



To: Senate Finance Committee
Relevant, Interested Parties

Cc: USUAA General Assembly

From: Jonathon Taylor - President, USUAA Student Government

Date: March 29, 2016

Re: **Opposition to SB 208**

As student leaders, we are very cognizant of the financial situation the state currently faces. However, we are deeply concerned and disappointed with SB 208, and urge that you oppose it.

The Union of Students of the University of Alaska Anchorage (USUAA) strongly supports the Alaska Performance Scholarship Program (APS) for three main reasons. First, APS is a strong incentive for high school students to maintain high-levels of academic achievement. On the whole, the prospect of a potentially full-ride academic scholarship based on your GPA is an incentive that simultaneously encourages secondary educational achievement, and postsecondary aspirations. SB 208 removes that dual incentive, implying to students that educational achievement isn't important to state leaders.

Second, the APS makes college accessible for many students who wouldn't be able to attend otherwise. It bridges an important gap, reaching students who have great potential, but do not meet the qualifications to be a UA Scholar. The result is that, since its inception, more Alaska high school graduates are choosing to stay in Alaska to pursue their higher education, as opposed leaving the state, or not attending at all. SB 208 drastically increases the likelihood that high school graduates will opt out of college entirely due to the expense.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, APS encourages students to get their college degrees in Alaska. Reams of social science research over the last decade has consistently shown that the surest indicator of where an individual will put down roots, get a job, start a family, and contribute to society is where they graduate from college. The message SB 208 sends to students is that they are not wanted here in Alaska, and they would be far better off going elsewhere to pursue their education. On face, this is problematic; USUAA shudders at the thought of state leaders actually believing that sending students to schools in the Lower 48 is good for the state.

Even if that isn't the case, the message Senate Finance is sending to Alaska students is that they simply don't matter. Augmented by the body's refusal to heed student voices on SB 174, and the budget cuts which will likely spell the end of some academic programs, students feel attacked, unheard, and marginalized. At that point, many current and future students will feel justified in leaving the state and enrolling in a state that values their education and their voices.

While the state does face a budget crisis, we tell you that balancing that gap on the backs of students is not only morally questionable, but practically dangerous for the long-term future of the state. We strongly urge you to oppose SB 208.

JT

Doniece Gott

From: Sen. Anna MacKinnon
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2016 4:20 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: FW: SB 208 - Alaska Performance Scholarship

From: Trevor Grams [mailto:tsgrams@alaska.edu]
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2016 4:06 PM
To: Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mike Dunleavy <Sen.Mike.Dunleavy@akleg.gov>; Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Peter Micciche <Sen.Peter.Micciche@akleg.gov>; Sen. Anna MacKinnon <Sen.Anna.MacKinnon@akleg.gov>; Sen. Pete Kelly <Sen.Pete.Kelly@akleg.gov>
Subject: SB 208 - Alaska Performance Scholarship

Senate Finance Committee,

I am a Junior at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and am maintaining a 3.8 GPA. I am currently receiving both the Alaska Performance Scholarship and the UA Scholars Scholarship.

After high school, I applied and was accepted to several universities in the lower 48. Ultimately, I decided to attend UAF because I felt it offered the best balance between cost and quality of education. If I was not offered financial aid from the APS and UA Scholars Scholarship, I likely would have chose a University out of state.

The APS and UA Scholars scholarship makes the University of Alaska very attractive for high achieving students. I believe it is crucial for the State to continue to work to keep motivated students in Alaska as they receive a higher education and move into the workforce. Cutting scholarships will likely lower enrollment in the University of Alaska, especially among high achieving students.

Please consider the importance of the Alaska Performance Scholarship and UA Scholars Scholarship when voting on SB 208.

Sincerely,

Trevor Grams

Doniece Gott

From: Sen. Anna MacKinnon
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2016 9:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: FW: SB 208

From: Sallie Rediske [mailto:sallierediske@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2016 7:34 AM

To: Sen. Pete Kelly <Sen.Pete.Kelly@akleg.gov>; Sen. Anna MacKinnon <Sen.Anna.MacKinnon@akleg.gov>; Sen. Peter Micciche <Sen.Peter.Micciche@akleg.gov>; Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mike Dunleavy <Sen.Mike.Dunleavy@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>

Subject: SB 208

Dear Senate Finance Committee:

Do not eliminate or cut the performance-based scholarships for Alaskan students.

