

Operating
Budget Public
Testimony: #3
Public
Education

Doniece Gott

From: Vero Bunch <bunchvero@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 10:58 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School cuts

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

On Thu, Mar 16, 2017 at 10:56 AM, Vero Bunch

<bunchvero@yahoo.com> wrote:

I am speaking on behalf of my kids and everyone else's kids.... school cuts should be the last thing to cut!!! There is no rhyme or reason why our kids should suffer because of the ineptitude of legislators. Our kids already suffer from the lack of extracurricular activities, etc. What happens when kids have absolutely nothing to do? They end up in trouble and in jails!!!!!! Growing up in was lucky for my days to be filled with music, arts, sports etc. It made us better students and happier kids.... how about you guys quit wasting money on stupid things, including giving yourself raises... and put money where it is needed. The dumbing down of our kids is not gonna cut it. I am happy to pay taxes to have every opportunity for our children to flourish. Not for u people to fill ur pockets and waste tax payers money including our dividends on stupid shit.

From a very pissed off patent
Thank you for your time
Veronica bunch

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Doniece Gott

From: Arlot Hall <arlothall@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 10:36 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 22

We have a Constitutional responsibility to provide an education to all Alaskans. Your proposed cuts to their budget — on top of previous — cuts will cripple the ability of school districts to provide that education. The State of Alaska should increase its revenue sources sufficient to fulfill its obligations to the people by creating an income tax and ensuring that we receive fair value from our oil resources at low market prices by passing HJB133.

Bill Hall
907-748-3216
arlothall@gmail.com

Doniece Gott

From: Jenna Fabian <jenkfabian713@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 10:35 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: STOP cutting our FUTURE!

Please act now to fix the fiscal crisis! We cannot make any more cuts to public education that will hurt our kids. We have constantly been asked to do more with less. How can we help prepare kids for the future if we are constantly cutting education? Many of the careers that our students will excel in haven't even been created yet! Please put a stop to education cuts. Children are our FUTURE.

Best,

Jenna Fabian
Mom & AK Educator

Doniece Gott

From: Larri Spengler <lspengler@ak.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 10:08 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: school funding

Greetings:

Rather than slashing funding for Alaska's schools, the state should be looking at ways to offset some of our budget crisis through things like the Governor proposed, including a state income tax.

Thank you.

Larri Irene Spengler
4545 Thane Road
Juneau, Alaska 99801
907-586-9768 (phone/fax)
lspengler@ak.net

Doniece Gott

From: Michelle Wilson <michelle@ak.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 10:07 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Senators, keep public education funding in the budget

Members of the Senate Finance Committee.

I know you care about Alaska's children and young people.

I'm seriously concerned about rumors that the GOP intends to keep cutting the public education budget while subsidizing the oil and gas industry ("tax credits"). We need you to direct our state money towards public education of our children, our future, and to continue providing critical jobs in our communities in public education.

Please reconsider giving our public funds to wealthy companies and redirect your public office goals to maintaining civility and integrity in our state by maintaining and funding -not cutting- pre K-12 public education.

Thank You.

Michelle Wilson
8711 Pluto Drive
99507

...
Michelle Wilson
(907) 317-2748

Doniece Gott

From: Michael Backus <mbbackus@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 9:53 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School Funding and State Fiscal Plan

I will be unable to give public testimony at the specified time this Friday.

I am a teacher in the Mat-Su Valley. I have been teaching here for a decade now and love my job. Currently I teach computer science and computer literacy at Teeland Middle School. I am able to make my class engaging and fun and get students to learn many difficult concepts that prepare them for life beyond school when I have reasonable class sizes. But when the number of students gets to be too high, there's only so much I can do. Pretty much every other teacher I know feels the same way. I urge you not to make any cuts to education and to pursue a three pronged approach to balancing our state's budget.

1. First and foremost, I think the time has come for Alaska to have an income tax. Although I have no desire to see my paycheck diminish, I recognize the necessity and am willing to pay for the necessary services that the state provides.
2. It is time to start using a portion of PFD earnings to help balance the budget.
3. We need to make some cuts where we can to the budget and we need to stop giving so many tax credits to oil companies.

Doniece Gott

From: Mary Spalding <mspalding@gci.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 9:50 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education Funding

Please *increase* the funding for public school education. I, like so many citizens, would gladly pay an income tax to supplement the budget.

Thank you.

Mary Spalding
4306 W Dimond Blvd No 3
Anchorage, AK 99502
mspalding@gci.net
907-830-6443

Doniece Gott

From: jacquelyn sparrow <sparrowjd@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 9:33 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School funds

Does it make sense, if you want citizens to be interested and involved, to present a budget which includes no school funds? The Dispatch gives an explanation- however not everyone has access to the paper. With this type legislating, the public gets lost and even more troublesome rumors of "hidden agendas" start circulating.

Remember "all politics is local" and local means "individual" so legislate open and clearly! Jacquelyn Sparrow

Sent from my iPad

Doniece Gott

From: Rebecca Bezdecny <rebecca.bezdecny@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 12:16 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony: 5% Education Cut = Catastrophe

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this as my public testimony regarding the 5% cut to the education budget currently being proposed by some lawmakers.

I write this to you as a mother of three children currently or soon to be enrolled in the public school system. I am the wife of a soon-to-be laid off (due to alleged enrollment numbers) high school science teacher. My husband and I are both products of the Alaska public school system (I also have a degree from the University of Alaska Southeast-Juneau as well). If this 5% cut to education funding comes to fruition the results will be devastating to our children and to the future of this state.

This would cause massive teacher layoffs and ballooning (unlawful!) class sizes for the teachers who remain. This is completely unacceptable and frankly, frightening.

It's time to make the hard decisions that help BUILD our state's future instead of ruining it like a 5% cut to education would do. It's time to bring back the state income tax. It's time to tap into PFD earnings. Yes, I realize these are wildly unpopular ideas and many constituents will complain--but it is something that needs to be done. The future of the state depends on it. You get what you pay for. We can't keep hoping that the price per barrel of oil will go back up--regardless of new explorations promising great supplies of premium crude. Oil prices will not rebound to what we're using to living off of. Even if the prices do rebound, oil is not a sustaining source of revenue. Oil is a finite resource.

My husband and I spent 15 years out of Alaska and recently returned nearly two years ago. We love this state. We want to raise our kids in this state. We want to retire in this state. However, quite frankly, even the suggestion of cutting 5% from something so vital as education funding makes me ashamed to be an Alaskan.

