

Doniece Gott

From: stephen.morse30@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Stephen Morse
<stephen.morse30@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 11:41 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support For Senate Bill 178

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Stephen Morse and I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 178 and increasing FY27 funding for the Infant Learning Program expansion in the Department of Health, Division of Senior & Disabilities Services by \$5.72 million. I was happy to see the Legislature include this long-sought increment in FY26, and ask you to take that same step again.

I am a an SLP] who provides speech services in Sitka. In my role, I have seen the impact early intervention has had on my home community.

Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% to 25% developmental delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money.

Thank you for stepping up in support of expanding ILP programs from a 50% to 25% developmental delay! Please support Senate Bill 178 and maintain this commitment in the FY27 budget.

Sincerely,
Stephen Morse
314 Tilson St Sitka, AK 99835-7131
stephen.morse30@gmail.com
(907) 738-1664

Doniece Gott

From: Santanna Sumauang <ssumauang@cfc.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 9:31 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please Support SB178

Hello, my name is Santanna Sumauang and I am emailing you today in support of Senate Bill 178: Expand eligibility for Early Intervention. I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill 178. SB178 expands Alaska's Infant Learning Program early interventions, which helps parents become the best teacher for their children with developmental delays or disabilities.

I am a developmental specialist and speech language pathologist assistant and provide early intervention services in Sitka, AK. In my role, I have seen the profound impact early intervention has had on my home community. Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% developmental delay to 25% delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money.

We know the budget is tight. That's why it's important to recognize that - in addition to being the right thing to do - investments in the early interventions in SB178 promise to result in a 400% return on investment for the State of Alaska.

Data shows that nearly half of the children who receive the early interventions in SB178 will not need higher cost special education services when they get to K-12 schools. Small investments upstream can help children, families, and the state budget. But cost savings are only one of the many reasons to support SB178.

Beyond cost savings, early intervention helps children and families thrive during birth-3 years old, some of the most important and formative years of a child's life. The support families receive from early intervention services are skills they are able to carry throughout their child's entire life.

Thank you for your time and consideration in SB178.

Sincerely,

Santanna Sumauang, BA, SLP-A
Early Learning Program
Developmental Specialist/ Family Service Coordinator

Center for Community
700 Katlian St Ste B
907-331.0236 (phone)
907-752-0629 (cell)
907-276-6961 (fax)

Doniece Gott

From: Suriyani Raip <sraip@ifhs.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 9:30 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 178

My name is Suriyani Raip and I'm sending this email in support of Senate Bill 178. Expand Eligibility for Early Intervention - and I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill SB178 expands Alaska's Infant Learning Program early interventions, which helps parents become the best teacher for their children with developmental delays or disabilities.

I am a Case Manager who **provides/receives** services in **Unalaska / Dutch Harbor**. I have seen the impact early intervention has had on my **community/family**. Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% developmental delay to 25% delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money. We know the budget is tight. That's why it's important to recognize that in addition to being the right thing to do, investments in early interventions in SB178 promise to result in 400% return on investment for the State of Alaska.

Data shows that nearly half of the children who receive the early intervention in SB178 will not need higher cost special education services when they get to K-12 schools. Small investments upstream can help children, families, and the state budget. But cost savings are only one of the many reasons to support SB178. The others are far more personal and powerful and don't fit in my allotted time.

In closing, please support SB178, thank you.



Suriyani Raip

Iliuliuk Family & Health Services, Inc.

PO Box 144, Unalaska, AK 99685

P: (907) 581-8697 | Fax: (907) 581-2332

sraip@ifhs.org

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Doniece Gott

From: Erika Apathy <erika.apathy1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 9:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for the Infant Learning Program

Hello,

My name is Erika Apathy and I am writing in support of Senate Bill 178 to expand eligibility for early intervention. I respectfully urge the committee to support this bill, which expands Alaska's Infant Learning Program early interventions.

I am a parent who has received services in Sitka from the Early Learning Program with Center for Community. They are an amazing group that have helped my family immensely.

Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% developmental delay to 25% delay helps more Alaskan families and saves state money in the long run when more children are "caught" before they enter the public school system. So much development (90%) happens before the age of 6, that catching and addressing any delays is so crucial to our education system and our public services later in life. The data shows how much money is saved in the long run when you invest in these early childhood programs at the start of their lives.

I know the budget is tight, so I know this is a tough decision. I hope that the committee can look into the future and see the 400% return on investment the State of Alaska can get by investing in early intervention through SB178. Data shows that nearly half of the children who receive early intervention will not need higher cost special education services when they get to the K-12 school system.

Thank you for your time, and please support SB178!

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Erika Apathy
Bachelor's of Arts in Elementary Education
Master's in Educational Technology
[Erika.apathy1@gmail.com](mailto:erika.apathy1@gmail.com)
907-738-7888

Doniece Gott

From: Lydia Nelson <lydiannelson5.21@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 9:23 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Senate bill 178

My name is Lydia Nelson and I'm calling in support of Senate Bill 178: Expand Eligibility for Early Intervention - and I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill 178. SB178 expands Alaska's Infant Learning Program early interventions, which helps parents become the best teacher for their children with developmental delays or disabilities.

I am a mom who receives services for my son. I have seen the impact early intervention has had on my son. Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% developmental delay to 25% delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money. My son will soon not be eligible at 50% delay but isn't at all caught up. He needs these services.

We know the budget is tight. That's why it's important to recognize that in addition to being the right thing to do, investments in early interventions in SB178 promise to result in 400% return on investment for the State of Alaska.

Data shows that nearly half of the children who receive the early intervention in SB178 will not need higher cost special education services when they get to K-12 schools. Small investments upstream can help children, families, and the state budget. But cost savings are only one of the many reasons to support SB178. The others are far more personal and powerful and don't fit in my allotted time.

Thank you

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Doniece Gott

From: Carrie Nash <nash.carrie@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 9:12 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for Senate Bill 178 -Funding for Infant Learning Program

To the members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing to ask your support for Senate Bill 178: Expand Eligibility for Early Intervention. I have two children who were enrolled in the Infant Learning Program many years ago. The support and therapies they received made a huge difference in their lives and in our family's life. We learned terminology, solid and practical information and were sustained at a difficult time in our lives.

I am now the Board President at ACCA in Fairbanks. Our intervention specialists, early childhood educators and therapists serve a huge area of Northern and Interior Alaska. We know that nearly half of the children we serve between birth and age 3 will not need to be enrolled in Special Education in public schools as they will graduate from the need for services. We know that state investments in the Infant Learning Program at the beginning of kids' lives promise a 400% return for Alaska's budget.

Families are sustained and successful.

By expanding the eligibility for Alaskan kids from 25% disabled rating to 50% disabled rating we will be able to serve all of the Alaskan kids who really need our help. It also puts us in line with eligibility guidelines in most of the other states.

Parents are the best teachers for their young children with disabilities and developmental delays.

Please pass Senate Bill 178 for our kids and families.

Thank you,

Carrie Nash, Fairbanks

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Carrie Nash
nash.carrie@gmail.com

907 388 5018 cell

740 Pelican Way
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Doniece Gott

From: Angie Gingue <AGingue@alaskacenter.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 9:00 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for SB178

My name is **Angie Gingue** and I'm emailing in support of Senate Bill 178: Expand Eligibility for Early Intervention - and I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill 178. SB178 expands Alaska's Infant Learning Program early interventions, which helps parents become the best teacher for their children with developmental delays or disabilities.

I am the Infant Learning Program Coordinator for ACCA, who provides services in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Delta Junction/Ft. Greely, Copper River, and North Slope regions. I was also born and raised in Alaska and have seen the impact early intervention has had on my own family, as well as my community throughout my life. Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% developmental delay to 25% delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money. Data also shows that almost half of the children who receive the early intervention in SB178 will not need higher cost special education services when they get to K-12 schools.

In closing, please support SB178, thank you.



