

Doniece Gott

From: Kenneth Westrope <kenneth.westrope@g.kpbsd.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 10:21 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SILC experience

I have a very good experience working with and attending youth leadership forums I joined a little while ago, around 2022 i believe, tho i could be wrong, bad memory. However, I first joined as a participant, and I learned a lot about resources that I can use in my life, whether that be work or play it also helped me realize my own disabilities. All in all i have had a good experience with the soldotna independent living council

Doniece Gott

From: Mikki Brown <Mikki.Brown@comconnections.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 10:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: ILP Support

My Grandson received ILP services when he was 2. It helped him greatly and he went on to be successful in preschool, kindergarten and now 1st grade.

I'm hoping ILP will be supported in the state budget. Our kids only benefit from it!

Thank you,

Mikki Brown
Community Connections
Developmental Associate II
(907) 225-7825 x351
Fax: (907) 225-1541

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Doniece Gott

From: Jaris Michaels <jaris_michaels@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 1:03 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for SILC

My name is Jaris Michaels, from Bethel, AK. The parent of a 15-year-old daughter with Down syndrome, the youth programs offered by the Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska have made a meaningful difference for our family. What I value most is that these programs focus on each young person's abilities rather than their limitations. They give youth the chance to build confidence, develop independence, and see real possibilities for their future.

Living in a remote Alaska community, it has not always been easy to find programs that truly meet my daughter's needs. Opportunities are limited, and travel costs alone can make participation impossible. SILC removes those barriers by offering programs that are completely free and by covering travel and related expenses for participants. Just as important, there is no red tape, complicated paperwork, or special requirements to qualify. The process is simple, welcoming, and focused on getting youth the support they need rather than creating obstacles.

One experience stands out in particular. Before participating, my daughter was often shy and hesitant to speak up for herself, especially around new people. After attending the program, I saw a noticeable change. She came home more confident, more willing to try new things, and proud of what she had accomplished on her own. She began introducing herself to others, sharing her opinions, and talking about her goals in ways she never had before. Seeing that growth was incredibly powerful as a parent.

These programs do more than provide activities—they help young people with disabilities feel included, capable, and empowered. They also give families like mine hope and reassurance that our children have opportunities to grow and succeed. The work of the Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska is essential, especially for families in rural communities, and I strongly support the continuation of these youth programs.

Thank you,

Jaris Michaels

Doniece Gott

From: Kenneth <mkw11@proton.me>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 10:55 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Request for Targeted Education Stabilization Funding – Campbell STEM Elementary

Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing regarding the recent decision by the Anchorage School District to close Campbell STEM Elementary School due to budget constraints. I respectfully ask the Committee to consider targeted education stabilization or program-preservation funding mechanisms that would allow nationally certified, high-performing programs such as Campbell STEM to remain operational while longer-term fiscal solutions are evaluated.

Campbell STEM is currently the only elementary school in Alaska holding a nationally recognized STEM certification. That designation was achieved in 2024 after nearly eight years of structured program development, staff training, curriculum alignment, and measurable academic effort. The program represents a significant educational investment that supports both student outcomes and the State's broader interest in developing STEM literacy and future workforce readiness.

The school was also recently approved for more than \$11 million in voter-authorized capital improvements. Closure of a facility following substantial public investment raises legitimate fiscal and planning concerns regarding return on investment and long-term capital alignment. When voters approve funding tied to specific facilities and those facilities close soon afterward, it can undermine public confidence in future education bonds and statewide funding initiatives.

It is also important that enrollment data be reviewed in proper context. Campbell STEM has operated below full building capacity — under approximately 80% utilization — while maintaining attendance rates exceeding 90%, demonstrating strong student engagement and program stability. Enrollment access at the school is managed through a district-controlled lottery process, meaning capacity levels may not fully reflect underlying program demand. Consideration of enrollment policies is therefore important when evaluating utilization metrics and program viability.

The timeline surrounding the closure decision further highlights the need for careful review. Public notice of the proposed closure was issued approximately eleven days prior to the final vote, limiting the opportunity for meaningful financial analysis, alternative scenario review, and full community understanding of the long-term implications. For a decision involving elimination of Alaska's only nationally certified STEM elementary program, a more deliberate fiscal review process would better support transparency and informed decision-making.

This issue extends beyond a single neighborhood school. It raises a broader statewide policy question: how should Alaska preserve specialized, high-performing programs during periods of district-level budget compression? Without targeted stabilization mechanisms, unique programs that required years of investment and development may be disproportionately vulnerable despite alignment with statewide education priorities.