I urge you to do the right thing.

Thank you for the time in reviewing my testimony.

Rebecca Bezdecny
202 S. Forest Dr. #4
Kenai, AK 99611
862-596-8106

Doniece Gott

From: Chelsea Lindquist <chelserin@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 11:52 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Don't cut education funding

Dear Legislators,

As a public school employee and a parent of a school age child I am extremely concerned about the proposed budget cuts to education in the state budget. Education is the very foundation on which our society is built. If we are worried about the rate of high school graduation/drop outs, if we are worried about violence among young people, if we are worried about drug use, if we are worried about growing the economy and having a workforce who are trained and educated than ALL of that starts with giving children an education, a foundation for learning and succeeding. Starting with preschool and going all the way to college. We must support our students if we expect them to grow and contribute and be the future of our state.

I would appreciate an answer to the following questions:

- Why was this budget released without the critical pieces when there have been rumors of large cuts to K-12 public education funding?
- When education funding is added back to the budget, will additional hearings occur to allow for public input?
- Is the Senate's ultimate goal to cut K-12 funding by 5%? That will negatively impact every public student in Alaska – is that the Alaska we want?

I appreciate your time and implore you to stand up for Alaska's schools and students and give them the quality education they deserve.

Thank you,
Chelsea Vukovich
99516

Doniece Gott

From: Mike Bronson <bronsonconsulting@gci.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 11:49 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education funding

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members:

Please arrange this session to increase public schools' funding so they will raise the reading and math proficiency of students by a grade-level on average statewide. Ask DEED and the school districts to provide you a plan for raising student academic proficiency from near the bottom of the barrel up to the state standards, and then provide the funding to accomplish that.

Thank you,

Mike Bronson

NAACP Anchorage

Doniece Gott

From: Alyssa Keill <akkeill2@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 11:45 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Concerns on the State Budget

Senate Finance Committee members,

I am a resident of Fairbanks. If it matters, I hold a BS in Exercise Science and a MS in Health Promotion. I got these degrees out of state, but I grew up here and I love it here, so I have come back for my career. I also coach competitive swimming in my free time; working primarily with grade school and middle school kids.

It has been brought to my attention that a budget has been put forward with ALL funding for early childhood programs REMOVED. I would like to express my disapproval of this move by my State Government.

I have never understood why education is the first thing to be cut when money gets tight. I find myself wondering this over and over, year after year, because this trend keeps happening. Have we no respect for education? Can we not ALL agree that our education is how we have become successful? If not in a direct "book" manner, but in the structure, the challenge, and the life skills along the way. I find it hard to believe that my legislators think they could have gotten where they are now without the amazing educators who took them on and supported their learning along the way.

This brings me to early childhood education. As I mentioned above, education is not about "book" learning. It is much more. As you may know, very few jobs hire because a person has all the hard skills. They hire someone based off of their soft skills; someone who will also fit in with the company, who can problem solve without having their hand held. These are the skills kids begin learning before kindergarten, in early childhood education. The socialization alone is paramount. Even more important to this issue is the access for families. If funding is stopped for programs who provide early childhood education, not only are we as a State neglecting our youngest people, the ones we are supposed to be looking out for the MOST because they cannot do it themselves, we are also neglecting their families. Without funding, many of these places will not be able to offer services, putting their employees out of work, and forcing the families (mothers, fathers, siblings, single parents, etc) to figure out something else while their child is small. They might not be able to work anymore, which means they cannot provide for their families. It could force them to make rash decisions which put their children at risk during the day, or the night. By denying funding for early childhood education, the lives affected are not 60 children in one early learners daycare, the lives affected reach into the multi-hundreds because these kids cannot stay home alone. And when they get to be school aged, the burden on our already burdened grade-school educators will be even greater.

I ask you, as a resident of this State, to reconsider your budget cuts. Education should never be on the chopping block.

Sincerely,
Alyssa Keill

Did you know New Mexico doesn't pay their law makers a salary? Yes they get per diem and mileage, etc, but I wonder if we'd have enough money left over to *buy nice things* for the State...

Doniece Gott

From: Cindy Long <cincinxoxo@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 13, 2017 11:19 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: How educational budget cuts affect me

Dear Finance Committee Members,

I am an English language arts teacher at a small school on the Yukon. I just wanted you to hear from a teacher who is out of work for no reason except there is no enough money. Instead of spending cultural time with my students and preparing for next year, I am preparing to go to the job fair in Anchorage next week. Last weekend, I did my First Dance with the dancing group here, I was ACCEPTED by the community, and I had to decline to travel to the "sister-city" and yupik dance with them. I just found out that I am not going to be here next year so I can't spend money to do those thing. I have to move on again.

It is an emotional time already; these Kotlik High School students are losing their counselor and it seems all of the new teachers hired are choosing to move on. I thought it would be possible for me to stay. In a high school staff, there are five of us and I have just been here one year. I have to go. I got pink-slipped in an effort to close the budget gap. Yet, I have to pretend for another few weeks that I am going to be here and positive about the future. This is going to make it really difficult to teach anything of substance.

I think the worst thing is that it is happening to my high school students. The water is bad, they struggle to make it to school at all. This year already we did without a special education teacher and the aides filled in for the 2nd grade. We were helping reduce spending so we did our best. It is going to be particularly hard on the junior class. As seniors, they will have no science teacher, no counselor and no ELA teacher. What kind of success are you setting them up for? What message are you sending to these village students? The assistant principal gets to stay, but only as a way to provide counseling services.

It feels like people who don't teacher are always critical when teachers move away. I want to stay here. I did every thing I was supposed to do and still I have to move on. This is NOT my fault and it's NOT my students' fault and yet we are the ones who continually pay.

What do you in the finance committee have to say about this?

Sincerely,

Cynthia R. Long
Kasilof, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Mari Jamieson <marijaminak@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2017 9:00 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget

Dear Legislative Finance Committee,

I have lived here for nearly 30 years, I own property and do not have any children.

I grew up in a state where we paid taxes because it was the right thing to do to support our community infrastructure. I believe that we all should contribute to the financial well being of our state and one effective way to do this is by an income tax.

We should not suck the life out of the things that improve our city and our state. Our children are our most precious resource. If we do not support their education we are being "penny wise and pound foolish."