Angie Gingue, M.Ed. ECSE Assistant Director
Infant Learning Program Coordinator
1020 Barnette St., Fairbanks AK 99701 Phone: (907) 456-
4003 x123 Cell: (907) 328-8748 (call or text)
www.alaskacenter.org

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Doniece Gott

From: Brittni Haan <brittni.haan@maniilaq.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 8:54 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB178

My name is Brittni Haan and I respectfully urge the committee to support SB178. Expanding ILP eligibility to a 25% delay results in a 400% return on investment for Alaska, as nearly half of these children will not need higher-cost special education services later in K-12. Small investments upstream help children, families, and the state budget. Please support SB178. This program has been crucial in supporting the needs of our youngest community members in our region and linking them with the supports and resources to nourish their growth and development. Starting these interventions early prevent so many future supports that may be needed actively decreasing the cost for the State overall.

Brittni Haan, BSN, RN
Public Health Nurse III
Maniilaq Association Public Health
P: 907-442-7884
brittni.haan@maniilaq.org

Doniece Gott

From: Lauren Wild <lauren.a.wild@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 8:52 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 178 Support

Hello,

My name is Lauren Wild and I am writing in support of Senate Bill 178 to expand eligibility for early intervention. I respectfully urge the committee to support his bill, which expands Alaska's infant learning program early interventions.

I am a parent who has received services in Sitka from the Early Learning Program with Center for Community. They are an amazing group that have helped my family immensely.

Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% developmental delay to 25% delay helps more Alaskan families and saves state money in the long run when more children are "caught" before they enter the public school system. So much development (90%) happens before the age of 6, that catching and addressing any delays is so crucial to our education system and our public services later in life. The data shows how much money is saved in the long run when you invest in these early childhood programs at the start of their lives.

I know the budget is tight, so I know this is a tough decision. I hope that the committee can look into the future and see the 400% return on investment the State of Alaska can get by investing in early intervention through SB178. Data shows that nearly half of the children who receive early intervention will not need higher cost special education services when they get to the K-12 school system.

Thank you for your time, and please support SB178!

- Lauren Wild

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Lauren Wild, PhD

Assistant Professor - Applied Fisheries
Research Biologist - Marine Mammalogy
University of Alaska Southeast Sitka Campus

Sitka, Alaska
907-738-5315 (cell)

Doniece Gott

From: Fontana Dawson <FDawson@alaskacenter.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 8:42 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: † Support Senate Bill 178

Good Morning,

*My name is **Fontana** and I'm reaching out in support of Senate Bill 178: Expand Eligibility for Early Intervention - and I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill 178. SB178 expands Alaska's Infant Learning Program early interventions, which helps parents become the best teacher for their children with developmental delays or disabilities.*

*I am a parent of twins who **received** services in **Fairbanks**. I have seen the impact early intervention has had on my **family**. Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% developmental delay to 25% delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money. One of my twin's "B" was one of the children that unfortunately fell below the 50% delay. For the first year of his life, he received ILP services and made huge gains. At his one-year evaluation he was at a 35% delay and no longer qualified for services. Over the next year we watched as his twin brother "O" continued to make gains developing communication and motor skills supported through ILP. At close to their 2nd birthday "B" had made very limit progress in language and communication. I made the decision for a reevaluation. At the reevaluation he was evaluated as a 24-month child because he was 24 months and 15 days, if he had been evaluated the next day he would have been evaluated as a 25-month-old, and not met the threshold for a 50% delay. Therefore, he would not qualify for services. I firmly believe the lapse in being eligible in services directly impacted him. "O" continued services from birth until he graduated from ILP at 2 years and 9 months. "B" was eligible for school services, which would be a longer-term cost to the state. I have an older child "J" who did not qualify for ILP services due to "not enough of a delay," he was eligible and used 4 years of school-based Speech services. This took away from his academic time, that could have been supported earlier in life when the brain grows and develops quickly.*

We know the budget is tight. That's why it's important to recognize that in addition to being the right thing to do, investments in early interventions in SB178 promise to result in 400% return on investment for the State of Alaska.

Data shows that nearly half of the children who receive the early intervention in SB178 will not need higher cost special education services when they get to K-12 schools. Small investments upstream can help children, families, and the state budget. But cost savings are only one of the many reasons to support SB178. The others are far more personal and powerful.

In closing, please support SB178, thank you.

