
From: Cyndy Mika <Cyndy.Mika@kibsd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 4:47 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Public Testimony on HB 263: State Operating Budget

Good afternoon, Co-Chairs and members of the House Finance Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide public testimony today. I wanted to share my written testimony as it is longer than the 2 minutes that I was allocated for public testimony today on HB 263: State Operating Budget.

For the Record, I am Dr. Cyndy Mika, Superintendent for Kodiak Island Borough School District. This is my written testimony on HB 263: State Operating Budget.

First, I want to respectfully urge the legislature to invest in Alaska's students by increasing education funding inside the Base Student Allocation. School districts across Alaska are facing significant financial challenges, and Kodiak is no exception.

Our district is currently facing an approximately \$5 million budget deficit. This deficit is not the result of mismanagement of funds, but rather the reality that education funding has not kept pace with inflation since 2011.

Last year's \$700 increase to the BSA was critical and appreciated. However, even with that increase, our district still had to close an elementary school and use most of our fund balance just to cover our operating deficit.

More than half of that increase went directly to providing a 4 percent raise for all of our staff—an important step in helping us recruit and retain teachers and other employees in a very competitive labor market.

Despite those efforts, last month our Board of Education still had to make the difficult decision to cut nearly \$2.9 million in positions and programs. We have also asked our Borough Assembly to fund education at 100 percent of the local contribution cap for the first time. Even with these actions, we have identified an additional \$1 million in reductions that will need to occur next year.

These reductions mean fewer teachers, fewer instructional supports, and fewer services for students. They include reductions in counseling, nursing, special education and gifted support, instructional coaching, and classroom aides—positions that directly impact the opportunities and support systems our students rely on every day.

Last year we closed an elementary school, and if our fiscal outlook does not improve, our community is already preparing for the possibility of closing another school in the 2027–2028 school year.

These are incredibly difficult decisions for any community, and they ultimately translate into fewer opportunities and supports for students.

I also want to highlight the importance of the \$490,000 investment in the ACSA and Alaska Educator Recruitment and Retention Center contract. This support is incredibly valuable to districts like ours.

Recruiting teachers to Alaska—especially to rural and remote communities—is complex and time-intensive. Through partnerships with AERRC, our district has participated in national and international recruitment efforts, job fairs, and onboarding supports.

Because of those efforts, for the first time we are retaining all 11 of our village teachers this year—eight of whom were international hires recruited over the past three years. AERRC has been a critical partner in helping districts navigate the time-consuming and complex international hiring process.

The organization also supports administrator mentoring and leadership development. I personally participated in the New and Incoming Superintendent Coaching Program, which helped me be successful in this role, and our incoming superintendent is already enrolled and will begin the program later this month.

Thank you for your continued work and for your commitment to Alaska’s students and schools.

Cyndy A. Mika, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools Kodiak Island Borough School District



*We gather on the traditional homeland of the Alutíq/Sugpiaq people.
The heritage and culture of the Alutíq people continue to enrich our communities
and our schools.*

KIBSD
722 Mill Bay Rd
Kodiak, AK 99615
907-486-7550

From: Lawrence Baker [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 4:37 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Supporting ILP FY27

My name is Lawrence J Baker and I feel strongly about supporting the expansion of the Infant Learning Program for FY27 to include infants and children experiencing a 25% developmental delay. Thank you for including this for FY26, please continue for FY27 as it will continue to support developmental improvements for these children. There will be a savings for the State later on as these children need less support as they get older.

We have a granddaughter with an Autism diagnosis. 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. She was given access to every opportunity for therapies, orchestrated by her parents, as an infant, toddler and elementary school student which set her on a path to thrive. **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 by expanding ILP FY27 with a 25% delay.

Sincerely,
Lawrence J Baker

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

--

Lawrence Baker

From: Kathe Baker [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 4:14 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for continued ILP for FY27.

My name is Katharine Weber-Baker and I strongly support expanding the Infant Learning Program for FY27 to include infants and children experiencing a 25% developmental delay. It is wonderful that it was included for FY26, please continue for FY27 as it will support improvements and data for these children. There will be a return on the money as these children will thrive with less need for the cost of services in elementary school and beyond.

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

[REDACTED]

From: Fred Becker <fred@matsufoodbank.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 3:33 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Operating Budget HB263

Support for Food Security Funding in HB 263

Chair and Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is **Fred Becker V**, and I have the privilege of serving as the Executive Director of the **MatSu Food Bank**, which works to eliminate hunger in the MatSu Valley by providing nutritious food through strong community partnerships and compassionate service.