Thank you for your time,

Mari Jamieson
520 W 19th Ave
Anchorage, AK 99503

Doniece Gott

From: Lisa Renken <haylisa69@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, February 20, 2017 1:29 PM
To: House Finance; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education budget concerns

Thank you for taking time and consideration for public statements.

I've been an elementary school teacher in the Kenai Peninsula Borough for over 16 years. Please consider keeping class sizes from getting larger. Students in each class are at a wide range of skill levels, and many include special needs. Small group and one-on-one instruction is crucial in meeting the needs of each student. As teachers, we are charged with differentiating instruction for each student, and we are glad to rise to the challenge. I consider it my calling to do everything in my power to see that each student in my class succeeds. This is a reachable goal when my class size is around 20 students. But some years class sizes have been closer to 30. This is frustrating not only for teachers, but also for students. Besides not having sufficient small group instruction (let alone one-on-one), there is also a lack of materials, space, etc.

I've heard of many districts going to 4 day weeks in order to solve budget concerns. Please keep class sizes small in the public schools. Thank you for your time.

Sent from my iPad

Doniece Gott

From: Carol Hutto <cmhutto52@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 20, 2017 4:20 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; House Finance
Subject: Budget Deficit Hearings

Hello,

I am a secondary school teacher in Soldotna. I teach science in level 7-12.

I urge your to work toward closing the budget gap in our state budget for school. This a serious and increase problem that needs a solution now.

Our kids are affected every day you do nothing. Less money means quite simply less goods and services available in our classrooms. There are many examples:

(1) Teaching science, for example, requires lab equipment and consumable materials. A hands-on STEM program requires materials and equipment to put you hands on. There are MANY high quality labs that I would love to do that I do not do in my classes simply because the money for materials is too great. Instead I chose labs that take minimal materials or I use online simulations. While they are good, they could be better.

(2) Technology is another big issue. In today's science classroom, using technology and learning how to use technology is essential to a well-educated, scientifically savvy population that can solve the problems of our future. Our kids need the best technology available. While our tech department does a valiant job trying to keep up with repairs and support, they can only do so much. We need more and better tech and tech support.

We are a state with many issues that require well trained, scientific mind to solve. We need ALASKAN minds to work on those problems. Those are OUR kids today.

Please consider any and all possible solutions to this budget crisis and know that supporting education is supporting the future of our state.

Carol Hutto

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Carol Hutto

Doniece Gott

From: Justine Pechuzal <jpechuzal@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2017 7:52 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee; House Finance
Subject: Education funding

Dear Finance Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to hear this public testimony about a very important issue.

I am an educator in Seward, Alaska. Last year I was the Fine Arts instructor for Seward Elementary and Middle School. I also substitute teach. I have worked in education, as an art educator, for seven years, doing a combination of short-term and long-term work, including artist residencies through out the state. In this time, I have seen many schools, and worked with many students from a diverse background.

I would like to ask you to support a fiscal plan that will close the state budget deficit and avoid major budget cuts that will hurt our students. In a small community such as Seward, it is easy to see the effects of lack of funding. Personalized attention is key to successful education. I would also love to see more funding to support the arts. These programs connect with kids' hearts. Already our district will only fund one specialized teacher position for the elementary school- which this year is music. The kids do not have an art teacher at all. When I was a kid, at my local public school, we had a full time art teacher, as well as a music program. This showed me that my community valued arts as an integral part of education.

Please invest in our state's future!

Thank you,
Justine Pechuzal

Doniece Gott

From: Ranada Hassemer <ranada@arcticbarnabas.org>
Sent: Saturday, February 25, 2017 9:20 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget deficit

Thank you for your time on this critical issue.

My name is Ranada Hassemer. I have taught in Wisconsin for 23 years and this is my 9th year teaching as an interventionist and also test coordinator at Redoubt Elementary School in the Kenai Peninsula School District. Having taken 10 years off when our children were very young, I have been closely involved with education for over 40 years. Many teaching trends have come and gone, family dynamics have drastically changed, and the future for our youngsters is more unknown than ever before. As we try to prepare our students for their future, educators struggle as the jobs many of our students will be working in have yet to be created. We are preparing for the unknown. A daunting task. However, their need for solid basics of reading, math, and problem solving skills has not changed over the decades. Our school district is again talking of increasing the number of students per class which already has seen steady increase in recent years. Children are crossing the thresholds of our classrooms with greater needs than ever before. Not just educationally, but physically and emotionally as well. When our class sizes are continually increasing due to budget constraints, our students are hurting.

I ask you to support a fiscal plan that will close the state's budget deficit and avoid major cuts that will hurt our students.

Thank you again for your time,

Ranada Hassemer
960 Keystone Drive
Soldotna, AK. 99669
907-394-8466

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Paul Greci <paulgreci@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 14, 2017 6:21 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: do not cut public education

Dear Senators,

I am a long time Alaskan teacher and children's book author. Please do not cut public education. Please keep investing in our students. Today's children are tomorrow's leaders.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Paul Greci

Fairbanks, Alaska

Author of *Surviving Bear Island*

paulgreci.com

Surviving Bear Island

Doniece Gott

From: Donald Hennessey <corcel1951notas@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 14, 2017 5:07 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education

Dear Legislative Committee:

Class sizes have doubled. Funds are extremely limited. Positions are not being filled. It is a burden on the students. Please reconsider any cuts to education. Thank yo.

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Jennifer Olson <JOlson@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2017 9:34 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Say No to the 5% Cuts to Public Schools - A Teacher Testimony

To the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Jennifer Olson and I am a second grade teacher at Paul Banks Elementary in Homer, Alaska. I would like to ask that you please support a fiscal plan that will close the state's budget deficit and avoid major budget cuts that will hurt our students. I have been a teacher in Alaska for seven years and I am very concerned about the state of our public education system. Since I first started teaching in Homer, I have seen our student to teacher ratio rise from 17:1 to 27:1 due to budget cuts. These cuts have also hurt our intervention programs (fewer intervention teachers, materials, and time), which are an absolutely essential part of ensuring our struggling students receive proper acquisition of early literacy skills. Because there are now fewer opportunities for intervention and our class sizes keep growing, the amount of time I get to work with students one-on-one and in small groups (which is key to meeting our students' individual needs, both academically and behaviorally) has dramatically decreased. We as teachers are doing everything we can with what very little we are given, but this is not how it should be. Public education is crucial to the success of every single one of the citizens of our state and it should be treated as a priority, not an inferiority.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Olson

Doniece Gott

From: Linda Horstman <Linda.Horstman@k21schools.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2017 4:39 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Education

Hello,

As you deliberate and make difficult budgetary decisions, I urge you to refrain from making any cuts to public education in Alaska. As an Alaskan educator with 34 years experience, I know that local school districts (particularly rural and off the road system schools) cannot withstand any other cuts.