Fontana Dawson

Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

Doniece Gott

From: Rita Short <gage.rita@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 8:28 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Testify for Continued Support of SB178 (Infant Learning Program)

Dear Committee Members,

My name is [NAME], and I respectfully urge you to support SB178.

Expanding eligibility for Alaska's Infant Learning Program (ILP) to include children with a 25% developmental delay is a practical, fiscally responsible step that will make a measurable difference for children and families across our state. Early identification and intervention during the first three years of life—when brain development is most rapid—can significantly alter a child's long-term educational trajectory.

Data show that expanding ILP eligibility to a 25% delay yields an estimated 400% return on investment for Alaska. Nearly half of the children who would qualify under this threshold are expected to avoid needing higher-cost special education services later in K–12. In other words, modest investments in early intervention reduce future strain on school districts, improve educational outcomes, and strengthen long-term workforce readiness.

For families, early intervention is more than a cost-saving strategy—it provides reassurance, tools, and professional guidance during a critical developmental window. It empowers parents to support their child's communication, motor, cognitive, and social-emotional growth before delays widen into larger academic gaps. In many cases, timely support means children enter kindergarten ready to learn alongside their peers.

For the state, SB178 represents sound public policy. Small, strategic investments upstream prevent significantly higher expenditures downstream. By expanding ILP eligibility, Alaska can reduce long-term special education costs, support stronger student outcomes, and build a more resilient education system overall.

This is a common-sense measure that supports children, families, school districts, and the state budget simultaneously. I respectfully ask you to vote in favor of SB178 and prioritize early intervention for Alaska's youngest residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rita Short
Kotzebue, AK
gage.rita@gmail.com

Doniece Gott

From: Marlene or John Wenger <marwen@cvinet.net>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 7:26 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB178

Hello
I am writing as a member of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education. I am in total support of Senate Bill 178 to expand eligibility for early intervention in the Infant Learning Program. I'm aware that the legislature supported this expansion last year, and I strongly urge you to maintain that commitment in the FY27 budget.

Thank You
Marlene Wenger

March 3, 2026

Subject: Parent Support for SB 178 – EXPAND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

Dear Member of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Myrna Johannsen, a parent from Ketchikan, and I am writing to express my strong support for SB 178 – Expand Early Intervention Services, which you will be considering on March 4, 2026.

By now you have seen the math and heard the science behind what a more robust early intervention services program can do for Alaska's babies ages 0–3. You have undoubtedly been told where Alaska sits in comparison to other states and the results they have achieved.

What I would like to do is give you a picture of this program's true impact — a name, a face, a family, and a reason.

Baby Chuck Norrisa.

Tiny and Alaskan tough. She was born 7.5 weeks premature and required significant medical intervention. She was also a child who received Early Intervention Services. The teachers providing services came directly to our home for evaluations and lessons. They taught me how to help her catch up with her peers using everyday items we already had in our home, and they gave me a vast amount of knowledge about how to help her communicate, eat, and develop motor skills.

Baby Chuck Norrisa had a 75% developmental delay. With Early Intervention Services, I taught her to say “help,” to point, to use a fork and spoon (sometimes), and to develop the play skills that form the foundation for everything else in life.

When Baby Chuck Norrisa was 1.5 years old, I was placed on bed rest (couch rest) during my pregnancy because medical experts determined she had set a precedent for being born too early. The Early Intervention Services program adapted immediately to support our family. Every teaching strategy was adjusted so that I could continue helping my daughter while protecting my pregnancy.

Miss Wyatt was born 3.5 weeks early — and cute as a button. She also received Early Intervention Services for communication and motor development.

As we know, history tends to repeat itself. When Miss Wyatt was 1.5 years old, I was again placed on couch rest during my pregnancy with Miss Henry. Once again, the Early Intervention teachers adapted everything to fit my family's needs.

Miss Henry was born only 1.5 weeks early, and she too received Early Intervention Services.

Your support for SB 178 holds the power to heal Alaska's babies. Without the support and services my family received during those very difficult days of trying to help our children learn to crawl, eat, and talk, my children would have been left far behind their peers.

