

St. Paul

St. George

Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Inc.

1131 E. International Airport Rd.
Anchorage, Alaska 99518-1408
Phone (907) 276-2700
Fax (907) 279-4351

Nelson Lagoon
False Pass
Belkofski
King Cove
Sand Point

Akutah

Unalaska

Nikolski

Atka

March 31, 2017

Senator Lyman Hoffman
State Capitol Room 518
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Senator Mike Dunleavy
State Capitol Room 11
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Senator Anna MacKinnon
State Capitol Room 516
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Senator Natasha von Imhof
State Capitol Room 514
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Senator Click Bishop
State Capitol Room 115
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Senator Donny Olsen
State Capitol Room 510
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Senator Pete Micciche
State Capitol Room 508
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: SATELLITE INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Dear Honorable Senators Hoffman, MacKinnon, Bishop, Micciche, Dunleavy, von Imhof, and Olson;

The Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association is a regional Tribal non-profit organization that represents 13 tribal communities in Alaska's Aleutian Pribilof Islands that covers an area of approximately 100,000 square miles, a region slightly larger than Virginia, Kentucky, and Maryland combined. The Aleutian Pribilof Islands Region is vast and remote, with each community being reachable only by boat and/or plane. Frequent inclement weather makes such travel a challenge. APIA wishes to express strong support for maintaining current funding levels for satellite infrastructure and public communications.

I have heard that the Senate Finance Subcommittee for Administration closed out their budget, proposing to zero out funding for public broadcasting and cutting the satellite funds by \$160,000. I realize sacrifices need to be made with the State's fiscal crisis. However, eliminating funds that support public broadcasting services at this time would put many of our rural communities at risk. Cutting funding for management and operation of the satellite infrastructure renders that system virtually inoperable.

The satellite system provides an integrated and efficient distribution system for ARCS, public television and public radio content to communities across Alaska. It runs on a bare minimum of funding from the State. The proposed cuts would eliminate what little support exists for the management of that system. It would also end the distribution of public radio and television signals statewide to translators in rural communities.

There would be significant public safety impacts. ARCS is an Emergency Relay Network, a key component in Alaska's Emergency Alert System (EAS) Plan, feeding real-time emergency alerts to individuals and organizations. Alerts from state and federal authorities are fed into the ARCS satellite signal and carried directly into the homes of ARCS viewers as well as commercial and non-commercial broadcasters EAS systems all across Alaska.

The ARCS system depends on KUAC, KAKM and KTOO for all of its public television programming, including most particularly Alaska Weather which rural residents depend on to plan travel and subsistence activities in some of the most extreme environments, in effect making daily life and death decisions. Some APIA communities have aging automated surface observing weather systems that are at times not operable and the news and weather programs are needed for forecasting air travel. Children's educational programs, important national and international news coverage, and Gavel to Gavel coverage of the legislature itself would be in jeopardy. Removing funds for these stations will reduce, weaken, and could even eliminate these vital programs.

Alaska's public communications systems are at the highest level of integration and inter-reliance in its history. Digital convergence is finally reaching many of the

Honorable Senators Hoffman, MacKinnon, Bishop, Micciche, Dunleavy, von Imhof, & Olson
March 31, 2017

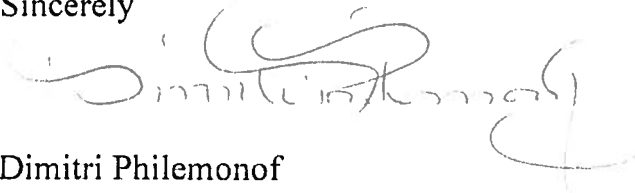
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most under-served villages in the country. It is critical that this system be fully deployed and continued so that it can serve the information needs of the people who live in our most remote communities. The new digital ARCS service is presently operating at 70 Alaskan sites. These proposed cuts will have a direct effect on rural viewers losing access to these essential program services just as rural Alaskans are finally able to see them.