Students in Alaska deserve the best education we can possibly give them. Districts are making do with less to the point that there is no more making do.

Support the children of Alaska. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Linda Horstman
Ketchikan

--

Linda Horstman
Title 1 Teacher
Fawn Mountain Elementary

Doniece Gott

From: walkeralaska@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2017 4:15 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please don't cut education!

Please don't cut 5%! I am a parent and teacher at Seward Middle School. There is so much we go without: a librarian, a school counselor, a full-time principal. Please don't cut anything from our already minimal budget.

Sincerely,
Shelly Walker

Doniece Gott

From: jacquelyn sparrow <sparrowjd@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 9:19 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School funds

Why has the budget been released without

Sent from my iPad

Doniece Gott

From: Sarah Fineman <sarahbbbb@me.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 9:17 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School funding

I am shocked and appalled to hear that you are considering cutting funding to schools in you new budget. This is unacceptable. Students and teachers have faced cuts and shouldered this lack of funding responsibility in their education for several years.

Fund our schools.

Support our teachers.

Our future leaders deserve the resources. Do not short education!

I vote and I am watching.

Find our schools well.

Sarah Fineman
Anchorage Alaska
99508

Doniece Gott

From: Brittany Sofia <brittany.sofia@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 9:14 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education Cuts

Finance Committee Members:

In response to the proposed further cuts to education I want to pose a question. What kind of education do you want for the children of Alaska?

I'm a K-1 elementary school teacher in Anchorage. My personal K-12 education was in rural Minnesota. Every school bond passed. The community supported education leading to small class sizes, extra curricular activities, high quality teachers, and opportunity. When a student walks into a school they feel how much they matter. The state of the building, the amount of time adults are able to spend with them, and the feeling of safety and respect. I was told I mattered in my education in Minnesota. The buildings were top of the line and I had many choices in classes. Teachers were able to meet with me, listen to me, and support my growth.

Throughout my 12 years of teaching in Anchorage I've seen the cuts on education lead to unsafe school - students with behavioral and mental health needs are not getting the support they need and are in the general ed schools. I've seen the supports to the classroom plummet. How can we infuse technology if it is too old to work and no one is their to manage it?

I worked within the Portland Public School system and saw first hand the effect of high class size and the lack of PE or Library. Cutting education budgets doesn't work. They only dismiss children's opportunities and limit their growth potential.

The question I pose to you again is: What kind of education do you want for the children of Alaska?

I hope you consider this question. Please reflect upon it within your hearts and minds.

Sincerely,

Brittany Bauman
K-1 Teacher Anchorage

Feel free to contact me with questions or a response.

3704 Arkansas Dr., Anchorage, AK 99517
907-230-0847

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Brittany Sofia <brittany.sofia@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 9:14 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education Cuts

Finance Committee Members:

In response to the proposed further cuts to education I want to pose a question. What kind of education do you want for the children of Alaska?

I'm a K-1 elementary school teacher in Anchorage. My personal K-12 education was in rural Minnesota. Every school bond passed. The community supported education leading to small class sizes, extra curricular activities, high quality teachers, and opportunity. When a student walks into a school they feel how much they matter. The state of the building, the amount of time adults are able to spend with them, and the feeling of safety and respect. I was told I mattered in my education in Minnesota. The buildings were top of the line and I had many choices in classes. Teachers were able to meet with me, listen to me, and support my growth.

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I worked within the Portland Public School system and saw first hand the effect of high class size and the lack of PE or Library. Cutting education budgets doesn't work. They only dismiss children's opportunities and limit their growth potential.

The question I pose to you again is: What kind of education do you want for the children of Alaska?

I hope you consider this question. Please reflect upon it within your hearts and minds.

Sincerely,

Brittany Bauman
K-1 Teacher Anchorage

Feel free to contact me with questions or a response.

3704 Arkansas Dr., Anchorage, AK 99517
907-230-0847

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Sallie Rediske <sallierediske@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2017 8:22 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public school funding, etc.

To the Finance Committee:

Rapid cutting to our social fabric including public schools, public media, the university system, public transportation and DOT will not save this state. We cannot cut our way out of this mess we find ourselves in. We will have nothing left to support a robust citizenry that provides us with the necessities of a quality life: healthcare, education, roads, access to law enforcement, and an educated pool of employees. Continuing to cut these programs and services will result in an exodus out of Alaska by those seeking a better quality of life for their families and a reduction in those choosing to come to Alaska - either for permanent residence or for travel because of the limitations imposed by such cuts. Continuing forward with such cuts is dragging Alaska backward instead of to the future of a healthy, sound, well-diversified economy that is more resilient to fluctuations in the global oil market.

The funding needs to be found by restructuring the tax on oil companies and a fair and equitable taxation, both income and sales tax.

Sincerely,

Sallie W. Rediske
Homer

Doniece Gott

From: Rachael Hannah <rachaelmhannah@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2017 10:29 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please do not Reduce Education Budgets

Dear Senators,

My name is Rachael Hannah, and my family and I moved to Anchorage (2015) to raise our children near extended family. I am writing this email regarding two budget reduction issues; Early Childhood education resources and UA budget.

Early Education Resources; As a mom of a son who had hearing issues in infancy and speech delays; the ability for us to take our son to Lake Otis Elementary Pre-K program has been transformative. In the past year while in Ms. Kline's Pre-K room our son has blossomed. This wonderful play-based education setting has encouraged him to speak more and "tell" us stories of his day. Prior to this Pre-K opportunity he was not engaging others by speaking and was at risk for a difficult kindergarten experience. Lake Otis has a wonderfully diverse student body and has given my son the opportunity to have many friends now that will help him continue to engage with others as he continues with his education. He is exploring reading and trying new words, because of the wonderful opportunity of the Pre-K program. I know we are not alone as parents that are extremely thankful that Alaskan resources have been devoted to Early Education Resources for the future leaders of our state.

