

From: [Sen. Anna MacKinnon](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: FW: SB 208
Date: Wednesday, March 30, 2016 9:32:17 AM

From: Paul Story [mailto:PStory@KPBSD.k12.ak.us]

Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2016 9:19 PM

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. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman <Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>

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Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing you to urge particular caution when considering SB 208 and the elimination of the Alaska Performance Scholarship. I am sure you have read the ACPE's outcome report, which does a nice job outlining some of the benefits of the APS since its inception.

I would like to echo those supportive sentiments and offer you a few other considerations. I understand the terrible financial situation facing our state and the extremely difficult task you face as elected officials trying to come to a balanced budget. However, programs like the APS which aim to retain more of the brightest Alaskan high school graduates to stay in-state and to ultimately contribute to our communities and to our economy are perhaps more important than their line-item budget amount would suggest.

I have had the pleasure to work as a high school counselor in Alaska for 11 years. I have witnessed a marked increase in students wanting to remain in-state for post-secondary education since the advent of the APS. With the exponentially increasing cost of universities and trade schools, it has become more and more attractive for our highest-achieving and most motivated students to consider Alaskan options after high school. And of course, those that stay in-state for their education naturally feed Alaska's employment pipeline upon conferment of their degrees or certificates. The opposite is also true. When a brain drain occurs and more of Alaska's most talented young people pursue post-secondary education Outside, they are that much less likely to return home upon completion of their schooling. Rather, they will be more likely to parlay the internships and school-community ties they've made in college into initial job offers in Washington state or California or Montana, etc., etc., and be less likely to return to Alaska as full-time residents and active participants and drivers of a vibrant economy.

I have never advocated that the APS be an entitlement for Alaskan high school graduates. It is a scholarship that should be *earned*. Those that do earn it and take it advantage of it are likely to stay and to help advance the future of our state. I see it as a completely worthwhile investment and its elimination as short-sighted.

Sincerely,
Paul Story

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