I am writing today in strong support of maintaining the **\$3 million allocation for Alaska’s food banks and food pantries in the current draft of the State Operating Budget (HB 263)**.

Across Alaska, food banks and community pantries are experiencing **historic levels of demand**. Rising food costs, inflation, and economic uncertainty continue to push more families, seniors, and working households into food insecurity.

At the MatSu Food Bank alone, the need in our community continues to grow rapidly. In **2025 we distributed over 2.3 million pounds of food to neighbors in need, a 49% increase from the previous year**, while also increasing the food we provide to partner agencies across the Valley by **139%**.

Behind these numbers are real Alaskans:

- Seniors choosing between groceries and heating fuel
- Working families struggling with rising food prices
- Children relying on food programs when school meals are unavailable

Food banks serve as **the frontline response when need spikes**, whether due to economic hardship, natural disasters, or disruptions to federal nutrition programs.

Stable, predictable funding such as this **\$3 million investment allows food banks to purchase food, manage logistics, and deploy resources quickly when communities need help most**.

Alaska’s anti-hunger network has demonstrated that these funds are used efficiently and responsibly. Investments in food security strengthen communities, support local economies, and ensure that emergency food systems remain ready when disaster strikes.

Protecting this funding in HB 263 will help ensure that food banks and pantries across Alaska can continue serving families with dignity and compassion.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering the needs of communities across our state.

Respectfully,

Fred Becker V

Executive Director MatSu Food Bank

5099 E Blue Lupine Drive Suite 114

Wasilla, Alaska 99654

Office: 357-3769

Cell: 440-8415

www.matsufoodbank.org



Because no one should have to go hungry

From: Meredith Pearson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 1:31 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: School funding

Please prioritize education in the budget! Invest in a significant funding increase so our schools, our students, and our state can thrive.

Meredith Morpew
Homer Alaska
Sent from my iPhone

From: Melody Bechberger [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 12:37 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for Alaska Learning Infant Program

My name is Mrs Melody Bechberger, Anchorage Resident, and I'm writing in support of expanding Infant Learning Program supports in FY27.

I have seen the impact early intervention can have. Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% to 25% developmental delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money in the long run. I know the budget is tight, but I wouldn't argue for this if it wasn't important for long term savings and welfare of the state. Investments in early interventions promise to result in a 400% return on investment for the State of Alaska. Data show that a \$5.72 million increase in funding for ILP generates nearly \$35 million in savings to the state's annual special education spend. Nearly half of the children who experience between 50% and 25% developmental delay and receive early intervention services will not need higher cost special education services when they get to K-12 schools.

Please support Infant Learning Program service expansion to infants and children experiencing a 25% developmental delay. Thank you.

Mrs Mel Bechberger

[REDACTED]

Alaska Resident

From: Kaitlyn Conway <Kaitlyn@akml.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 12:02 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Nils Andreassen
Subject: Testimony for Today - Written Comments
Attachments: AML State Budget FY27 Testimony - House - To email.docx

Please see the attached written comments for our testimony we will present later today.

Thank you,

Kaitlyn Conway, MPA
Intergovernmental Affairs Manager
Alaska Municipal League
(907) 586-1325 x228
"Strengthening Alaska Municipalities"



From: Cara O'Brien-Holen [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 11:20 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Increase Education Funding

Please prioritize education in the budget! Invest in a significant funding increase so our schools, our students, and our state can thrive.

*Cara O'Brien-Holen
25 year educator
Anchorage 99517*

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: Angelina Salvato [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 10:55 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Fwd: SILC



Dear House Finance Committee

My name is Angie Salvato and I live in Anchorage. My daughter Gianna is 16 years old and has Down syndrome. She is turning 17 this month and preparing for her senior year in high school this fall. SILC has come into her life in the last year and has been teaching her independent living skills and self advocacy. Gianna is on a non-degree track in high school due to her disability, but participates in cheerleading, track, and a part time job through the Life Skills program. She is smart, amazing and high functioning but people still often treat her like a baby! She is not! She can be a productive member of our society, have a job, and live independently with some minimal support. Last year she went to the SILC summer camp in Fairbanks and still talks about it all the time. Living in the dorms with a roommate, learning CPR, life skills, and self advocacy! This is what she needs! Please fund SILC so they can continue to do their good work and keep kids and young adults like Gianna out of institutions and overly restrictive and expensive

group homes and hospitals. Thank you for your consideration!