UA Budget: As a Professor of Biology at UAA I love working with the amazing minds of the students that I work with everyday. I was hired to implement our introductory biology course for majors using current best educational practices. Our students have prospered with the teaching methods that we employ in this course. For example from 2012 to Spring 2015 the student success rate was ~46% (C or better); since Fall 2015 (when I was hired) our student success rate is now 90%. We didn't make the course easier, we made it available for all students to explore the material and provided means for success. We are now at a critical juncture with these students. Our Biology department has lost many strong faculty (17) that could have provided upper-level hands on research opportunities to these students. Now many students are faced with the question "now what" in regards to continuing their training as biological scientists. We need the funds to create these courses, and to provide resources for student education that allows their minds to explore the challenges that face our environment and humanity. I am thankful that I am able to work with such a diverse population at UAA as the only way we can tackle the challenges that lie ahead for Alaskans is through their ingenuity. As an educator and scientist I cannot help them create mental tools for this if I do not have the resources for their education.

If necessary, to support these budgets, I would be willing to pay an income tax or reduce my permanent dividend funds.

Thank you for reading this email and for your thoughtful consideration of these budget cuts. I ask for your continued support for educational resources in Alaska. As through education we can build an amazing sustainable future for our children's children.

Sincerely,
Rachael Hannah

Doniece Gott

From: Nancy Mendenhall <mendenhallnancy01@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 3:56 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education budget

i am a retired educator, and have lived and worked in education in rural Alaska since 1961, at Nome since 1973. i will repeat what you have heard so many times: if you are concerned for the long-range health of our state and its families, education is not the place to make cuts. Please at least hold onto the basic per-pupil allotment and the transportation budget. How are children going to have an education at least as good as other industrialized nations if we can't hold to that? How are children going to be safely sent to school if we don't provide buses? Can we really expect kids in Alaska to walk up to 1 1/2 miles in winter, as set forth in our district's policies? Our district is already expecting to cut PE teachers, librarians, aides, admin. positions, and not fill vacant positions, before looking at your most recent larger proposed cuts. Please don't send us back to the standards of the 1960-70s. Let Alaskans help pay for services like every other state's citizens through a state tax, preferably an income tax. Thank you for taking my comments into consideration

Nancy Mendenhall
<http://nancydanielsonmendenhall.strikingly.com>

Doniece Gott

From: Patricia Abney <paabney@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 3:31 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Cathy Giessel
Subject: Education funding

Please don't kill our children and states future by not funding Education. Please look to a bright future with a sustainable economy. The university is a strong economic engine providing Well educated citizens who add to our economy. Education is our future!!

Sincerely

Pat Abney
5800 E 142 Ave
Anchorage
99516

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Virginia Evens <halibut@gci.net>
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 2:34 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Bert Stedman; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Subject: Opposition to Senate Finance Committee substitute to SB 22

Honorable Senators,

I am writing in opposition to the last minute substitution for SB 22 by the Senate Finance Committee.

I am advocating for an opportunity for public testimony on any action taken by the Senate Finance Committee regarding BSA/Pupil Transportation, as well as any additional cuts to education.

I am also an advocate for:

1. Priority Funding for Education - The State of Alaska must provide timely, reliable, and predictable revenue for schools, funding the true cost of education across the state for all initiatives, laws, and mandates that require additional services.
2. A Revenue Enhanced Fiscal Plan - Alaska needs to develop and implement a long-term multi-revenue fiscal plan.

I am opposed to cost shifting state expenditures responsibilities to local governments.

Sincerely,

Ginger Evens
PO Box 585
Petersburg, AK 99833

Doniece Gott

From: Sarah Merrick <2007merrick@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 2:34 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education cuts

Dear Finance Committee Members,

You have got to be kidding me? A 97% cut to education? I am a teacher in the MatSu School District. Do you have any idea what that would do to the quality of education for our children? The classrooms aren't big enough for the 100 children each teacher would have. Do you want our children taught by robots?

You need to put your creative thinking caps on and come up with some cuts somewhere else to balance your budget, or you may have a massive exodus of population from the state because parents value their children's education. Or all the teacher's would leave the state because of the impossible task you would be putting on them. Then who would teach the children?

Your problem may be solved when you don't have any teachers or students left to teach.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Merrick

Dena'ina Elementary School Teacher

Wasilla, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Robin Solfisburg <rsolfisburg@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 2:33 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 22 - School Budget

House Finance Committee,

I am writing to request that an opportunity for public testimony be taken by the Senate Finance Committee regarding the BSA/Pupil Transportation items or any additional cuts to education. It is important to hear what these cuts mean to Alaskans and allow them the opportunity to voice concerns about any cuts made to our Education Program.

Sincerely,
Robin Solfisburg
rsolfisburg@gmail.com
Skagway, Alaska

Doniece Gott

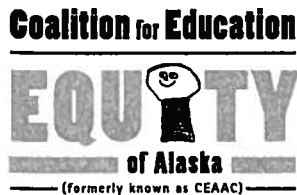
From: Miss Trasky <nunugrrl@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 1:32 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please do not cut funding to education!

To whom it may concern,

Our children are our future, and without a quality, WELL FUNDED, PUBLIC education they have no future if their own. Our public schools educate all at their level and do not force religion down their throats. Please fully fund (or add extra funding to!) public education. Cuts hurt our kids.

Thank you and have a nice day,
Tracy Trasky

Sent from my iPhone



My name is Sarah Sledge. I am a resident of Anchorage and I am the executive director of the Coalition for Education Equity, which is a statewide organization dedicated to ensuring all Alaska children have a

meaningful opportunity to be educated.

Our organization fought and settled the Moore vs. State of Alaska lawsuit. In its decision, the Court found that the State had not met its constitutional responsibility to "maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State". The Court had set four requirements for compliance with the Education Clause, which are: 1) constitutionally adequate set of educational standards, 2) adequate assessments determining whether children were learning the standards, 3) adequate funding so as to accord to schools the ability to provide instruction in the standards, and 4) adequacy of State oversight and accountability. It was in this fourth prong that the State was found deficient.

The Coalition for Education Equity believes that a thriving state requires a successful education system. This means that we need a stable, sustainable, and predictable budget supported by diversified revenues. Further reductions to our education budget are not in the best interests of a successful education system and such cuts will, in fact, threaten the ability of our schools to provide instruction in the standards and the ability of the State Department of Education and Early Development to provide adequate oversight and accountability to our schools.

We support a comprehensive solution to our state's fiscal crisis, which does not include deeper cuts to education, but rather includes a restructuring of the permanent fund earnings and a combination of other revenue measures, like an income tax, to balance our budget and provide sustainability for our future.