As a policy matter, weakening Alaska's public communications services at a time when declining statewide economies will increase our resident's dependency on free-to-watch over the air television and radio for much of their news, weather and public safety information, could deprive them of these basic services which other Americans take for granted.

I humbly request that you consider maintaining current funding levels for satellite infrastructure and public communications for fiscal year 2018. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dimitri Philemonof", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

Dimitri Philemonof
President/CEO

Doniece Gott

From: Sue Scherwin <snowbirdsue2@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 02, 2017 1:27 PM
To: Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. Anna MacKinnon; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please do NOT cut funds for Alaska Public Media

Dear Alaskan Senators:

I write to request that you not cut the funds for Alaska Public Media from the state budget, for reasons essential to the welfare and safety of our state, some of which I shall try to articulate:

NPR and PBS provide community through communications, on local, state, and national levels. (Indeed, on a worldwide level, as they incorporate the CBC and BBC networks in their broadcasting.) Listeners receive access to accurate and balanced news reporting, as well as dialogue and debate on the many perspectives which lead to an understanding of one another: a unifying force across physical and cultural distances.

Through public media broadcasts, this huge state of ours is brought together in times of peace, celebration, and disaster. From "bush" Alaska to Southeast to Anchorage, residents can be thus informed of earthquakes and avalanches, PFD deadlines, health epidemics, power outages, election ballot candidates and initiatives, early warnings of potential disasters, local road conditions and school closures, to name a few. I am concerned that state cuts will put at risk the federal matching funds rural stations depend upon to receive and relay such critical information.

As a retired teacher, I appreciate the role of public media in education, from pre-school to continuing education, from science to the arts, especially as you consider budget cuts impacting our children in schools and the university.

As state and municipal legislatures consider changes to law and budgets, we citizens are kept informed through news summaries, interviews with our representatives, and by way of televised broadcasts of hearings and floor sessions.

As more and more emphasis is placed upon activities in the Arctic, Alaska Public Media will surely achieve greater prominence in the national broadcasting of issues and politics of the region.

But I think, for me, the greatest benefit of Alaska Public Media is the "sound of community." Just as the beauty of our surroundings and the lifestyles of our neighbors describe the place where we live, so too does public media become part of our Alaskan environment. Just as a map on a road trip identifies the countryside, so does public media give us a sense of where we are and who we are. After tuning in to other public media as I travel, I am extremely proud of the superior programming here at home, identifying us as Alaskans! We have an amazing resource: Alaska Public Media must be cherished and preserved. Please do not cut its funding.

I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan K. Scherwin
P. O. Box 449
Girdwood, Alaska 99587
(907) 783-2826

Doniece Gott

From: Penelope Wells <pawellsak@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 29, 2017 9:05 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: PROTECT OUR PUBLIC MEDIA!

Dear Members of the Alaska Legislature,

As a long time supporter of Alaska Public Media, I urge you not cut State funding and support public broadcasting. The State's small investment is approx. 7% of Alaska Public broadcasting's annual operational budget and certainly one of the best investments we as a society can make.

This funding is vital and helps local public radio and TV stations broadcast excellent programming in news/journalism, kid's education, documentaries, science, theater, music, weather, etc. and brings top notch quality entertainment from around the world. It also provides Early Warning Service in the wake of a disaster. First rate programs and services you can find nowhere else. Public broadcasting is essential and an integral part of our local communities and statewide. It is particularly indispensable to our under served rural communities in Alaska.

Again, protect our public radio and TV stations for the good and benefit of all.

Thank you.

Penelope Wells
1236 W 5th Ave
Anchorage
907 743-1960

Doniece Gott

From: Judith Cavanaugh <jcavanaugh@gci.net>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2017 12:15 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Funding for Public Broadcasting

Dear Finance Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support full funding for Alaska Public Broadcasting. As you must know, Public Broadcasting plays a vital role in the life of almost every Alaskan. We depend on it for our local, Alaskan, and national news. We need it to connect with each other and our communities.