Angie.



From: ahnie litecky [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 10:42 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Prioritize education in the FY 2027 budget

Dear House Finance Committee,

My name is Ahnie Litecky, and I live in Homer. I have three kids in school here in grades 4, 6, and 7.

Please prioritize education in the FY 2027 budget. Our schools need a significant funding increase.

Alaska's students, families, and teachers need stable and adequate support. For too many years, school funding has fallen behind inflation. That has led to staff cuts, larger class sizes, and growing strain on schools across the state.

Public schools serve all children. They are essential to our communities and to Alaska's future. Strong schools help keep families in Alaska, support local jobs, and prepare students for work, college, and life.

The Legislature has a responsibility to make sure our public schools are adequately funded. Please invest in education so our schools and students can thrive.

Thank you for your time and for your service.

Sincerely,

Ahnie Litecky

From: Melany Wilson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 10:17 AM
To: House Finance
Cc: ky@alaska34thlegislature.ccsend.com
Subject: Written Testimony to the Alaska House Finance Committee In Support of Increased Funding for Public Education

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of increased and sustainable funding for Alaska's public education system. As you make difficult decisions regarding the state's operating budget, I respectfully urge you to recognize that investment in public education is one of the most critical and strategic expenditures the State of Alaska can make.

Over the past decade, school districts have experienced significant erosion in real funding due to inflation and rising operational costs. At the same time, expectations for student outcomes, workforce preparation, and community stability have continued to grow. This widening gap has forced districts to reduce programs, increase class sizes, and defer essential services that students depend on to succeed.

The operating budget reflects the state's priorities. A strong and stable commitment to public education signals that Alaska is serious about retaining families, supporting working parents, and building a capable future workforce. When schools are underfunded, the consequences extend beyond the classroom — affecting economic development, population retention, and the long-term fiscal health of our state.

Public education funding supports essential services such as core academic instruction in math, science, and literacy; enrichment opportunities like arts and career-technical education; and critical student supports including school nurses, counselors, and safe facilities. These investments directly contribute to healthier communities, improved student outcomes, and a stronger economy.

Alaska is at a pivotal moment. As the Legislature balances the operating budget, prioritizing predictable and adequate education funding will help stabilize communities and ensure that families can confidently build their futures here. Investing in education today reduces future costs associated with workforce shortages, social services, and economic stagnation.

I respectfully ask the Committee to prioritize increased funding for public education as a foundational component of Alaska's operating budget. Strong schools are essential to a strong state.

Thank you for your service and your thoughtful consideration.

Melany Wilson

Parent and State Employee

From: Sherry Eckrich [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 10:10 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Operating and Mental Health Budgets

I am unable to participate in the upcoming hearings on these issues, but I would like to let the committee know that I believe our state has a responsibility to provide necessary services for those who are unable to afford or access them by themselves. Cutting the budget for mental health is false economy that will actually result in greater costs in the future. I strongly encourage you to fund necessary services.

Sherry Eckrich

[REDACTED]
Eagle River 99577

From: victory lavalle [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 10:03 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 263 HB 265

Please focus on mental health and Alaskas children.

We can provide treatment centers and broader mental health services. Our society will thrive and improve. We need long term investments not short sighted expensive band aids.

Children should be able to play outside in green spaces without risk of fentanyl exposure or risk physical harm do to homeless camps.

Homeless mentally unstable citizens deserve their humanity back.

Please allow our state to support all citizens .

If we invest in our children's education and mental well being our society will have a strong future.

Thank you

Have a great day!

Victory Cheney
[REDACTED]

From: Lisa Bass [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 9:32 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: House Finance Committee Testimony

Please include the following written testimony in the record for the House Finance Committee.

My name is Lisa Bass. I live in Soldotna, and I am the parent of children in Alaska’s public school system. I am asking this committee to increase school funding, and I want to show you what it looks like on the ground when the state fails to do so.

Alaska has not meaningfully increased the Base Student Allocation in over a decade. Districts across the state are absorbing rising costs with flat funding, and the results are predictable: program cuts, staff reductions, and the elimination of schools and supports that serve our most vulnerable students first.

I have watched this happen in my own community.

River City Academy is a small, mastery-based school in Soldotna serving students in grades 7–12. Three of my children have attended it. My stepson enrolled while facing a life-threatening mental health crisis. In a traditional school setting, he likely would have fallen further behind or disengaged entirely. RCA met him where he was, maintained high expectations, and allowed him to keep earning credits during one of the hardest periods of his life.

