

From: [Sen. Donny Olson](#)
To: [Liz Harpold](#); [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: FW: SB 41 Mental Health Education
Date: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 12:05:05 PM

From: Diane DeSloover <dianedesloover@yahoo.com>

Sent: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 10:37 AM

To: sen.lymon.hoffman@akleg.gov; Sen. Donny Olson <Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Kelly Merrick <Sen.Kelly.Merrick@akleg.gov>; Sen. Jesse Kiehl <Sen.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>; Sen. James Kaufman <Sen.James.Kaufman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mike Cronk <Sen.Mike.Cronk@akleg.gov>

Cc: Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson <Sen.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Matt Claman <Sen.Matt.Claman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Cathy Giessel <Sen.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov>; Sen. Forrest Dunbar <Sen.Forrest.Dunbar@akleg.gov>; Jamie Bagley <Jamie.Bagley@akleg.gov>

Subject: SB 41 Mental Health Education

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

You have the opportunity to benefit the current and future citizens of Alaska by moving ahead with the passage of SB 41, the Mental Health Education Bill.

Consider this explanation from the World Health Organization: *Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being affecting how we think, feel, act, handle stress, relate to others and make choices. It is a fundamental component of overall health across all life stages, enabling individuals to realize their abilities, cope with normal life stresses and contribute to their community.*

The mental health of Alaskan citizens is foundational to a healthy society. It's time we acknowledge that just as we teach our children academics and taking care of their physical bodies with exercise and good eating habits, we must teach them how to take care of their mental well-being. Mental fitness does not develop instinctively. There are skills to attaining mental fitness that can be taught. Developing such ability over the growing years of a child will reduce anti-social behavior, isolation, crime and suicide. Why wouldn't we prioritize educating our children to be resilient, adaptable, able to solve problems and face challenges in healthy ways?

I am a retired Juneau elementary school teacher with close ties to students and teachers currently in Juneau schools. I know that with funding shortages in recent years, school curriculum has been stripped down to basic academics, class sizes are large and students and teachers are stressed from school closings, constant change

and little support. This is not healthy and if you just spend a day in any public school you will see what I mean. There are age appropriate programs to teach students what it means to be mentally fit and able to handle the difficult times they will encounter. Imagine a generation of mentally healthy youth coming to adulthood as stable, productive citizens. We can change society for the better by acknowledging that mental health education is essential and providing it in our public schools.

The people of Alaska have placed great trust in you to act for the common good. I urge you to take action on SB 41 for the good of Alaska's children and future active citizens.

Sincerely,

Diane DeSloover

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