As the federal funds for Public Broadcasting are also at risk, as Alaskans, we need YOU, our legislators, to show just how important it is to you and your constituents, so hopefully our national legislators will also follow suit.

I am a daily listener to KTOO radio, and I watch the PBS News Hour at least Monday-Friday. I also treasure the other programming (Nature, Nova, Frontline, Antiques Road Show just to name a few).

I feel Public Broadcasting provides the most objective and accurate information to Alaskans and all Americans.

I also financially proudly and regularly support Public Broadcasting in Alaska, and I will continue to do so. However, we also need our Alaskan State government to support this vital service to our Alaskan communities.

Thank you for your work and I urge you to support Public Broadcasting in Alaska!

Sincerely,

Judy Cavanaugh
2521 David Street
Juneau, AK 99801

907-463-3367

Doniece Gott

From: Bhree Roumagoux <bhree@ompainc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 7:55 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education

Dear Senators:

Cutting public education funding without public comment is disrespectful to your constituents and cowardly. Your approach to the budget and a 5% cut to education funding shows either a manipulative process or Senators out of touch with the people of Alaska. Or both.

I sincerely hope you open the FULL proposed budget for comment. And that you not cut education any more. We need a strong education system for the future of Alaska. Ask Sen. Costello how to approach this. Based on my recent conversations with her, she appears to have some moral fortitude and sensibility that the rest of you seem to be lacking on this issue.

While I generally respect the work you do, this was poorly done.

- Bhree

Bhree Roumagoux
7350 Kidron St
Anchorage AK 99502
907-249-6463

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Doniece Gott

From: Kari Gardey <kari@ak.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 12:41 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Sen. Kevin Meyer
Subject: stop cutting education!

Dear Finance committee,

It is time to stop cutting, especially the education budget. You have successfully cut out the fat from a series of significant cuts over the past few years, please move on to finding sources of new revenue. I would like to live in a state that continues to function and is vibrant. Further cuts to education will only diminish our state's ability to attract new businesses to invest in our state. Why would they? Our state legislature keeps cutting vital services and fails to support the future of our students. And we cannot wait for oil revenues to bail us out again. We need to diversify our sources of revenue.

No more cuts to the education budget please, for our future and for the strength of the state. Now is the time to look at the rest of us paying our share through an income tax or state tax in addition to using the permanent fund earnings. I want to live in a strong, robust state, continuing to cut is short-sighted. Everyone must pay their share, it's time.

Thank you,

Kari Gardey

7240 Stamps Cir

Anchorage, AK 99507

Doniece Gott

From: Freya Lhotka <freya.lhotka@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 9:46 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education Funding

Dear Finance Committee Members,

Thank you all for your service to our great state during this challenging time.

I respectfully request that you do not cut education funding. I understand that our state is in a budgetary crisis, but I believe that there are other ways to balance the budget. The majority of our state agrees that education should be a top priority and funds should come from elsewhere.

Please prioritize our state's future by funding education fully. We already have serious challenges attracting and retaining qualified teachers, especially in rural Alaska. Our students deserve bright futures!

Thank you very much,

Freya Holm Lhotka
Third generation Alaskan
Teacher, Kodiak Island

Sent from my iPad

Doniece Gott

From: Tamra Wear <tamra.wear@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2017 7:29 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please do NOT cut K-12 education

Dear Finance Committee,

I wanted to write to express my concern at talk of a 5% cut to K-12 education. Ours schools have been hit hard already and we should be looking out for our students and their future. Student engagement is a key factor in student success. As important as the core subjects are, I'm also a certified math teacher and LOVE math, students need other learning outlets at school. Principals should not have to decide which elective to cut in order to function under smaller and smaller budgets. While companies are still make billions in this state you'd think there was somewhere else the money could come from. Compromising our students' futures is not the solution!