In a short period, nearly 900 petition signatures were gathered, public testimony filled multiple board meetings, and substantial civic engagement occurred. That level of response reflects community concern not only about one school, but about long-term planning, fiscal consistency, and educational continuity.

I respectfully ask the Committee to consider:

- Targeted stabilization funding tied to preservation of nationally certified or uniquely accredited programs
- Conditional appropriations allowing districts to maintain high-performing specialty programs during temporary deficits
- Oversight measures that encourage alignment between capital investments and operational decisions

Maintaining public trust in education funding is essential. Decisions perceived as inconsistent with recent voter-approved investments may influence future willingness to support bonds and statewide education funding measures. Thoughtful consideration of targeted stabilization support could help preserve both program continuity and long-term public confidence.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully
M. Kenneth Wake

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.



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TEL (907) 586-1325 • FAX (907) 463-5480

WWW.AKML.ORG

February 27, 2026

Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the State's FY27 budget and associated appropriation bills currently under consideration.

Alaska's municipalities are on the front lines of service delivery. Cities and boroughs are responsible for maintaining roads and ports, operating water and wastewater systems, supporting public safety, coordinating emergency response, and fostering local economic development. The state budget decisions before you directly affect our ability to carry out these responsibilities efficiently and predictably.

As you consider the operating budget, we urge a focus on stability and sustainability. Municipal governments rely on consistent and predictable state funding streams to plan responsibly and meet community needs. Sudden shifts or reductions in shared services, statutory entitlements, or pass-through programs create ripple effects at the local level that often result in service cuts, deferred maintenance, or increased local taxes and fees. While we recognize the revenue volatility the state continues to face, reliance on one-time savings without addressing long-term structural balance creates uncertainty not only for the state, but for every community that depends on state partnership.

We urge recapitalization of Community Assistance to \$90 million, such that the full funding of \$30 million is paid out in FY27. We encourage full funding of School Bond Debt Reimbursement; and note that currently Community Jails funding is only 62% of the requested \$14.5 million needed to operate these facilities.

Capital appropriations are particularly significant for municipalities, and a sufficient capital budget is essential to municipal planning, deferred maintenance, and economic development.. Local infrastructure continues to age under harsh conditions and increasing environmental pressures. School construction and major maintenance funding is critical to improve our educational facilities. Investment in transportation systems, ports, airports, flood mitigation, and water and sewer infrastructure is not simply a matter of convenience; it is foundational to public health, safety, and economic opportunity. Programs like the Harbor Matching Grant program are essential, and currently not included in the budget. Capital appropriations frequently unlock federal matching dollars, allowing communities to leverage outside investment. When state capital funding is delayed or reduced, municipalities risk losing access to those federal resources and falling further behind on critical projects.

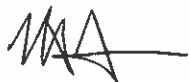
Municipalities are often the first point of contact when behavioral health systems are under strain. Local law enforcement, emergency responders, and community partners bear increasing responsibility in responding to mental health and substance use crises. Robust investment in comprehensive, community-based behavioral health services reduces pressure on local emergency systems and improves outcomes for individuals and families. Ensuring that services are accessible in rural and remote communities is especially critical in a state as geographically diverse as Alaska.

Finally, the supplemental appropriations measure reflects the reality that communities frequently respond to unanticipated events, from wildfires and floods to emergency response needs. Municipalities routinely incur costs in disaster response and public safety before reimbursement mechanisms are fully in place. Timely supplemental appropriations that address these costs are essential to maintaining local fiscal stability and ensuring communities are not penalized for acting swiftly to protect residents.

Our overarching message is straightforward: strong state-municipal partnership is indispensable to our joint success. Municipal governments do not operate in isolation; they implement many state priorities at the local level. A budget framework that preserves statutory commitments, reduces administrative burdens, expands shared-service delivery through regional partners, invests in infrastructure, supports behavioral health systems, and reimburses emergency costs strengthens not only municipalities but the state.

We appreciate the Legislature's careful deliberation and the complexity of the fiscal environment. The Alaska Municipal League stands ready to work collaboratively to ensure that the final budget reflects long-term fiscal responsibility while sustaining the essential services that Alaskans depend on every day.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nils Andreassen', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Nils Andreassen
Executive Director

Doniece Gott

From: Stoneking, Marge <mstoneking@aarp.org>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 5:38 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB215 Operating Budget Written Testimony

Chairs and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the operating and mental health budgets. My name is Marge Stoneking, and I serve as Advocacy Director for AARP Alaska. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the interests of Americans age 50 and older and their families. In Alaska, we represent over 76,000 members in communities across the state.

