

**From:** [Sen. Anna MacKinnon](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Protect our Students; Save the Alaska Performance Scholarship  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 30, 2016 9:43:19 AM  
**Attachments:** [SB-208 AK Performance Scholarship.pdf](#)

---

**From:** Michael Bekeris [mailto:mishab13@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 29, 2016 7:05 PM

**To:** Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. John Coghill <Sen.John.Coghill@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mia Costello <Sen.Mia.Costello@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mike Dunleavy <Sen.Mike.Dunleavy@akleg.gov>; Sen. Dennis Egan <Sen.Dennis.Egan@akleg.gov>; Sen. Johnny Ellis <Sen.Johnny.Ellis@akleg.gov>; Sen. Berta Gardner <Sen.Berta.Gardner@akleg.gov>; Sen. Cathy Giessel <Sen.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Charlie Huggins <Sen.Charlie.Huggins@akleg.gov>; Sen. Pete Kelly <Sen.Pete.Kelly@akleg.gov>; Sen. Anna MacKinnon <Sen.Anna.MacKinnon@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lesil McGuire <Sen.Lesil.McGuire@akleg.gov>; Sen. Kevin Meyer <Sen.Kevin.Meyer@akleg.gov>; Sen. Peter Micciche <Sen.Peter.Micciche@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Gary Stevens <Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Stoltze <Sen.Bill.Stoltze@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>

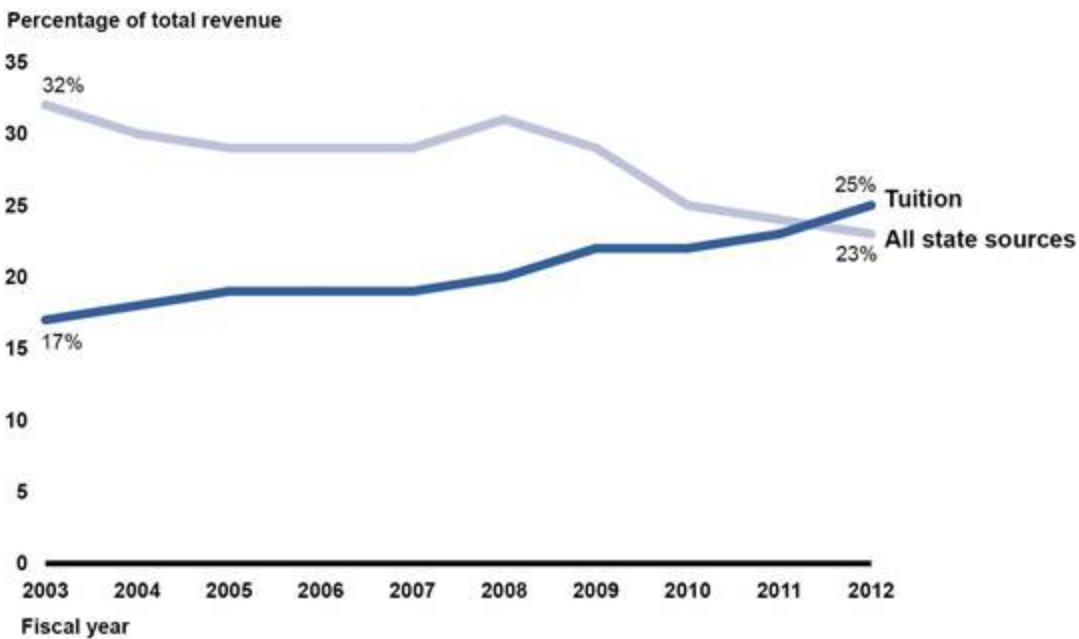
**Subject:** Fwd: Protect our Students; Save the Alaska Performance Scholarship

Dear Alaska State Senators,

My name is Michael Bekeris and I am the Student-Body President of the Sitka High School Student Council. As a representative of the students of Sitka High School, I am contacting you today with urgent concern of Senate Bill 208, which is specifically titled "An Act eliminating the Alaska education grant program and the Alaska performance scholarship program." For your own convenience, I have attached a copy of the bill in this email. Also, I tend to assume that everyone understands what this scholarship entails, but if you need more information you can visit the link here: [APS](#).

Although I recognize that not every student that graduates from an Alaskan high school attends an Alaskan college, a vast majority of students do move on to further their education and careers in Alaska. However, with less funding from both federal and state sources, colleges across the nation have become much more reliant on student tuition. For example, see the graph I included below:

Public College Revenue from State Sources and Tuition, Fiscal Years 2003 through 2012



Source: GAO analysis of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Finance component data. | GAO-15-151

In fact, just a few months ago, the University of Alaska Board of Regents approved a 5% tuition increase for all UA schools (see this link for more information: [Alaska Dispatch News - UA Tuition Hike](#)). Because of the increasing costs of college, scholarships have become mandatory for students that wish to graduate from college with minimal student debt. This scholarship was initially created as an incentive for students to pursue an education and career in Alaska, and removing this scholarship would be counterproductive to our economy as less students would be incentivized to remain in Alaska, causing Alaska to have less taxpayers, employees, and less State revenue.

While you may view the Alaska Performance Scholarship as \$460 million dollars that may temporarily relieve a portion of our current deficit, I see a bridge that allows Alaskan students to pursue a higher education. Like many other students at Sitka High School, I remember visiting the counseling office numerous times throughout my Junior and Senior year just so I could ensure that I was taking all of the courses required to receive the Alaska Performance Scholarship. Just like me, a vast majority of the students at Sitka High School base their entire school curriculum around obtaining the Alaska Performance Scholarship, and to remove this opportunity - this bridge - would be cruel.

Please do not let our current budget crisis put student achievement at risk; using this scholarship is a non-renewable solution to a renewable problem. So, I please ask of you, keep the Alaska Performance Scholarship so that future students - my friends and my peers - will have the support needed to further their education and be successful in Alaska.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me via the phone number and email provided below! I understand that this is a lengthy email, but I appreciate the time you have taken to read this.

With Genuine Hope,  
 Michael Bekeris  
[mishab13@gmail.com](mailto:mishab13@gmail.com)

(208)215-8204