually, help come up with solutions and be dynamic, productive members of our communities.

Parent  
Talkeetna

Attn: Finance Committee

I know times are tough and it is time to tighten the belt but supporting early childhood programs is the best way to support Alaskan families. The days of one wage earner in homes is nearly over. Universal Pre-K, grants for daycare, and programs that generally fund early childhood development have enormous spill over effects. With income tax a close eventuality consider supporting young families in this very important way.

Parent, Concerned Citizen, Education Professional  
Anchorage

As an Alaskan resident, public educator, and mother I truly value Early Childhood Education Programs. Programs focused on Early Childhood Education are essential to child development from infancy to adult, and anchored in significant empirical research. Data analysis using multi-methodology on self-awareness, autonomy, independence, critical thinking skills, emotional intelligence, and multicultural competency conclude the importance of early childhood education. As a professional who has worked for six years in Alaska's post-secondary public education system, my experience has been that a percentage of individuals who transition to post-secondary education are under-prepared to navigate the system of post-secondary with autonomy, self-awareness, independence, critical thinking skills, emotional intelligence, and multicultural competency. Alaska's workforce development needs individuals who are educated, but also have emotional intelligence as well. Further, Early Childhood Education programs establish a foundation of essential skills, which can have a residual impact on the ability to overcome future challenges/barriers. State appropriations for Early Childhood Education programs are essential for improving 1.) 8th Grade Math competency, which impacts High School Completion 2. Improving High School graduation rates, including the summer slump associated with literacy 3. Beginning college at College Level Math and English 4. Completing post-secondary education 5. Becoming a member of Alaska Workforce Development and thriving. If you cut state appropriations for early childhood education, it will become a catalyst for eroding students' abilities to reach successful K-12 benchmarks, and being prepared for post-secondary education.

Parent, Concerned Citizen, Business Professional  
Juneau

I support State investment in Early Childhood Education Programs because if we don't ensure our community's kids have a good education then we will see the results when those kids try to run this community later. the kids are literally our future. Please support Early Childhood Education Programs!

Parent  
Anchorage

I will always support Early Childhood Education Programs because my husband and I believe in conditioning our children to be very well educated, to become productive members of society in their future. We encourage our children to learn and explore and to question things to expand their knowledge. We want our child to have programs to actively participate in to help this goal, to broaden our children's imaginations, to protect and secure their future.

Parent  
Fort Wainwright

Learning and reading is important to young childrens' minds and future. My daughter is so excited to recieve her book every month, and supports her habit and love of reading. Sad to hear about the program being discontinued.



Parent  
Juneau

Early childhood programs are essential so that every young child has the opportunity to learn and succeed later in life. Children should NOT just be a product of their situation in life, we as a community should nurture and help them grow to be productive members. It all starts at these young ages. Please consider funding the early childhood programs in Alaska. They are vital to our state and its growth. Cutting these programs will lead to more and more people leaving Alaska in search of better opportunities for their kids.

Parent, Concerned Citizen, Business Professional  
Juneau

Expanding access to high quality early childhood education is among the smartest investments that we can make.