AARP's mission is to empower people to choose how they live as they age. Central to that mission is ensuring older Alaskans and people with disabilities can remain living independently in their homes and communities, with dignity and security, for as long as possible. The following budget items are critical, cost-effective investments that advance those goals and help prevent more expensive institutional care.

Senior Development Housing Fund (Alaska Housing Finance Corporation)

AARP strongly supports maintaining \$3 million in the Governor's proposed operating budget for the Senior Development Housing Fund administered by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.

This program addresses the growing shortage of affordable, accessible housing for Alaska's rapidly expanding senior population. Funds may be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of senior housing, allowing older Alaskans to remain in their home communities rather than being forced into higher-cost care settings prematurely.

Grants to nonprofit organizations help bridge the gap between total project costs and other funding sources, often making projects feasible that otherwise would not move forward.

Coordinated Community Transportation (Department of Transportation and Public Facilities)

AARP supports maintaining \$700,000 GF/MH in the Governor's proposed Mental Health budget for Coordinated Community Transportation.

Accessible transportation is essential for seniors and people with disabilities to reach medical appointments, jobs, shopping, and social activities. Coordinated transportation services are particularly important for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, cognitive or behavioral health conditions, seniors living with dementia, and their caregivers.

These funds leverage federal resources and provide flexibility to meet the unique transportation needs of Alaska's diverse communities.

Home Modifications and Upgrades (Department of Health, Division of Senior and Disability Services)

AARP strongly supports maintaining \$1.15 million GF/MH in the Governor's proposed Mental Health budget for Home Modifications and Upgrades.

Home accessibility improvements such as ramps, bathroom modifications, and adaptive equipment allow people with disabilities to remain safely in their homes. These relatively modest investments reduce the need for assisted living or skilled nursing care, resulting in significant savings to the state while supporting independence and safety.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

AARP supports an increase of \$403,000 for a total of \$603,000 for the Statewide Independent Living Council.

SILC is federally required and plays a critical role in supporting independent living for Alaskans with disabilities, including seniors. Without adequate funding, Alaska risks losing more than \$1.4 million in federal Independent Living funds that support Centers for Independent Living statewide.

These AARP-supported budget items are smart, preventative investments that help older Alaskans and people with disabilities live independently while reducing long-term public costs.

AARP respectfully urges the committee to maintain the Governor’s proposed funding for these programs and approve the requested increase for SILC.

Further, AARP encourages the Alaska Legislature to seriously consider increasing reimbursement rates for Medicaid Home and Community Based Services providers to make these positions competitive enough to be stable employment for Alaskans and stable in-home support for older Alaskans and those living with disabilities.

Respectfully submitted,

Marge Stoneking
Advocacy Director, AARP Alaska

Marge Stoneking | Associate State Director - Advocacy | AARP Alaska
3601 C Street, Suite 1420, Anchorage, AK 99501
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Doniece Gott

From: Colleen M Bolling <colleenmbolling@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 28, 2026 1:30 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Senate Education; Sen. Matt Claman; Rep. Mia Costello
Subject: Please make a meaningful increase to the BSA this session and inflation-adjust education funding into the future
Attachments: BSA buying power_Bar and Line with labels.jpg

Good afternoon,

I am writing today to to plead with you to increase the BSA in a meaningful way this session and to set up a long-term fiscal plan to keep sustainable education funding in place through built-in annual inflation-adjustment. I am grateful for the legislators who voted to override the Governor's veto for an increase during the August special session, but we all know that was a compromise bill that still vastly under-funds education after 15 years of flat funding. **See the attached graph that depicts the drop in buying power since 2011.**

If you haven't already, please take the time to read Ben Walker's op-ed because he clearly paints the picture of our current dire situation with education in our state:

[Opinion: We were honored as Alaska Teachers of the Year. Now we can no longer stay.](#)

Revenue

I support new revenue streams to help cover education funding including an income tax, an education head tax (HB 152), a re-working of SB 113 to tax companies doing online business in Alaska, and many of the other ideas the legislature has come up with to bring in new revenue streams. It is not enough to say we don't have the money to increase education funding, we have a constitutional duty to provide adequate education for all Alaskans. **I do not support the governor's proposal of a regressive sales tax.**

Diminish Governor's Veto Power

We have seen the damage that one governor can inflict to undo all of the hard work of the legislature to reach a bipartisan revenue bill, and I also support a resolution to diminish the governor's veto power so the legislature can do their work and have the power to override a veto by an overzealous governor like we currently have. We currently have the highest threshold of any state to override a governor's veto, and this is unnecessary and dangerous for our state. Please balance this power so the legislature can continue to protect the priorities of their constituents.