In particular, we ask our legislature to:

- Stop further cuts to education and advocate for supports for those populations most in need;
- Create a forward-funded education system that reduces uncertainty for our local school districts as they make their funding decisions and plan their budgets;
- Hold pre-K funding steady, fund an additional \$1.2 million to continue pre-K programs at Moore schools, and to seek opportunities to expand pre-K to reach more of our children most in need of this support.

We appreciate the difficult work you have taken on and thank you for your service to our state and our children.

Thank you.

Sarah Sledge
Executive Director

Board of Directors

Daniel Walker
President

Norma Holmgaard
Vice President

Annemarie O'Brien
Secretary-Treasurer

Rayna Hartz
Executive Board Member

Sarah Sledge
Executive Director

Alaska Gateway School District

Aleutian Region School District

Anchorage School District

Bristol Bay Borough School District

Chatham School District

Hydaburg City School District

Iditarod School District

Kake City School District

Kashunamiut School District

Kuspuk School District

Lower Kuskokwim School District

Lower Yukon School District

Nenana City School District

Northwest Arctic Borough School District

Southeast Island School District

Saint Mary's City School District

Yukon Flats School District

Yupit School District

Cook Inlet Tribal Council

GCI

NEA-Alaska

Investing in Pre-K is One of the Best Investments Alaska Can Make

The Coalition for Education Equity believes that a thriving state requires a successful education system. This means that we need a stable, sustainable, and predictable budget supported by diversified revenues. We recognize that further reductions to our education budget are not in the best interests of such a successful education system and that cuts will, in fact, do damage to our education structure. The Coalition for Education Equity also acknowledges that opportunities for youth to come to school prepared to learn, and to leave school with the ability to pursue further education or a meaningful vocational occupation are obligations guaranteed in Alaska's constitution.

Among our chief priorities are:

- **Adequate investment in Alaska's public education system and public schools,** ensuring that the budget is not balanced on the backs of our children and our schools. We ask you to ensure that education funding sources are reliable and adequate and that funding decisions are made in a timely manner that enables school districts to plan efficiently and responsibly.
- **Secondly, we seek to ensure that pre-elementary funding be held steady and expanded,** so that all of Alaska's children have a strong foundation when they start kindergarten.

The Case for Pre-Elementary Programs

We believe one of the most important questions we should be asking is not "should we be funding pre-elementary programs in Alaska?" but rather, how can we get our quality pre-elementary programs to more of our children? For years there has been a significant amount of research available that demonstrates the critical benefits of pre-elementary programs.

High quality pre-elementary programs consistently demonstrate "moderate to large impacts on children's school experiences":

- Reduce referrals to special education
- Reduce rates of grade retention
- Higher school achievement
- Higher high school graduation rates

They have also been shown to have long-term impacts on socio-economic, behavioral, and health conditions of participants:

- Employment
- Increased earnings
- Reduced rates of criminal activity
- Reduced rates of teen and single motherhood

In fact, the long-term impacts are great enough that investing in pre-k is one of the best investments we can make. National, long-term studies demonstrate that investment in the developmental growth of at-risk children is one of the most effective strategies for economic growth, even during a budget crisis:

“Short term costs are more than offset by immediate and long-term benefits through reduction in the need for special education and remediation, better health outcomes, reduced need for social services, lower criminal justice costs and increased self-sufficiency and productivity among families,” (from *Invest in early childhood development: Reduce deficits, strengthen the economy*, James J. Heckman).

In one study, the estimated return on investment was \$7 for every dollar invested in public preschool. Other studies showed a 7-13% per year return on investment. And the College Board, which represents 6,000 of the world’s leading educational institutions, lists pre-K for all three and four-year olds first among its ten recommendations for increasing college enrollment.

Moore et al. v. State of Alaska

In the Moore case, the Court found that the State had given “inadequate consideration of pre-Kindergarten and other intensive early learning initiatives designed to address the unique educational challenges faced by students in Alaska’s chronically underperforming school districts.” Indeed, the failure to address the issues of access to high quality pre-kindergarten was puzzling given the wealth of knowledge regarding the long-term academic and socioeconomic benefits of access to high quality pre-kindergarten for at-risk students.

Multiple witnesses in the case from both the plaintiffs and the State consistently agreed on the importance of early childhood education. John Holst, called as a witness by the State, testified that many students in remote and underperforming Alaska schools arrive to kindergarten several years behind their same-age peers in academic readiness. As a result, struggling schools are asked not only to provide these students with access to the skills and experiences covered in a kindergarten curriculum, but also to help them make

years of academic progress during a single school year. Frequently, these students are unable to ever catch up.

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond explained in her testimony that high-quality early childhood education is particularly important to meeting the needs of students in chronically struggling schools and districts. She stated:

“High quality early childhood education can expand the amount of influence that schools have on student achievement. Because by closing the achievement gap substantially before students start school, they put the students who would normally be lower achieving on a more successful school trajectory.”

As a result, a portion of the Moore Settlement provided funds for two-year kindergarten and early literacy programs. These funds were distributed through grants and were available to the 40 schools with the lowest performance and demonstrating community support for the program. To date, 32 of these schools have received grants over 4 years, totaling close to \$9 million. This is the final year (2017-2018) of grant distribution and there is currently no replacement funding.

High Quality Pre-K

Research shows that to reap these short- and long-term benefits of pre-elementary programs, they need to be high-quality programs. Common elements of high-quality, effective programs include:

- Intervention at an early age/two-year programs (3-4 year olds)
- Highly qualified, well-compensated teachers/staff
- Maintained small class sizes and low child-teacher ratios
- Minimum number of contact hours (at least 2 ½ per day)
- Component aiding transition to kindergarten
- Parent involvement component/intentional interaction between teachers and children and their families

Alaska's Pre-Elementary Program

Alaska has one of the highest rated pre-K programs in the country – we were one of only four states to meet all ten National Institute for Early Education Research benchmarks in 2013. Yet, in Alaska, only around 10% of our children are enrolled in pre-K, compared with 28% average enrollment nationally. And unfortunately, we were one of only 3 states to cut pre-K funding in 2014, while 7 states maintained and 30 increased their investment in pre-K. We have not increased our funding since.

Our most recent data shows that nearly 70% of our current-year kindergarten students were not able to meet developmental goals that would be considered age appropriate for kindergarten entry. How can we get our quality pre-elementary programs to more of our children?