Thank you for your time,

Tamra Wear

SOHI Librarian

Soldotna, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Christy Everett <christyeverett.personal@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2017 7:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education funding

Please hold a hearing for public testimony on the final funding for education. The funding amounts were not finalized prior to the previous public hearing on this issue. The public should be able to comment on the final proposal.

Although I realize Alaska is in a recession, cuts to education are very short-sighted, and counter-productive to economic stability in the long term. As a mother of five Alaskan-born sons, I know the importance of high quality education for our state. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely

Christine Everett
2308 Robinson Circle
North Pole, AK. 99705

Doniece Gott

From: Joe Banta <jbanta@mac.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 29, 2017 10:00 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education Funding

To Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

It is critically important for members of the Senate Finance Committee to understand that Alaska public education cannot withstand further reduction to the Base Student Allocation. Classroom sizes are growing beyond what students need to learn adequately. Support services are diminished and the needs for capital improvements to many schools are beyond belief. If we are to weather the current economic downturn in Alaska you must fulfill your responsibilities to work in a bipartisan manner to build new revenue streams to sustain Alaskan infrastructure – and nothing is more important than the educational needs of our children, our future. It will be especially important that you hold public hearings with your final budget, including education, so that Alaskans can ensure that you realize how much importance they place on the education of our children.

Reducing the BSA will result in actual layoffs for individuals currently employed in schools. The last thing our economy needs is to have more Alaskans facing unemployment. For the last few years, the Alaska legislature has avoided making the hard decisions by “kicking the can down the road” as if money will fall from the sky to keep our state functioning. It is past time for you to make the hard decisions to ensure that our schools provide children the education they deserve. These decisions should not include further erosion of the BSA, but may need to include a fair tax plan, as unpleasant as that may seem. Please...work with those across the aisle to come up with a fair and equitable tax plan to minimize impacts on our most important resource – our children.

We would like our comments entered into the record.

Janice and Joe Banta

Doniece Gott

From: Staci Cox <cox.staci@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 29, 2017 5:23 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: school budget

Dear Senators,

Please do not make additional cuts to education. We have a 7th and 5th grader in the Anchorage School District, and we are already so disheartened that our youngest child will not have the same middle school experience as our oldest. Due to current cuts, Anchorage has been forced to eliminate the middle school model next year. Our son's middle school experience has been exceptional, despite the fact that he attends a school with roof leaks and navigates trash cans that catch drips this time of year. I can't imagine what it will be like if additional cuts are made!

Our family has lived in Alaska for over 20 years. We are invested in this state: we own two homes here, we work here, and we contribute to the economy here. We had planned to retire here, but if our children do not have access to a quality public education we will not stay.

If you have any doubt about the great things happening in our public schools, please visit them personally so you can see for yourselves. Last Friday our son took part in a Model United Nations simulation at Romig Middle School. This Friday our daughter will participate in an Ellis Island simulation at Bowman Elementary School. Our children love school, and the quality of their education is our top priority.

Clearly our state cannot continue down its current path. It's time to solve our fiscal issues, and we are impressed by legislators who are brave enough to discuss income/sales taxes, PFD restructuring, or a school tax. We understand that these decisions come with personal risk, but hope that the long term fiscal issues of our state are more important than any short term political agendas.

Above all, please recognize that the budget you present reflects your values. I urge you to value our state's children above all else.

Thank you,

Staci Cox
Anchorage AK
Senate District N

Doniece Gott

From: Gretchen Nelson <glnelson19@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 02, 2017 10:04 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Alaskan voices should be heard

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to say that as an Alaskan resident I expect a very transparent public process when it comes to our state budget funding and spending decisions. We expect to know well ahead of time where the legislature will direct funds and cuts to the programs and agencies we rely on as citizens. And we expect an opportunity to give comment, (with plenty of notice to rearrange our schedules) on how those cuts will impact our lives. The funding for our education system in Alaska goes beyond the basic classroom of 27 students. It effects the social fabric of our communities and the student's decisions and actions well into their adult lives, as well as their family stability.