Thank you for your hard work, and please make education funding the top priority this session.

Sincerely,
Colleen Bolling
10830 Kamishak Bay Cir
Anchorage, AK 99515
907.301.4522

Doniece Gott

From: Emily Johnson <emilyjunerich@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 7:16 AM
To: House Finance; Senate Finance Committee; House Education; Senate Education
Subject: Education Funding

Dear Representatives,

I am writing as both a special education teacher and a mom. I see every day what is happening in our schools, and it worries me deeply.

Class sizes continue to grow and workloads increase. Teachers are being asked to do more with less, and the pace is not sustainable. Burnout is high. Turnover is high. The teachers who stay are stretched thin not only by their own responsibilities, but by the need to constantly support and mentor new staff coming in as experienced teachers burn out. That instability directly affects kids.

Many of our students simply cannot function in classrooms as large as they are right now. Students with disabilities and many typically developing students struggle in overcrowded rooms. The students who can manage end up losing quality instruction because their teacher is putting out fires all day. No one wins in that environment.

My oldest child starts kindergarten next year. I want to raise my kids here and continue working as a special education teacher. This is where our family lives. Having their support and being able to raise our children in a place with such incredible access to the outdoors matters deeply to us. Alaska is home.

But I am constantly questioning whether we will be forced to move out of state to provide our children a quality education. My husband works remotely. I know I can get a special education job almost anywhere. People want to live in Alaska, but we are asking educators and families to sacrifice too much when it comes to the quality and stability of our schools.

Increased and sustained school funding is crucial. It is about class size. It is about retaining experienced teachers. It is about giving students the support they need to actually learn. It is about whether families like mine can confidently build our future here.

I am asking you to prioritize meaningful increases in school funding this session. Our students, our teachers, and our communities deserve it.

Thank you for your time and your service to our state.

Sincerely,
Emily Johnson

Doniece Gott

From: LaChapelle <aklachapelle@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 2:22 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: K-12 Education Funding

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

Investing in our kids' education is possibly one of the most important things we can do for Alaska's future. When I think about where our state will be in 10 or 20 years, I want to know we as citizens of Alaska did everything we could to give our children every opportunity for success. This can only come from giving our children the strong foundation a good education can provide.

I am writing in strong support of increasing state funding for K-12 education. Specifically, I support, and urge you to fund:

- A real increase in school funding that keeps up with inflation
- Money for both basics (like heating, supplies, safe buildings) AND programs that help kids thrive
- Salary and retirement support for our teachers so we can keep good educators in Alaska

School funding should always be a top priority, and never an afterthought; our children deserve the very best we can give them. However, funding for our public education system has fallen behind inflation for almost two decades. We used to have some of the best-paid teachers in the country: a point of pride when I talked with outsiders about our education system when our kids were in school. And now our teachers can barely afford housing and can't rely on a pension. This is unacceptable. We need these talented and dedicated people to stay in our communities and educate our kids. I am a product of the Anchorage school district, as are our two children. We three are successful contributors to society (my husband is too, but he was educated outside) and it is because we have the foundation a good education provided us. We are grateful, and want the same for future generations of Alaskans.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I know these decisions aren't easy, but our kids and our communities are counting on you. Please support a significant and sustained increase to the base student allocation so our schools can be great again. Let's aim to be the best in the nation, as it felt like we once were.

Sincerely,
Ravnit LaChapelle
Anchorage, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Holly <hollyhill2020@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 4:49 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Senate Finance Committee; House Finance
Cc: Holly; Rep. Donna Mears; Rep. Calvin Schrage; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Rep. Ted Eischeid; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Support for SB 104 regarding Transfer on Death Deed for common interest community

Dear Honorable Members of the Legislature:

As a member and resident of Chester Park Senior Cooperative I am strongly supportive of SB 104. Chester Park is a 142 unit common interest community in East Anchorage. SB 104 would definitively allow for Transfer on Death Deeds for our member interest in our community, eliminating any grey areas in the statute and avoiding potential lawsuits.