From the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Early Childhood Programs 2017 Program Report (attached):

“In many of Alaska’s public schools and communities, young children are entering school with limited assets to ensure full success in school...The Alaska Pre-Elementary Program is designed to bring parents, educators, and their communities together to achieve school readiness for Alaska’s preschoolers.

The purpose of the Alaska Pre-Elementary Grant Program is to promote school readiness and positive outcomes for participating children and to inform the longer-term implementation of universally accessible, affordable, mixed delivery, high-quality early care and education. The preschool programs are to provide a voluntary, comprehensive, half day preschool program for four and young five year olds (five year old children who do not meet the cutoff date for Kindergarten entry).

DEED is specifically interested in providing targeted support based on local community design. In July of 2016 DEED awarded 14 locally designed grants to school districts. While each program is unique grantees are required to demonstrate commitment and outcomes based on shared goals and activities.”

Alaska pre-elementary program goals and activities:

- 1) Promote school readiness on positive outcomes in all areas of child development, build strong early childhood literacy, and align with the goals of their districts.
- 2) Identify and provide support for Alaska’s children who are most in need of support.
- 3) Maximize parental choice and continuity of care; encourage community-based collaboration with mixed delivery system of early learning support (including state, federally funded, private, and non-profit early learning environments).
- 4) Support use of child reliable and valid assessment systems and tools; ensure programs are effectively measuring children’s progress; use assessment information to inform practice and policy decisions.

- 5) Support transition of pre-elementary children to Kindergarten through partnership and strong school and family relationships. Build ongoing, long lasting, trusting relationships with parents.
- 6) Ensure early childhood professionals have excellent preparation, ongoing professional development, and compensation commensurate with their qualifications and experience.

Grantee districts are also asked to ensure that other federal, grant, and private funds can be leveraged to provide, to the best extent possible, more-pre-elementary slots for children. As a result, these grants to 14 school districts directly serve 358 students, but enable these districts to braid and leverage funding to extend services to a total of 1206 students.

Children served in these programs are making impressive gains in development and learning, showing growth between fall and spring assessments in cognitive development, language development, literacy development, and mathematics. Additional outcome data is becoming available from school districts demonstrating longer-term benefits – students who attended state funded pre-K programs are outperforming their peers who did not receive any preschool in 2nd and 3rd grade assessments.

Investing in Alaska's pre-elementary programs is one of the most critical investments we can make in the future success of our state. The Coalition for Education Equity asks our legislators to hold pre-K funding steady, increase pre-K funding amount to continue pre-K programs at Moore schools, and to seek opportunities to expand pre-K to reach more of our children most in need of this support.

Coalition for Education Equity – Position on Revenue for 2017 Legislative Session

The Coalition for Education Equity believes that a thriving state requires a successful education system. This means that we need a stable, sustainable, and predictable budget supported by diversified revenues. We recognize that further reductions to our education budget are not in the best interests of such a successful education system and that such cuts will, in fact, do damage to our fragile education structure. The Coalition for Education Equity also acknowledges that opportunities for youth to come to school prepared to learn, and to leave school with the ability to pursue further education or a meaningful vocational occupation are obligations guaranteed in Alaska's constitution.

To this end, the Coalition for Education Equity supports the following actions:

- Continued support of a robust foundation formula that reflects the diverse needs and interests of our Alaskan residents – regardless of where they live or their particular needs;
- Stop further cuts to education and advocate for supports for those populations most in need;
- Create a forward-funded education system that reduces uncertainty for our local districts as they make their funding decisions and plan their budgets;
- Continue to support pre-k and early childhood education to prepare youth for learning.

To meet these goals, the coalition supports certain revenue measures including:

- Ending corporate tax subsidies and rebates that could cost the state potentially over \$700 million annually
- Use of up to 5% of the annual earnings of the Permanent Fund to support general operations of the state government.
- A statewide income tax or similar revenue measure to further ensure a stable funding stream for state expenses, including education.
- Supports increases in user fees and incidental taxes on alcohol, fuel, mining, and other similar items where those taxes have not been altered in many years

Together these measures may generate as much as \$3.5 billion – offsetting the current anticipated budget deficits.

The Coalition for Education Equity acknowledges and supports efforts at diversifying our economy to further sustain our budget revenues, identifying efficiencies in government that do not compromise local control, and the development of alternative fuels and other energy sources to reduce the cost of energy in rural Alaska.

KENAI LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Kenai_LIO@akleg.gov

Phone: 907-283-2030 / Fax: 907-283-3075

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| NAME: | <u>Debbie Cary</u> | |
| REPRESENTING: | <u>Self</u> | |
| BILL # or SUBJECT: | <u>SB 22</u> | |
| COMMITTEE: | <u>SFIN</u> | DATE: <u>3-17-17</u> |

Yes, I would agree that parts of the education program are broken but that doesn't mean that we scrap the whole thing and start over. It is time to start looking at innovative ways to ensure that every student receives the education that is best for them. Not every student is college bound, so we need to explore technical schools, we need to explore alternative goals on how we deliver education to all students. Ensuring all students are ready for the dynamic world they will be entering.

Please fund education. Let's work together on finding ways to fix the problems but in the meantime, let's work together on educating our children.

Respectfully,

Debbie V. Cary

KENAI LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Kenai_LIO@akleg.gov

Phone: 907-283-2030 / Fax: 907-283-3075

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| NAME: | <u>Debbie Cary</u> | |
| REPRESENTING: | <u>Self</u> | |
| BILL # or SUBJECT: | <u>SB 22</u> | |
| COMMITTEE: | <u>SFIN</u> | DATE: <u>3-17-17</u> |

Dear Budget & Education Committee,

I am asking you to fund education. Education is the single most important responsibly the state has. I have been a parent with children in Ninilchik School for 26 years. When I moved here in 1990 one of the main draws was the school. I came from Santa Rosa California with a 16, 14 & 11-year-old. All three of them graduated. Two on the Kenai Peninsula and one in Anchorage school district. I currently have a 12 & 16-year-old at Ninilchik School. I am proud of the fact my 16-year-old has had the opportunity to go to the same school for her entire schooling year. Sabrina spent 2 years in Pre-K at Ninilchik and is currently a Junior at Ninilchik School. My 12-year-old, Olivia, has also been at Ninilchik School for all of her schooling years also, Although, she had a tough time in Kindergarten, because of bullying, and dropped out for a year. She has made and continues to make tremendous strides because of the teachers at Ninilchik. I would hate to have to drive her an hour away for the next four years to finish her high school years. The reality is if we don't fund education and offer enough classes for her to graduate that is exactly what will happen. I'm not here to pull on your Heartstrings I am simply here to ask you to fund education, not only fund education but to also forward fund a sustainable plan so we don't go through this every year. Education is the single most important resource that the state of Alaska has if we don't educate our children we will never solve the problems of the state.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, under the supervision of Sean Dusek, his staff and the school board, has done a tremendous job in cutting expenses while still leaving teachers in front of the classroom the Kenai Peninsula Borough is at a point now where not cutting teachers in front of the students is not an option if you don't fund education.

