

Good evening Senators,

I know in the coming weeks you will be receiving a lot of testimony on sb208, much (if not most) of it laced with sharp criticism. I wanted to take a moment and pass on some encouragement, hopefully ahead of the flood.

I am a student at UAA, the first in my family to go to college. I am also a recipient of the Alaska Performance Scholarship. I chair both College Republicans and Young Americans for Liberty at UAA. Each semester, I have received a credit to my UAA account balance of \$2,378.00, as I am in the level one bracket for APS and take 15 credit hours each semester. I also work full time in order to support myself. I live completely independent from my parents, and have been since two weeks after my 18th birthday (when I moved out to attend my first semester at UAA).

I know you will receive many emails and phone calls asking you to please spare the APS. Everyone in the state has that one service they wish to see perpetuated by the state. I am not one of those students. The APS comes from a time of record high oil prices, and with that, record high revenue. Obviously that is not the case today. And even though I directly benefit from my APS, I recognize that the program needs to go.

My first year of college, I supported myself making \$10/hr at the McDonalds on Tudor road in Anchorage, right next to campus. I was a department manager, and frankly, I made a crappy wage. I did not apply for state assistance, though I surely would have qualified. Instead, I tightened my belt, and lived within my means (and then some, as my scholarship didn't cover everything, I still had to save to pay the remainder). I won't lie, it completely sucked. I left the relative comfort of home, giving up luxuries like Internet, tv, a house heated above 60 degrees (paying for utilities is expensive), and many others. I worked every day of the week, even if just for two hours, so that I could take advantage of the \$8 of free food my employer provided me. I lived in rough housing with rough roommates in order to save money. I didn't eat out or have fun. I worked, I went to class, I studied, and then I worked some more. I couponed and found every possible way to save money. After all, what else should you do when you are living paycheck to paycheck or headed into the red?

The state's situation is not dissimilar to my own. Today I have a better job, but I still work full time. I pay my bills and save the rest so that I can pay for school.

The loss of the Alaska performance scholarship will undoubtedly make my life harder, but just like I had to sacrifice to scrape by and maintain my independence, so too should the state. We need to cut, and cut deep. We must tighten our belts and live within our means. That means cuts to education, to healthcare, to state services. Our budget is bloated and we must become fiscally solvent.

And besides, I would much rather lose my APS, or my dividend for that matter, than be subject to a state sales or income tax. I budget to my last dime so that I can survive the high cost of living here and put money away for school and emergencies. I see no reason why the state shouldn't do the same.

I appreciate the position you are left in, as it is not easy to make cuts, but in order for me and the rest of millennials to even have a future in this state, we need to clean up our act.

I fully support sb208. It is a step in the right direction.

For prosperity,  
Kelsi Pulczinski

(P.S. I apologize for the length! I felt it prudent to be very vocal in my support and I know you will be facing criticism for this bill)