Holly R. Hill
Member/Owner in Chester Park Senior Cooperative
2020 Muldoon RD
Anchorage AK 99504

Please enter into the record my
WRITTEN TESTIMONY

TO: Committee: Senate Finance
Date of Hearing: 2-27-26
RE: Bill #/Subject: Budget

Both my boys went thru public schools in Homer graduating in 2003 and 2006. They had excellent teachers and education opportunities.

Those same opportunities are not available to students today due to lack of funding the last 10 years. Today, schools are underfunded by \$1283 per student.

The solution is for the state to fully fund education as per the state constitution.

We owe it to our students, teachers and our future.

FROM:

Signed:

Sherry Stead

Printed Name:

Sherry Ann Stead

Representing:

Homer

Community of Residence

Homer

Doniece Gott

From: Karin Halpin <karinhalpin@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 6:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 213

Good morning,

This is getting exhausting, advocating for adequate funding for public education. While it was helpful to receive the additional \$700 boost last year, it is not nearly enough to meet the needs!! I don't know of a district in our state who is not facing a major budget crisis. There is no 'fat' left to cut. Districts are cutting staffing, increasing class sizes, reducing support staff along with facing serious maintenance issues. This is not acceptable!

I invite you to visit schools in your district to see what school staff are facing. It isn't pretty.

I am willing to pay an income tax to help fund critical services such as education. There are fixes here to the budget challenges. If we want thriving schools, we must be willing to fund them. Please increase the BSA to address inflation along with rising costs.

Kind regards --

Karin Halpin
25530 E. Phoenicia Cir
Palmer, AK. 99645

Sent from [Outlook](#)

Doniece Gott

From: Diana Johnson <akdianaj@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 10:25 AM
To: Senate Education; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Deep Cuts: why can't we afford school nurses?

Senate finance committee,

In light of our schools' budget crises, I sent the following letter to ADN and am sending it to you now so that you can further understand the need for an increased BSA and a BSA funding calculation system that is linked to inflation. I know you're busy, so **I put my direct message to legislators in bold** in the text below.

Sincerely,

Diana Johnson

2613 Redwood St

Anchorage, AK 99508

Deep Cuts: why can't
we afford school nurses?

Across Alaska, our school districts face impossible budget deficits and some have already been cutting their budgets and gutting programs for years. Locally, our Anchorage School District (ASD) has finally run out of savings and one-time funding boosts with which to bridge the gap between the flat Base Student Allocation (BSA) and the inflation-driven rising costs of running our schools. The gap is enormous and the proposed cuts are devastating: increasing class sizes by 4, tossing the middle school model, cutting gifted education, removing nurses from schools, cutting special education staff, and dropping school sports. Children will suffer with losses in learning, year over year, in overstuffed classrooms with overstretched school staff. Families with means will move out of state in search of better education, young people will choose to start careers elsewhere, and we'll be looking at a future of decline.

Here in Anchorage, school nursing is just one of many of ASD's proposed cuts, but I am a middle school nurse, so I feel deeply unsettled by it. On one hand, I see ASD's need to trim our budget and that it's no one's fault that nursing is on the chopping block; everything is. On the other hand, my nursing office is very busy and I'm providing an essential service to our community every day of the school year. If I'm not in the building, the nursing work won't go away, it'll just be delegated to our front office or teaching staff without medical training, decreasing safety and increasing stress on staff, students, and families. It's confusing to be busy and essential and also deemed extraneous via budget cut. How did we come to a place of no longer being able to afford a public service as basic as school nursing?

What I gather is that our state's revenues have been in decline and our state government hasn't been able to adapt to that reality in any way but by cutting services. When you cut far enough, you hit essential services like classroom teachers and school nurses. If we want to maintain these essential services for our communities, we either need to cut other services, raise revenue through taxation of one variety or another, or both.

This week, the ASD School Board was able to retain most school nurses and school sports through actions such as closing several elementary schools. These savings were, however, one-time savings and that nursing and school sports will be on the chopping block again and again without a significant BSA increase at the state level; ASD's deficit this year is \$90 million and anticipated deficit next year is an additional \$47 million.