My daughter later faced a serious medical challenge while enrolled there, and the school responded with the same flexibility and care. During two of the most difficult periods in our family’s life, when our focus was simply keeping our children alive, River City Academy kept them connected to school and learning.

That school is now on the chopping block — not because it is failing, but because the district cannot afford to keep it open. RCA students score in the 90th percentile for math growth, and ninety percent report feeling encouraged to do their best. It is a school that works, and it may not survive another year of flat funding.

RCA is only one example. Across Alaska, districts are making the same kinds of cuts — eliminating programs that serve students who do not fit the traditional mold, reducing staff, and asking teachers to do more with less. These are not abstract budget decisions. They are decisions about which students stay connected to their education and which ones do not.

Increasing the Base Student Allocation is the most direct action this committee can take to prevent that from happening. It would give districts the ability to maintain programs that are working, retain experienced teachers, and support students whose needs are greatest.

The cost of underfunding schools does not disappear. It shows up later — in intervention, in lost potential, and in the long-term consequences for students who needed support and did not receive it.

Alaska’s children deserve a public school system funded to actually serve them. I urge this committee to increase the Base Student Allocation and invest in the future of this state’s students.

Thank you for your time and for the important work you are doing on behalf of Alaska's families.

Sincerely,

Lisa Bass
Soldotna, Alaska

From: Lisa Bass [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 9:19 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: House Finance Committee Testimony

testimony.

My name is Lisa Bass. I live in Soldotna. In this email, I am representing myself. I am a person with disabilities and the mother of two children with disabilities.

I want to tell you what it looks like when the system fails early — and what it looks like when it finally shows up.

When my son first needed help, there were almost no options in Alaska. The system sent him out of state to a for-profit facility, away from his family and into an environment that did not meet his needs and was not good for him. When he came home, he struggled. He developed substance use issues, became justice-involved, and ended up in youth detention.

I have thought about that trajectory a thousand times. I keep coming back to one question: what if he had access to disability-informed supports earlier? What if someone had connected our family to independent living concepts before crisis hit?

I cannot answer that for him, but I can tell you what has changed.

With the help of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the Independent Living Center (ILC), my son has found his footing. He has gained an understanding of his disability and the knowledge that he is not alone. Those connections have supported him in his recovery and his continuing education, including helping him find adult learning supports and a job experience placement through Kenai Peninsula College. The system finally showed up for him, and it has made a real difference.

Now I can tell you what I am watching happen for my younger child because the supports exist today that did not exist then.

Through programs connected to SILC, my child has developed a proud disability identity and self-awareness. She has connected to the Independent Living Center summer work programs. She is building skills, confidence, and self-advocacy. She has been able to set personal goals and find a completely different path than the one that was chosen for her brother.

The difference is SILC.

Here is what I need this committee to understand: SILC is federally mandated. Alaska must maintain it to receive federal Independent Living funds. But SILC's budget has been frozen at \$200,000 since 2020, while its responsibilities have continued to grow. \$200,000 does not enable SILC to fulfill its federal requirements.

The SILC is requesting an increase of \$403,000. That is not simply a cost — it protects more than \$1.4 million in federal funding.

But beyond the math, these numbers represent real turning points in real people's lives: a young man in recovery and back in school, and a younger child building a future she believes in. The payoff is human, and it is also fiscal.

This committee has a rare opportunity to invest \$403,000 to protect over \$1 million in federal funding. My family is proof of what that investment prevents and what it makes possible.

My family learned the hard way what late intervention costs. I strongly support fully funding the Statewide Independent Living Council, which protects funding for the Centers for Independent Living.

Thank you for your time and for the important work you do on behalf of Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Lisa Bass, Proud Alaskan & Mother

From: Marie Greene <Marie.Greene@kodiakhealthcare.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 9:06 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for Child Advocacy Center Funding in the FY Budget

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for your continued support of Child Advocacy Centers serving children and families across Alaska. The \$5.5 million included in the budget for CACs reflects the Legislature's recognition of the essential role these centers play in responding to child abuse and supporting multidisciplinary teams.

I also strongly support the \$1.5 million increment included to help offset reductions in federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding. VOCA cuts will significantly impact victim services in Alaska, and this additional funding will help ensure CACs can continue providing critical services such as forensic interviews, advocacy, and coordination with law enforcement and child protection partners.