- You will be ensuring the brain and ECONOMIC drain for AK. Without this incentive, these students will leave our state for school and many, permanently. They are the ones who will STAY to work and live in AK after graduating from our UA schools and create and grow our NON-FOSSIL fuel economy solutions.
- Fix the tax issues with the oil companies. They are not charitable organizations that need our charity.
- Expect those with resources to pay their fair share of property, sales and income taxes. Our children do not need to bear the burden of our mismanagement of taxation.

Sincerely,
Sallie Rediske
64893 Da Mar Loop
Homer, AK 99603
907-235-7921

Doniece Gott

From: Sen. Anna MacKinnon
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2016 4:20 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: FW: SB 208 - Alaska Performance Scholarship

From: Trevor Grams [mailto:tsgrams@alaska.edu]
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2016 4:06 PM
To: Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mike Dunleavy <Sen.Mike.Dunleavy@akleg.gov>; Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Peter Micciche <Sen.Peter.Micciche@akleg.gov>; Sen. Anna MacKinnon <Sen.Anna.MacKinnon@akleg.gov>; Sen. Pete Kelly <Sen.Pete.Kelly@akleg.gov>
Subject: SB 208 - Alaska Performance Scholarship

Senate Finance Committee,

I am a Junior at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and am maintaining a 3.8 GPA. I am currently receiving both the Alaska Performance Scholarship and the UA Scholars Scholarship.

After high school, I applied and was accepted to several universities in the lower 48. Ultimately, I decided to attend UAF because I felt it offered the best balance between cost and quality of education. If I was not offered financial aid from the APS and UA Scholars Scholarship, I likely would have chose a University out of state.

The APS and UA Scholars scholarship makes the University of Alaska very attractive for high achieving students. I believe it is crucial for the State to continue to work to keep motivated students in Alaska as they receive a higher education and move into the workforce. Cutting scholarships will likely lower enrollment in the University of Alaska, especially among high achieving students.

Please consider the importance of the Alaska Performance Scholarship and UA Scholars Scholarship when voting on SB 208.

Sincerely,

Trevor Grams

Doniece Gott

From: Liz Downing <eadowning@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2016 11:14 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Sen. Gary Stevens; Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: Opposed to SB 208

I understand the financial constraints our state faces in light of low oil prices. I strongly support your efforts to commit to a fiscal plan to strengthen Alaska's future. We all know that we cannot cut our way through this but that cuts are a necessary part of the solution.

That said, eliminating the Alaska Performance Scholarship will cause more harm than good. The impact is not just to the University, but to all of our youth. The APS is a strong incentive for graduation. It is a strong incentive to stay in Alaska. It is a strong incentive for advanced career and technical education. It is a strong incentive to higher education that creates productive and informed citizens. It reaches beyond the top 10% as the University Scholars Program does, and provides opportunity to a majority of our students.

I am the mother of a college freshman. Many of his friends are in college in Alaska because of the APS. My son did not qualify in spite of the fact that he had 5 math courses through AP Calculus, 3 years of foreign language, 4 years of language arts (with two AP courses), 4 years of science (again, 2 AP courses), 3 college courses starting in his sophomore year, and straight A grades throughout high school graduating at the top of his class at Homer High. His courses didn't fit neatly into the two categories but exceeded most of the requirements in each. He is not in college in Alaska. If he qualified for the APS, we certainly would have taken a harder look at his opportunities here.

As a school board member and 25 year veteran of University of Alaska student services, I have seen the positive impact of the APS. Yes, cuts are necessary. This one is not. It will leave a sour taste for government in our children and their parents and weaken, not strengthen, our state. Please keep your commitment to the Alaska Performance Scholarship.

Thank you,

Liz Downing

Doniece Gott

From: j.middleton43@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2016 10:45 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: The Alaska Performance Scholarship

Dear Alaskan Legislators,

My name is Julia Middleton and I'm a student at Sitka High School. During my trip to Juneau we found out about Senate bill 208 that would eliminate the Alaskan Performance Scholarship. This scholarship helps so many Alaskans get a higher education, it helps alleviate debt and encourages students to stay in Alaska. Eliminating this scholarship would be a huge mistake. Please consider the students and the future of Alaska.

-Julia Middleton