Legislators from across the state: band together this session, as you did last, to pass education funding. Push to inflation-proof the BSA. Raise revenue through taxation or cut other services if there are any left to cut. Keep in mind that governor Dunleavy, who has vetoed bipartisan education funding

Doniece Gott

From: LIO Fairbanks
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 10:34 AM
To: Senate Resources; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony/Lynch/SB21

Please forward to Senate Resources and Senate Finance.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Leon Lynch <leonandkarenak@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Feb 26, 2026 at 1:14 PM
Subject: Oil Tax Reform
To: Letters Editor <letters@newsminer.com>

I appreciate the three legislators who participated in the recent town hall meeting and the NewsMiner's coverage of the event. Rep. Sapp raised concerns about SB 21, emphasizing that any tax adjustments should be stable and fair to both the state and the oil industry. SB 21 has now been in place for 13 years—by any reasonable measure, that is stable. As for fairness, I would ask: was it fair that the bill was introduced by a governor who was a former ConocoPhillips Alaska (CPA) lawyer, and that two state senators still employed by CPA voted to pass it? SB 21 passed the Senate by a single vote and has since resulted in the transfer of billions of dollars from the state to the oil industry. In my opinion, that outcome was neither fair nor ethical. Since SB 21 passed, Alaska's savings have declined from \$16 billion to near zero. We are now using production tax revenue from state lands to help finance projects on federal lands, where the state has no royalty interest and will see no production tax revenue for years. As Tim Bradner of the Alaska Economic Report noted, "The fact that state income from big new projects like Willow and Pikka will actually reduce state oil tax revenue for the near term is sure to attract scrutiny by the Legislature."

Rep. DeLena Johnson, speaking at the start of the session, said she did not see an appetite for oil tax reform because it was "too complex." Indeed, state consultants consider Alaska's system the most complex oil tax structure in the world—precisely how the industry designed it. The proposal now under consideration by Senate Resources would shift from a net to a gross tax system, which is simpler, more transparent, and more equitable for Alaskans. The reality is that Alaska faces serious fiscal challenges. With Willow and Pikka nearing completion, after years of state support, it is reasonable to expect a fair return for the public. Alaska cannot afford to continue policies that undermine its financial stability. It is time for oil tax reform to ensure the state receives its fair share.

Leon Lynch
Ester

Til Beetus
Fairbanks, Alaska
tilbeetus@gmail.com

February 27, 2026

Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature Juneau, AK 99801
Via Email: Senate.Finance@akleg.gov

RE: Support for Increased Funding – CDVSA Grant Line (Department of Public Safety)

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

My name is Til Beetus, and I am a lifelong Alaskan from Fairbanks. I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living (IAC), where we focus on governance and fiscal oversight. I am writing to urge your support for a \$2.5 million increase to the CDVSA grants line, including \$2 million for emergency victim services and \$500,000 for legal services.

I do not approach this request as a typical advocate. I approach it as a person whose life was physically saved by the shelter(s) in Fairbanks.

As a child, I witnessed horrific abuse against my mother and my two-year-old sister. As a young adult, I survived an abusive relationship that lasted nearly two years. Even after that, I endured thirteen years of stalking and property damage that didn't end until my daughter was grown. I know exactly what it feels like to have nowhere else to go, and I know that in the Interior, IAC is the only door that stays open for survivors.

Alaska continues to lead the nation in rates of domestic and sexual violence. This is not just a social issue; it is a public safety crisis that the State has a fundamental duty to address. For IAC, providing that safety has become a mathematical impossibility under current funding:

- **Increased Demand:** In FY25 alone, IAC provided over 17,000 survivor services and nearly 17,000 shelter nights.
- **Stagnant Funding:** Our funding has remained flat since 2017. In that same timeframe, inflation has risen 24%, eroding our ability to pay for utilities, food, and staff.
- **Systemic Collapse:** Due to the reduction in federal VOCA funding and the loss of the Enhanced Services Grant Program, IAC is currently preparing to close its legal program—a service that has provided no-cost protection to survivors for over a decade.

A Common-Sense Investment in Public Safety From a governance perspective, this is not a matter of program inefficiency; it is a matter of capacity. When we are forced to cut legal advocacy or limit shelter beds, the burden does not disappear—it shifts. *It shifts to the Alaska State Troopers, local law enforcement, emergency rooms, and the corrections system.* These are far more expensive ways to manage a crisis than through the preventative and stabilizing work of the CDVSA.

Increased funding for the CDVSA is public safety infrastructure. Without it, the bridge between a victim and safety is being dismantled.