Thank you for supporting Alaska's children and the professionals working every day to ensure their safety and healing.

Sincerely,

Marie Greene

Kodiak Child Advocacy Center Director

D: (907) 486-1369 | F: (907) 486-1410 | marie.greene@kodiakhealthcare.org

Kodiak Area Native Association | 3449 Rezanof Drive East | Kodiak, Alaska 99615

www.kodiakhealthcare.org  

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From: Natalie Wojcik [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 8:50 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support Infant Learning Program Expansion in FY27

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Natalie Wojcik, and I am writing in support of expanding Infant Learning Program (ILP) services in FY27. I was grateful to see the Legislature include this expansion in FY26, and today I'm asking you to continue that commitment by supporting ILP services for infants and children with a 25% developmental delay.

I'm writing as a parent from Sitka. I have three children, all Indigenous to the land we live on, and my youngest—now six—had communication delays as a baby and toddler.

Before my son received his autism diagnosis, I was referred to the Sitka Infant Learning Program, which became a lifeline for my family. At the time, I knew something was different but didn't yet have answers. I had also recently become a single parent after the children's father died in a boating accident, and the possibility of a diagnosis felt overwhelming.

The Infant Learning Program stepped in with compassion, skill, and practical support. They taught me how to support my son's speech development and understand his sensory needs—concepts I had never encountered before. They helped me learn how to build communication through play and how to create meaningful back-and-forth interaction with him. Just as importantly, they supported me emotionally as I prepared for the possibility of a diagnosis, which at the time felt isolating and frightening.

They also helped us navigate the transition into the school system, ensuring my son entered that next stage with strong support and information.

Early intervention does more than support children—it strengthens families. It improves educational outcomes, reduces long-term costs, and helps parents respond early rather than waiting until challenges escalate.

I know firsthand that these services change lives. Sitka is a small town, and I've seen how this small office has supported many families—whether their children later needed an IEP or simply benefited from additional guidance and support. I truly don't know what I would have done without them.

I respectfully ask you to support the proposed funding increase so families across Alaska can continue to receive the same early, life-changing support my family did. Even in tight budget years, investments in early intervention are proven to return significant value—up to a 400% return on investment for the State of Alaska.

Please support expanding ILP eligibility from a 50% to a 25% developmental delay in FY27 and beyond.

Sincerely,
Natalie Wojcik
Sitka Resident

From: Amanda Cherok [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 8:19 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support of increased education fundings

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to urge you to **prioritize education in this year's budget** and to invest in a **significant, meaningful increase to school funding**. Our schools, our students, and our state's future depend on the choices you make right now.

For years, Alaska's public schools have been asked to meet growing needs with shrinking resources. Class sizes have increased, essential programs have been cut, and districts across the state are struggling to retain qualified teachers and support staff. These are not abstract budgeting issues—they are daily, concrete realities that affect the learning environment of every child in Alaska.

When we underfund education, students lose access to individualized instruction, extracurricular programs, early intervention services, career training, cultural and language programs, and the supportive adults who make learning possible. Teachers face overwhelming workloads, burnout increases, and communities lose experienced educators who move elsewhere for stability.

But when we **invest in education**, the benefits ripple across our entire state:

- **Students thrive academically and emotionally**, setting the foundation for a stronger workforce and healthier communities.
- **Schools become stable and functional**, able to plan ahead instead of scrambling to avoid layoffs and cuts.
- **Teachers stay in Alaska**, improving continuity, local stability, and student outcomes.
- **Communities strengthen**, because strong public schools are a cornerstone of economic growth and family well-being.

Prioritizing education funding is not just a moral decision—it is an economic strategy. Every dollar invested in students today returns dividends to Alaska for decades: through higher graduation rates, more stable employment, stronger local economies, and reduced social service costs.

Alaska cannot thrive if its children fall behind. And our children cannot succeed when their schools are surviving year to year on inadequate funding.

Please prioritize education in the budget and invest in a significant increase to school funding this year. Our students deserve stability. Our teachers deserve support. And our state deserves a future built on strong public education.

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

Sincerely,

Amanda Cherok

Parent of two public-school students (ages 6 and 9)

From: JJ Harrier <jharrier@denalifs.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 8:12 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for HB 265 – Mental Health Budget

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is JJ Harrier and I serve as the Director of Development and Communications for Denali Family Services. I am writing to express our strong support for HB 265 and the \$10 million investment in Alaska's mental health system.

