

**From:** [cristina.balsimelli.echaverria](mailto:cristina.balsimelli.echaverria)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** SB 103 – Alaska Performance Scholarship  
**Date:** Monday, April 10, 2017 8:05:51 AM

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As a parent of a high school student, I am writing to urge you to maintain the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) and withdraw Senate Bill 103

The Alaska Performance Scholarship not only has far-reaching educational and social impact for our residents but also funds the future economic prosperity of our state.

**APS incentivizes superior high school academic achievement:** In the most recent comprehensive APS survey study, nearly 60% Alaska high school graduates reported that the prospect of receiving APS motivated them to achieve better grades, regardless of whether they ultimately received APS funding (APS Survey Report, 2015). Producing a better-educated workforce is a strategic investment in strengthening Alaska's economy.

**APS graduates are significantly more prepared for college than their non-APS counterparts:** Although the SB 103 sponsor statement complains that 26% of APS recipients take remedial coursework in college, it neglects to recognize that between 2013 and 2016, non-APS students have enrolled in remedial coursework at 2.2 – 3.2 times the rate of the APS cohort (APS Outcomes Report, 2016). A 55% - 67% reduction in need for remediation is clear evidence of APS's academic impact

**APS motivates our highest-performing high school graduates to remain in Alaska for college and their careers:** Based on an analysis of the high school class of 2011 (the first APS cohort) five years after high school graduation, APS recipients were 25% more likely to be Alaska residents than other non-APS high school graduates (APS Outcomes Report, 2017).

**Without APS, more of our best and brightest high school graduates will leave Alaska for better opportunities:** APS competes with similar or more generous programs available at many out-of-state institutions. For example, Montana State University offers up to \$11,500 per year, and Washington State University offers up to \$11,000 per year, in scholarships for out-of-state freshmen who meet certain SAT/ACT score and other requirements

SB 103 proposes to divert resources from a program that has consistently demonstrated positive educational outcomes to a patchwork of unproven experiments. While it is clear that Alaska has more work to do in improving its education outcomes, SB 103 is based on flawed logic. By removing the critical incentive APS provides for students to engage, SB 103 will at best blunt the effects of the potentially meritorious investments in the classroom it is intended to fund.

Our best and brightest college-bound students are choosing to stay in Alaska and contribute their talents to our state because of the investment we make in the Alaska Performance Scholarship today. Tough economic times only make a stronger case for us to maintain it.

Sincerely,

Cristina Balsimelli

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Please retain this letter in the public record.