I am alive today because a shelter was there when I had nothing left. As a seven year old I brought my mother and sister there after my late father threw knives at us. As a young adult I received services for over half a year after my ex-fiance was going to my Fairbanks relatives' homes, with a gun in his hand, looking for me. I ask you to ensure that

the same safety exists for the mothers, children, and survivors across the 42 villages and Fairbanks communities we serve. Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to protecting Alaska's families.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Til Beetus', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Til Beetus, Board of Directors
Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living

Doniece Gott

From: Teryn B <terynbi@iacnvl.org>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 10:45 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Written Testimony in Support of CDVSA Funding Increase

Mr. Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,
My name is Teryn Bird. I work in Fairbanks, Alaska, serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. I am testifying in my personal capacity, based on my professional experience serving survivors in Interior Alaska.

I apologize that I am unable to provide live public testimony. Please accept this written testimony in strong support of the \$2.5 million increase to the CDVSA grants line within the Department of Public Safety — including \$2 million for emergency victim services and \$500,000 for legal services for victims and survivors.

In FY24, our legal program served 110 individual survivors. In FY25, that number dropped to 55 — a 50% reduction — directly corresponding with reductions in attorney staffing. We went from 1.75 attorneys to 1 attorney, and we are currently operating at only .25 attorney capacity.

When staffing declines, access declines immediately.

Although total clients decreased, case complexity increased significantly. Family law service instances rose from 161 in FY24 to 317 in FY25. These cases involve high-lethality risk factors such as coercive control, weapon access, ongoing threats, and contested custody disputes. These matters require sustained, trauma-informed litigation support and cannot realistically be absorbed by volunteer attorney programs.

Because of reductions in federal VOCA funding and structural underfunding, our community is now facing the potential closure of a legal program that has provided more than a decade of critical protection for survivors in the Interior.

In a community the size of Fairbanks, the loss of even one attorney dedicated to this work has a disproportionate impact. Survivors may be forced to navigate protection orders and custody proceedings alone, increasing safety risks for themselves and their children. When legal services weaken, the burden shifts to courts, law enforcement, healthcare systems, and local communities.

Reduced staffing leads to reduced access. Reduced access leads to increased risk.

These services are public safety infrastructure. I respectfully urge you to support the \$2.5 million increase to preserve emergency victim services and restore legal capacity for survivors across Alaska.

Thank you for your leadership and for supporting services that protect Alaska's families and strengthen our communities.

Respectfully,
Teryn Bird

Teryn Bird
Legal Program Director
Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living
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Robert Bashleben

777 N. Crusey St Ste A101

Wasilla, AK 99654

02/26/2026

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

My name is Robert Bashleben and I am writing as both an advocate and Alaskan constituent from the Matsu Borough to express my strong support for several critical items in the Governor Dunleavy's proposed Mental Health budget, including funding in SB 215 and SB 213, to serve Alaskans experiencing mental illness, substance use disorders, disabilities, and housing instability. These investments are essential to maintaining a responsive and effective continuum of care across our state.

Crisis Call Center – DOH Division of Behavioral Health

I respectfully urge you to support an additional \$500,000 GF/MH and to maintain \$1 million MHTAAR funds in the Governor's proposed Mental Health budget (SB 215). The Alaska Department of Health Division of Behavioral Health's crisis contact centers provide 24/7 in-state response to phone calls, texts, and chats from individuals experiencing emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, and substance use crises.

These centers deliver immediate intervention, de-escalation, and referrals to treatment and recovery supports—often preventing emergency room visits, hospitalizations, or law enforcement involvement. Notably, the proposed GF/MH funding is \$500,000 less than recommended by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. Restoring this funding will ensure that Alaskans in crisis continue to receive timely, life-saving support regardless of where they live.

Special Needs Housing Grant (SNHG) – AHFC

Please support an additional \$1.75 million GF/MH and maintain the \$200,000 MHTAAR and \$1.75 million AHFC dividend funds included in SB 215 for the Special Needs Housing Grant program administered by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.

SNHG grants address both short- and long-term housing needs of Alaska's most vulnerable residents, including individuals experiencing homelessness who live with mental illness, brain injury, and other disabilities. Stable housing—paired with appropriate supports—prevents unnecessary institutionalization and reduces costly emergency system involvement. The GF/MH amount in the proposed budget is \$1.75 million less than recommended by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, despite clear and growing need across communities statewide. Maintaining and restoring this funding is a practical and humane response to Alaska's housing crisis.

Small Group Home Placements for Stabilized Clients with Complex Care – Department of Family and Community Services

I strongly support maintaining \$750,000 in General Funds in the Governor’s proposed Operating Budget (SB 213) for small group home placements through the Alaska Department of Family and Community Services.