Denali Family Services (DFS) is the largest provider of Therapeutic Foster Care in Alaska and serves youth from communities across the state who have complex behavioral health needs. Every day we see firsthand the impact that accessible, community-based behavioral health services have on children and families. Investments in the mental health budget help ensure that youth can receive treatment in Alaska, closer to their families and support systems, rather than being sent out of state for care.

Funding through the mental health budget supports critical services including therapeutic foster care, school and community-based behavioral health services, and workforce development for the providers who deliver this care. These services stabilize families, reduce strain on the child welfare system, and ultimately lower long-term costs for the state by preventing more intensive interventions later.

At a time when Alaska continues to face workforce shortages and growing behavioral health needs among children and families, sustained investment in the mental health system is essential.

DFS respectfully urges the House Finance Committee to support HB 265 and maintain strong funding for Alaska's mental health services.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the well-being of Alaska's children and families.

Sincerely,

JJ Harrier
Director of Development & Communications
(907) 330-2484
1251 Muldoon Rd. Suite 116
Anchorage, AK 99504



Our Mission: To support the wellness of Alaska's youth and families through community-based behavioral health services.

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From: Rozlyn Grady-Wyche <educationak@naacpaowsac.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 7:34 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Prioritize Public Education in the FY2027 Budget

Dear Chair and Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Roz'lyn Grady-Wyche, and I serve as the Education Chair for the NAACP Alaska, Oregon, and Washington State Area Conference and as an educator in Anchorage, Alaska.

I am writing to urge the Legislature to prioritize meaningful investment in public education within the FY2027 operating budget.

Public education is one of the most important investments the state can make. Yet for more than a decade, Alaska's school funding has not kept pace with inflation, forcing districts into continual cycles of cuts.

The consequences are already visible across our state:

- rising class sizes
- staff reductions
- fewer academic and enrichment opportunities
- increased strain on teachers and support staff.

As both an educator and civil rights advocate, I want to emphasize that these cuts disproportionately impact vulnerable students, including students with disabilities, students of color, and students in rural communities.

Public schools are the backbone of Alaska's communities. They serve every child, every day, and they are required by law to do so regardless of need or circumstance.

Investing in education is also essential for Alaska's economic future. Businesses, military families, and healthcare professionals consider school quality when deciding whether to relocate to our state. Chronic underfunding undermines Alaska's ability to attract and retain the workforce our economy depends on.

Strong schools support:

- strong communities
- strong families
- and a strong economy.

I respectfully urge the Legislature to prioritize a significant and sustainable increase in education funding in the FY2027 budget, including support for an increased Base Student Allocation.

Our students cannot wait any longer.

Thank you for your time and for your service to Alaska.

Respectfully,

Roz'lyn Grady-Wyche
Alaska Education Chair
NAACP Alaska Oregon and Washington State Area Conference
Anchorage, Alaska

Roz'lyn Grady-Wyche

From: Claire Torbensen [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 7:04 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Funding Education

Please prioritize education in the budget! Invest in a significant funding increase so our schools, our students, and our state can thrive.

Claire Torbensen-Armstrong



Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Rob Bashleben [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 3:35 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 263 and HB 265
Attachments: LOS House Finance Committe (1).docx

Hello- Please see attached letter of support for HB 263 and HB 265
Rob Bashleben
Director of Community Advocacy

[REDACTED]

From: Duronda Twigg <dtwigg@sunshineclinic.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 2:14 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: ILP Expansion
Attachments: Outlook-sds55o23

Greetings ~

My name is Duronda Twigg from Trapper Creek. I am writing to urge the House to support expanding ILP eligibility from a 50% to a 25% developmental delay in the FY27 budget.

This investment offers a 400% return for the state, saving nearly \$35 million in future special education costs.

More importantly, it ensures our youngest Alaskans get the support they need when it matters most.

Please fund the ILP expansion. The health of Alaska's children is a key force in the strength of the state.

Thank you.

Kind regards ~

Duronda Twigg, BSN, RN

Chief Nursing Officer



dtwigg@sunshineclinic.org

907-733-2273 ext. 2830

Fax: 907-733-1735

Community-Driven Healthcare,
Rooted in the Strength and Resilience of Rural Alaska.

From: Angel Peger [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 1:24 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for Child Advocacy Center Funding in the FY27 Budget

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for your continued support of Child Advocacy Centers serving children and families across Alaska. The \$5.5 million included in the budget for CACs reflects the Legislature's recognition of the essential role these centers play in responding to child abuse and supporting multidisciplinary teams.