Therefor, strongly urge you to offer the opportunity for public testimony once line items for education funding are added to the budget - specifically the pieces that were missing when testimony was taken a few weeks ago.

Thank you for your support of Alaska's children, the future of our communities and state,
Gretchen Nelson
3039 Alder Cir
Anchorage, AK 99508

Doniece Gott

From: Jared & Doreen Schumacher <jd@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Saturday, April 01, 2017 10:13 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: A 5% cut to the education budget is a terrible idea

A 5% cut to the education budget is a terrible idea. Work to find a way to maintain funding for education. My Alaska-born children deserve the best shot they can get at a high quality public education, the proposed cuts will cause harm to Alaska's future.

Jared Schumacher
Wasilla, AK

Doniece Gott

From: COREY GILMORE <corey.gilmore@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2017 10:42 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: TESTIMONY to the Senate Finance Committee on 3/16/17

To Whom it may concern,

Attached is my testimony that I would like to submit to the Senate Finance Committee. I testified on 3/16/17 regarding the Dayhab Reductions that would affect me negatively.

Thank you,

Corey GILMORE

Hello, my name is COREY GILMORE and I'm here to speak on behalf of myself and my partner , who is not here today, regarding the proposed Dayhab Reductions. I moved to Alaska to be with my partner, Sabrina and to build a life together. When I came here I realized that it was possible for me to make a difference in the community through Dayhab. I am blessed to have a partner who believes that it's important to do the same. She and I love children and we are committed to making a difference in their lives and in the community around us. I know I dont look like someone who has trouble seeing but I do have a low vision problem that makes seeing all of you at such a distance difficult. This means that it is not safe for me to go out alone in the community because I also lack peripheral vision. And being in a wheelchair affects my depth perception. The result is that I have run off sidewalk curbs because I didn't see them. Reduction in Dayhab, even at 12hrs. will mean that there are days when we cannot take part in the community. And sitting around the house doing nothing, when we could be making a positive difference in our lives and the lives of others, is just not okay.

I added up just the things that my partner and I do together. This includes things like volunteering at an integrated preschool with children who have language difficulties. We help teach basic skills so that these children who can't communicate correctly now can become productive members of society. We also help teach youth group to children between the ages of kindergarten and second grade. Here, our job is to do the Bible story each week. We also take part in the CANVAS several times a week. In the summertime we teach Vacation Bible School. If you add all this up it comes to 22 1/2 hours a week and we haven't gone grocery shopping yet and we haven't had a date night which is important for our relationship. So my question is, if Dayhab gets reduced how do we decide "who" not to help? Who is going to explain to the children that we work with that we can't be there? They won't understand it and the truth is, we don't understand it. Nothing drives me more crazy than the idea that someone can say that we are too active in the community. Are we seriously contemplating not being able to go out and therefore, struggling with depression? Who does this make sense to?

All of the activities that we engage in give our life meaning and purpose. We work with children because we feel a responsibility to help lift them up and let them know that someone cares. We do not know their situation at home. We do know that we need to be there and that is why Dayhab is so important. We need assistance to safely be in the community. And just so everyone here knows, I will be giving back my PFD because I think it's hypocritical of the state to say there's a budget crisis and yet give us all money to spend. I would give any amount of money to save my ability to be in the community and to help the children we work with., because as I said, we need to be there.

Thank you,

Corey Gilmore

Sent from my iPad

Doniece Gott

From: Pat and Jen <jenandpat@gci.net>
Sent: Sunday, April 02, 2017 8:38 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please support community-based support services

Please do not cut funding for community-based support services. Protect housing assistance and homeless shelters, benefits for low income seniors, Pioneer homes, assisted living, substance abuse and mental health treatment, job supports, community health programs, family caregiver and natural supports, case management, crisis intervention, education and training for providers and caregivers, peer support, and transportation services.