These homes provide safe, structured environments for individuals stepping down from psychiatric hospitals or other intensive care settings. With one to three residents per home and trained staff support, these placements promote stabilization, skill-building, improved socialization, and better long-term outcomes—while preventing regression to more restrictive and expensive levels of care.

Coordinated Community Transportation – Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Please maintain \$700,000 GF/MH in SB 215 for coordinated community transportation through the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

Reliable transportation is foundational to independence and community integration. These funds support vehicles and assistive transportation services that help seniors and individuals with intellectual, developmental, cognitive, and behavioral disabilities access employment, medical care, and essential daily activities. Importantly, these funds leverage federal resources and allow communities flexibility to address unique regional transportation challenges.

Home Modifications and Upgrades – DOH Division of Senior and Disability Services

Finally, I urge you to maintain \$1.15 million GF/MH in SB 215 for home accessibility grants administered by the Alaska Division of Senior and Disability Services.

These modest but impactful investments allow individuals with physical and other disabilities to remain safely in their homes through ramps, bathroom adaptations, and other accessibility upgrades. Supporting aging in place reduces reliance on assisted living and skilled nursing facilities—improving quality of life while lowering long-term state costs.

Together, these budget items reflect a comprehensive approach to crisis response, housing stability, community integration, and cost-effective care. They are not only compassionate investments but fiscally responsible strategies that reduce pressure on emergency rooms, correctional systems, and institutional care.

I respectfully ask that you fully support these funding levels and restore the recommended GF/MH amounts to ensure Alaska’s behavioral health and disability service systems remain strong and responsive.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to Alaska’s most vulnerable residents.

Sincerely,

Robert Bashleben

LINKS Resource Center

Director of Community Advocacy

Doniece Gott

From: Brynn Bolling <castle@aptalaska.net>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 12:49 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: ILP Infant learning program

Hello, my name is Brynn Bolling and I am a parent of 2 children who received services from our local infant learning program. This was back in early 2000s. I learned so much from my ILP provider and that support assisted me in being a better parent with 2 children with moderate to severe language delays. Families need this support in raising independent and wonderful human beings. This support also meant less time in special education in elementary school. Both children are now young men continuing to live and work in Alaska. One is an electrician who graduated from AVTEC and is living in Juneau and the other received a four year degree in technology and now works for SEARHC as a medical technician. The future for these two young men may have been different without the support of our ILP interventionists. We received support in the first 3 years of life when the human brain does 80% of its growth. When neurons are built and strengthened. This support also encouraged me to go back to school and get my Master's Degree in Early Childhood Special Education. I am now the director of the same program my family received support from all those years ago.

ILP funding needs to be in the budget. It is part of a child's education just like kindergarten through 12th grade is a public responsibility.

Sincerely,

Brynn Bolling
Parent
Community Connections
Early Learning Director (ILP)
Serving Metlakatla, Ketchikan and all of Prince of Wales

Doniece Gott

From: Maya C <mayacurtis@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 1:10 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for Sustainable Education Funding in Alaska

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am a resident of Anchorage, an Anchorage School District employee, and a mother of two children enrolled in the district—a middle schooler and an elementary schooler (with special needs).

Working full-time while raising my children and supporting their extracurricular activities (sports and tutoring) so they can grow into healthy, well-rounded individuals requires significant time and commitment. I am very appreciative of the hard work our legislators put in last year supporting an increase to the BSA, but as we all know that increase is simply not enough. At the same time, it is beyond frustrating that hard-working parents must again take time from already full schedules to write advocacy letters and attend school board meetings in a show of support to advocate for strong public education—something guaranteed by the Alaska Constitution.

Beyond this constitutional promise, providing our children with an excellent education creates successful adults who will hopefully remain in Alaska, contribute to our communities, and one day help sustain the future of our state. It is difficult to understand how education funding has become an area where we appear willing to fall behind. Yesterday, I read an ADN article that shared that Department of Corrections spending is up 54%, far outpacing inflation and that the department's budget is driven by inflexible staffing formulas. I would like to see those inflexible staffing formulas applied to public schools so they can function efficiently, providing the best education possible to the young bright minds of Alaska.

I respectfully ask the Committee to prioritize education funding that:

- Provides stability and predictability for school districts
- Accounts for inflation and rising operating costs
- Supports recruitment and retention of educators and staff
- Ensures equitable access to resources for all Alaska students

Investing in education is an investment in Alaska's long-term strength, stability, and prosperity. Thank you for your service and for your careful consideration of this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Maya Curtis
Anchorage, Alaska