I also strongly support the \$1.5 million increment included to help offset reductions in federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding. VOCA cuts will significantly impact victim services in Alaska, and this additional funding will help ensure CACs can continue providing critical services such as forensic interviews, advocacy, and coordination with law enforcement and child protection partners.

Every day in a nonprofit leadership is faced with cost restrictions, time restraints, and resource difficulties. There is only one thing that will keep nonprofits successful - and it won't be a gathering, a study, a survey, a white paper, a toolkit, a research project or an advisory group, the answer is funding.

How do we increase effectiveness? Funding.
How do we prevent burnout in leadership? Funding.
How do we increase resilience? Funding.

Thank you for supporting Alaska's children and the professionals working every day to ensure their safety and healing.

Sincerely,
Angelica Peger
Fairbanks Children's Museum
Fairbanks Alaska

--
Sincerely, Angel Peger (she/her)
[click here to see why pronouns matter](#)

[REDACTED]
I acknowledge that the land on which I live is the ancestral and traditional territories of the lower Tanana Dene Peoples and the Dena'ina Peoples. The Indigenous peoples of this land never surrendered lands or resources to Russia or the United States.

From: L Alexie [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 1:23 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Please Support Critical Early Childhood Investments

Please,
include these **five important budget items** in the FY27 Operating Budget:

1. **\$7.5 million for the annual ROOTS Award**
Retention funding for early educators to keep classrooms open, prevent further program closures, and retain early educators.
2. **\$5.72 million for the Infant Learning Program**
Early intervention services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities, plus support for families.
3. **\$500,000 for Parents as Teachers**
Home visiting that strengthens parenting skills, supports child development, and helps families thrive early.
4. **\$400,000 for Best Beginnings Imagination Library**
Free books are mailed to young kids to boost early literacy and school readiness across Alaska.
5. **\$3.756 million for Head Start**
Funding is needed to reach the 20% required to draw down the full federal Head Start match and protect services for Alaska children and families.

Lucinda Alexie
[REDACTED]
Bethel, AK 99559

From: jetta whittaker [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 1:21 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Andi Story
Subject: support for food resources in the operating budget

I am the Juneau Unitarian Universalist Fellowship's co-coordinator of an interfaith food pantry that is volunteer-run and hosted by Congregation Sukkat Shalom, located just over the bridge and up Cordova Street, in Juneau. We are a "no questions asked" pantry: we allow shoppers the dignity of selecting their food from what we have available on our shelves, just like you do when you shop. The only data we collect is the number of adults and number of children each shopper is feeding that week.

We obtain the bulk of the food items we provide from the Southeast Alaska Food Bank. At \$.18/pound, is the best deal in town, but it often doesn't have basics like eggs, cheese, potatoes and onions, so we two small congregations often have to purchase these items. We also purchase and make available basic personal hygiene items that are not funded by SNAP.

We started our pantry in 2020 just before COVID, to help our neighbors who live in the immediate area. Since then, with SNAP funding issues, inflation affecting food and all other regular household expenses, and employment options less available, our numbers continue to grow. Every week, we have young people, seniors, and families return because they cannot make ends meet without our help. Just last week, we served a new shopper, a single mother with four children, who had tears of gratefulness because she didn't know how she was going to feed her children until she found our pantry.

Thus, I am asking you each to support direct food purchasing funding for food banks and pantries in the state operating budget.

The most efficient and cost-effective way to provide food support is through local food banks. Alaska's food banks are doing a phenomenal job distributing bulk-purchased food and food rescued from grocery stores. They need operating funds to continue this important work.

Thank you.

From: AndyandMicheala Phillips [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 1:18 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Infant Learning Program Support

Hello,

My name is Micheala Phillips and I am emailing in support of increasing funding for the Infant Learning Programs. I help provide services in Anchorage for Programs for Infants and Children and my hope is that more families get to receive these valuable services.

Thank you for adding \$5.72 million to the budget for the Infant Learning Programs so we can continue to help kids and help them be ready for school. This also saves Alaska millions of dollars in special educations costs in years to come.

Thanks,

Micheala and Andy Phillips

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Brynn Bolling [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 11:55 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: ILP Funding

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

There are no perfect parents and there are no perfect children, but there are plenty of perfect moments along the way. Dave Willis

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From: Ralph Mackie [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 11:06 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: ILP Support

Dear Committee,

Please vote in favor of expanding Infant Learning Program supports in FY27.