§ Please enact a fiscal plan that provides enough revenues to maintain critical services.

§ Community-based services keep people stable and out of expensive institutional care-such as hospital emergency rooms, psychiatric hospitals, nursing homes, and prison.

§ Without community supports, a family can lose their ability to care for aging or disabled family members at home.

§ Community services provide jobs for health care professionals and paraprofessionals, all of whom contribute to a healthy workforce and strong Alaskan economy.

§ The state will pay either way-on the back-end for expensive institutional care, or on the front-end for less expensive community supports.

Facts and Figures

§ Community behavioral health treatment and rehabilitative services cost 20-50% less than a psychiatric hospital for people with severe mental illness.

§ Community support services for seniors can cost half to one-fourth less than nursing home care.

§ For a person not on Medicaid, the cost of nursing home care can be over three times the cost of being served at home and in the community.

§ Alaskans transitioning from corrections, juvenile justice, or therapeutic court programs are more likely to remain crime-free when community supports are available for them.

Thanks so much for all you do for our great state.

Best,

Jenny Malecha

18224 Point Stephens Road

Juneau, AK 99801

907-957-0801

Doniece Gott

From: Nick Durbin <nidurbin@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 31, 2017 6:24 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Income Tax bad

I do not want an Income tax! I work two jobs 64-76 hours a week to barely make ends meet! I think this will be a bad idea and make the economy worse! I would rather see a sales tax! So it's equal to everyone special during the tourism season! I would rather see the pfd go first as well! Sincerely an Alaska of 22 years.

-Nicholas P. Durbin
6310 North Talgach View Drive
Wasilla, AK 99654

Doniece Gott

From: winforhim@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, March 29, 2017 10:05 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee; House Finance; Rep. Cathy Tilton
Subject: HB 115 Testimony

Dear Elected officials,

“We the people!” There are no more powerful words in our society than these words. The people’s voice is the cornerstone to every part of our society regardless of money or stature of a person. We are not like other countries in the world where the people simply accept what government gives them and hope the government is generous. I oppose any taxes of any kind until state government has been structured where the people can afford the level of government with current revenue the state receives. The people of our nation stand on liberty and freedom individually instead of dictatorship or socialism. Our state since the first governor (William Egan), has demanded that the people of Alaska know that their government was nothing like any other state in the nation. When our state drafted our constitution, and approved that document, it is clear that the people’s voice would always echo from the lands of this state and have the ultimate authority how our state supports Alaskans. I wished I could say that our state is honoring that commitment today, but I simply cannot see that occurring any longer; especially with the notion that taxing Alaskans and the spending of this state over several decades that has driven people away from this great state and generated those left as forgotten and ignored.

I speak the words above first as a platform to my email today to the house body of our state in regards to the HB 115. The people of this state should be heard and the government should be trusted to act on the voice of the people not simply appease in public forums but in action. I could simply write about the adverse conditions that Governor Walker’s reduction of the 2016 PFD has made on individual household funding, economy, stealing, or even placing some areas in this state on the brink of collapse. The PFD belongs to the people not just elected officials and any form of PFB structure should be brought to the people for vote at the ballot box. The PFD affects every Alaskan and every Alaskan should be heard fully by vote to any changes to the PFD. The “P” stand for permanent but for it also stands for people’s dividend fund and not the government. Just taking the PFD in half alone has taxed a family of four at 4,000 dollars. In addition, taxing more on families with income tax, sales tax, and other taxes would give an average Alaskan family over 7,000 to 8,000-dollar burden. Where are those families getting this income or your view extra income they have available to them? Where do you people live and not noticing that Alaska is in a recession, people are losing their jobs, unemployment in this state is still almost 7%, and companies are not investing in our state on any major level in any industry. Why should Alaskan families be asked to sacrifice their well-being and government offer not one sacrifice or not even try to reduce true government spending not just smoke and mirror reductions. I could dig deeper in these areas and I know the senate and house have heard all of these in great detail in committees and in public town hall meetings across this state. Personally, I have heard the outcry of the proposed taxes at my place of employment, social media, church, restaurants, and other places that my family are exposed. Just this week a Dettman pole revealed that a majority of Alaskans do not want any taxes until government is reduced to a place of sustainment. It simply has been a tragedy in the voice of the people in which I interact on a routine basis and a majority of them have no idea where the reductions have happened, why more reductions have not occurred. It simply has been disappointing to my circle of influence that our state government would turn their backs, close their eyes, and plug their ears of the people they serve. Furthermore, our elected officials think they have a right to be punitive to people at the sweep of a pen or one person sub-committee.