I know firsthand how important these services are for families navigating developmental challenges. From the perspective of a busy and growing family, this program can transform a child and a whole household from simply surviving to truly thriving.

I respectfully urge you to support SB 178 – Expand Early Intervention Services.

Thank you for your time and for your service to Alaska's families.

Sincerely,

Myrna Johannsen

Mother of Baby Chuck Norrisa

Mother of Miss Wyatt

Mother of Miss Henry

Ketchikan, Alaska



Photo of Charlie (Baby Chuck) Norrisa

Doniece Gott

From: alinakrol@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Alina Krol
<alinakrol@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 3:10 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support For Senate Bill 178

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Alina Krol and I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 178 and increasing FY27 funding for the Infant Learning Program expansion in the Department of Health, Division of Senior & Disabilities Services by \$5.72 million. I was happy to see the Legislature include this long-sought increment in FY26, and ask you to take that same step again.

I am a Social Worker who provides in Fairbanks, Alaska. In my role, I have seen the impact early intervention has had on my home community.

Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% to 25% developmental delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money.

Thank you for stepping up in support of expanding ILP programs from a 50% to 25% developmental delay! Please support Senate Bill 178 and maintain this commitment in the FY27 budget.

Sincerely,
Alina Krol
1340 Skyline Dr Fairbanks, AK 99712-1150 alinakrol@gmail.com
(907) 371-8247

Doniece Gott

From: Barbara Morse <barbaramorse2018@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 10:01 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: In support of Senate bill 178

Dear Senate Finance committee,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 178 to expand eligibility for early intervention. I respectfully urge the committee to support this bill, which expands Alaska's Infant Learning Program early interventions.

As a person who has worked in children's programs for many years in Sitka and seeing many amazing changes I can honestly say there is nothing that rivals the impact of early intervention on our children who are the future of our state. So please do the right thing and pass Senate bill 178.

Respectfully,
Barbara Morse
314 Tilson Street
Sister Alaska 99835

Doniece Gott

From: Kathe Baker <kathewb@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 10:33 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: ILP advancement

My name is Katharine Weber-Baker and I was very pleased to see the funds, 5.72 million, allocated for the Infant Learning Program for 2026 and I implore you to do the same for the FY27 budget. I have a granddaughter who has Autism. She is in her early 20's now and a working, community involved young lady due to very early interventions when she was a toddler and diagnosed. Everything that could be utilized in town through non-profit programs as well as private pay options was available to her and this strong, consistent, professional exposure provided a path for her to thrive. As a retired elementary teacher, I can attest to the tremendous growth of children with disabilities and delays who have been fortunate to receive specialized, focused instruction tailored to individual needs in Elementary school. So going even earlier with interventions, the Early Infant Learning program allows for even more success, supporting growing children at the earliest possible level before they reach school age. **Reaching infants with a 25% developmental delay instead of a 50% delay is vital to early growth and development and it benefits even more of these impacted children to lead productive lives, here in Alaska.**

Thank you for reading this and for your serious consideration to make Alaska a better place for raising and protecting children.

Most Sincerely,
Katharine Weber-Baker
907-388-4992
kathewb@gmail.com

Doniece Gott

From: Lawrence Baker <lawrencejbaker@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 10:42 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee

My name is Lawrence J Baker and I was pleased to see the funds, 5.72 million, allocated for the Infant Learning Program for 2026. Please do the same for the FY27 budget. We have a granddaughter who has Autism. She is in her early 20's now and a working, community involved young lady due to very early interventions when she was a toddler and diagnosed. Everything that could be utilized in town through non-profit programs as well as private pay options was available to her and this strong, consistent, professional exposure provided a path for her to thrive. So going even earlier with interventions, the Early Infant Learning program allows for even more success, supporting growing children at the earliest possible level before they reach school age. **Reaching infants with a 25% developmental delay instead of a 50% delay is vital to early growth and development and it benefits even more of these impacted children to lead productive lives, here in Alaska.**

Thank you for your serious consideration to make Alaska a better place for raising and protecting children.

Sincerely,

Lawrence J Baker

907-388-7365

lawrencejbaker@gmail.com

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Lawrence Baker