I hear people say all the time that this new generation thinks they're entitled to everything. Well, I personally think that they're entitled to an education. I think they are entitled to the same type of education that you and I received when we were young. For children to succeed they need us to BELIEVE in them. It is our responsibility to teach each individual child how to learn. We need to light the "spark" in each of our children, TEACHERS make that difference. Children are not just numbers, they are the future, they are the problem solvers, they are the greatest asset this state has. The most important crucial element of a young person's life is EDUCATION.

John Dewey said, "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself"

To cut education funding to solve the fiscal crisis this state is in is wrong the children did not create the problem. Yet, we are expecting them to be the ones to do without. To do without a teacher in the classroom, to do without access to supplies and resources to ensure they succeed. We need to step up and forward fund a sustainable education plan.

KENAI LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Kenai_LIO@akleg.gov

Phone: 907-283-2030 / Fax: 907-283-3075

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| NAME: | Olivia Ferguson | |
| REPRESENTING: | Self | |
| BILL # or SUBJECT: | SB 22 | |
| COMMITTEE: | SFIN | DATE: 3-17-17 |

Dear Education Committee,

Hi my name is Olivia Ferguson and I am a 7th grade student at Ninilchik k-12 School, like many small rural schools we are underfunded and under staffed. I aspire to do great things with my life as many others do, but how can my peers and I do so when we don't have the teachers to teach us?

It is true that we can go to an online system, but that isn't fair on the students. We need social connections in the real world not the digital world. If we want to do great things with our lives, we need real human interaction not the social interaction between a human and a device.

I have always been taught that one must truly earn happiness not it be handed to you. By teaching students at a young age that the only social connection you need is on a screen leads us to a digital age, where instead of human beings there will be creatures that thrive off of likes and followers.

But we can turn away from that. Teachers, we need real teachers. Teachers are the unsung heroes. They are role models for many and for many others the only role model. Taking away those role models is like taking away one's will to thrive. By taking away that inspiration you're taking away the earth's way to move forward. We need teachers to do great things.

Please Fund education so we don't go into a world despair.

Thank you for your consideration from the future generation. Olivia Ferguson

Doniece Gott

From: Kurt Schmidt <prairiegrouse@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 5:28 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: No Budget cuts to education

Dear Senate Finance:

I do not approve of cuts to education, especially after the passage of SB 26 and the loss of inflation proofing the PERMANENT FUND, which you have now destabilized, after 37 years of stability.

After the Senate has written in the ability to take the entire account at whim, my faith in my representative government is at an all time low. It is the poor choices and underhanded maneuvers of misrepresentation that has caused this. Adversely affecting the futures of our young people is intolerable and unacceptable.

Your collective efforts at creating law is burning the candle at both ends, and the middle too.
I urge you to not make educational budget cuts, especially that SB 26 has been passed.

Sincerely,

Kurt Schmidt
Delta Junction

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Carolyn Gray <dcgray@mac.com>
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 5:06 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: 2018 education funding

I am writing to urge you to make no further cuts, to fully fund the proposed K-12 education budget including the student foundation formula and the school transportation budget. One major resource of teachers/professors/adjuncts as well as businesses and other Alaskans is access to the internet and public broadcasting as well as Public Education.

I recently found out that State Farm Insurance considers the entire state "rural" and therefore we conclude that we are lacking many types of medical services, transportation network, energy sources and variety of job opportunities in commerce (such as auto insurance adjusters etc.) and social services in Anchorage, Fairbanks, MatSu, Juneau and even more remote locations.

Consider the fact that many workers are flown up to Alaska by mining companies, transportation companies such as First Student, and other businesses that find it more convenient to keep flying their personnel to the Alaska from Seattle and beyond, thus avoiding having to hire Alaskans locally and contributing to a needed tax base.

We need to tax all people working in Alaska, out of staters as well as residents, with a state income tax. We should raise the 8 cent/gallon fuel tax on gasoline which is the lowest in the U.S. Revenue sources must be considered now not continuing multiple cuts to State agencies which provide Alaskans needed services and training to help residents take advantage of the resources and talents which can be developed with excellent post secondary educational institutions. The more citizens with a high level of employable skills the more income will come to the State with these taxes. There have already been many years of cuts which slow the processing of permits, have caused transfer of offices thus resulting in undesirable relocation of residents and a housing crisis. State hiring freezes as well as now Federal ones cause a stalling of the economy.

In conclusion, please focus on revenue enhancement, via taxation for all.

Thank you,
M. Carolyn Gray
399 Hillside Dr.
Fairbanks, AK 99712

Doniece Gott

From: Dave Avery <avery_dave@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 4:14 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Funding for Education

I, as well as many other teachers, have had enough. I have fought for schools for 29 years now and after the incredibly huge lack of support by your decisions, am quitting. I have been asked to do more every year with less, teach extremely large class sizes, and always fight another battle for money the next year. Shouldn't my time be spent on educating our kids? Tired of it. You will notice a larger than normal retirement number this year do to this. Having been Science department head for most of these years, I have seen a lot of very talented young teachers quit shortly after starting because they could see their future on the wall. Many kids have suffered since. Quality of teachers have dropped significantly. Yes it is directly related to funding and perception of support. I have been BP Teacher of the Year, runner up for the Presidential Award of Education in Math and Science Teaching, and received many other notable acknowledgements, grants, and awards. I would love to speak about how supportive my state has been as I travel around the country but can't.

Please give me a call if you have any questions, 907-529-6657.

What you do really determines the future of our students, staff, and those graduates who choose to stay in this great state. Many of your very best graduates leave and never want to enter the educational field here because of your track record. Please change the cycle.

Dave Avery