Breaking the backs of Alaskans to balance an unsustainable budget in government is not what our founding leaders of this state would have tolerated or accepted. Alaskans have always been a free-spirited people and we always side on liberty and freedom that this great land has provided each one of us in so many ways. The affordable level of state government is simply a reflection of the commitment that was made to Alaskans many years ago, that we would always come first regardless of the circumstances we found ourselves. The word taxes or fees in that name of helping Alaskans is simply not a slogan or passive identifier. Rather it signifies a deep understanding between the people and government that we are in this together and everyone will always benefit from the resources of our state. To unilaterally take that commitment from the people makes it clear that government no longer wants to walk beside the people of Alaska but rather remove its commitment in a divorce without any ballot box cast from the other side. The tax mentality will reflect our values of this state more than just money and show our future generations that they will no longer be debt free in their lifetime and government will be the one that wins every time and the people will be losers. What is about to happen is the state government officials will be picking winners and losers and the losers will be the private sector and families barley hanging on in this deep recession. It reflects who we are and what we are like no other state in the union. The income tax will stand as a reminder that all Alaskans do not matter regardless of who you are, where you live in this state, or what your ethnic identification. The income tax or any other tax does not unite Alaskans like no other issue and it assures the next generations that common ground cannot be found because we do not desire to reach across caucus lines for the mutual benefit of all Alaskans. The idea of taxes is too large to be decided in the halls of Juneau and must be taken to the streets, the villages, the cities and towns of this state. Every voice in this state must have a say on something that truly speaks to everyone in this state. The idea of taking money from the people must be heard by all voting before Governor Walker's pen touch the lives of so many. This issue is about restoring confidence in our government and the people witness that government does not have the final say, we do!

Like so many Alaskans before me, I stand and shouting from the Matsu of my home in a state that I love hoping that our elected leaders will once again turn around and open their eyes, open their ears, and open their voice to advocate for the most precious resource we have in this state and that is life. The life of people is the heartbeat and backbone to this state. Please restore our faith and hope that government is truly for the people of all Alaskans and your commitment to us is first priority. We need to invest in our state by opening our resources not killing our private sector to uphold the public sector. We hear all the time that we all share in this state pain of budget, but I see very little sharing of job loss and cuts like the private sector has already seen and felt. Just today, we see that Alaska has the largest unemployment in the nation. With that news, the private sector in this state has taken 65 to 70% of that employment loss and it still keeps coming. The public sector is not even a fraction of that loss and frankly it is frustrating to see our elected officials would rather kill one part of society entirely so another sect of society can flourish. If we are all to accept the pain, then it is well time the government cut as the private sector has done and continues to do and we will have enough revenue to afford that level of government without touching one dime of the PFD and more taxes. If you want to kill the economy and keep our current recession going and stop growth, then passing these bills and other tax bills will accomplish that mission. Please be leaders and not managers and do what is right for all Alaskans not just the campaign funding you receive from special interest groups.

Thank You,

Greg Pugh

District 12