Please support lowering the eligibility threshold from 50% to 25% developmental delay. 25% is a serious condition which very much needs early intervention for the future well being of the child, and save a small fortune on future Special Education costs.

Needless to say, ILP has not had a funding increase in 13 years, and I ask that you support a fair increase this year.

Sincerely,
Ralph Mackie
[REDACTED]
Craig, AK 99921

From: Meredith Burkhalter [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 10:36 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Infant learning program budget increase

Hello, my name is Meredith Burkhalter, and I live in Ketchikan. I am writing to ask that you approve the budget increase for the statewide infant learning program/early learning program. Here in Ketchikan, our early learning program is facilitated by community connections, and they have been a wonderful resource for our family. Just over a year ago, our baby boy was born prematurely, and before we were discharged from the NICU in Seattle, we were advised to look into a local infant learning program. I was amazed to find out that these are funded in every state for children to receive free services if they need them. Our son has been in Occupational Therapy for the last six months in order to receive help meeting his gross motor milestones. Twice monthly home visits from community connections have greatly assisted him in learning to roll, crawl, stand, etc. We are so grateful for the help, guidance, and reassurance provided to us by the infant learning program as first time parents of a premature baby.

Since we live in a more rural place like Ketchikan, we are used to not having the same access to resources that we would in a bigger city. We are so grateful to have access to the infant learning program here to make sure our child is learning and growing as he should. We hope you can see how vital the early learning program is for families across our state and prioritize it in the budget to proactively address the needs of children.

Thank you,

Meredith Burkhalter

From: Maggie Moss [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 10:20 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Increase budget for Infant Learning, please

Hello,
My name is Maggie Moss. I live in Ketchikan and have two small children. Both of them, as well as our entire family, have benefited greatly from the support that community connections' early learning program (infant learning) has provided specifically through speech therapy and occupational therapy. Their network of support in our community beyond what they provide has been life changing.

I'm emailing to ask for and show support for an increase in the state budget for the infant learning program. There has not been an increase in this budget for thirteen years, and as we know, NOTHING costs the same as it did back then! Increasing access to early intervention decreases the need for intervention in the already congested special Ed departments of bare budget schools. Our community is in crisis and needs this help.
I look forward to sending a thank you letter once this increase has been approved.

Thank you for your consideration,
Maggie Moss

From: Tandra Thompson <Tandra.Thompson@comconnections.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 9:27 AM
To: House Finance
Cc: Brynn Bolling
Subject: Please add \$5.72 million to the state budget for ILP.

Tandra Thompson, Ketchikan Alaska

My name is Tandra Thompson, and I live in Ketchikan Alaska. I am the Executive Director at Community Connections, and our Infant Learning Program is called Early Learning.

I am also a foster and adoptive parent of children who went through the Community Connections ILP program.

My husband and I were foster parents for seven years and many of the children who came through our home participated in Early Learning. Each child had different needs and Early Learning met them where they were. Some needed support with communication, some needed help with motor skills, and some provided parent coaching so we could better understand how to care for them. For every foster child we cared for, Early Learning was the first team that stepped in to help us stabilize, understand, and support their development.

Our last foster child who we ultimately adopted came to us at nine months old and was severely delayed. My husband and I and his biological mother all participated in Early Learning sessions together. We were not equipped to manage his feeding issues or his frightening night terrors. At that time the hospital did not have ongoing support for an infant with these issues (as they still do not), and we had nowhere else to turn. Early Learning stepped in with referrals developmental support feeding strategies and most importantly the confidence and effectiveness we needed as parents.

Over the next few years, he received occupational therapy physical therapy and speech therapy. Early Learning advocated for him when it was time to transition into the school district special education preschool. They helped us understand the process the evaluations and the services he would receive. They also helped us prepare him emotionally and developmentally so he could enter the preschool setting with support already in place.

He is now thirteen years old. He carries diagnoses of FASD, intellectual disability and apraxia. These are lifelong disabilities but because of Early Learning and consistent support throughout his early years he made tremendous progress. He has tested out of special education in math. Next year he will no longer need one to one special education services due to gains in emotional and behavioral regulation. He plays basketball, he wrestles, and his coaches and teammates are some of his greatest advocates. Early Learning set him and us on the right track. I do not believe we would have been brave enough to enroll him in all of these activities without the support and guidance we received early on. They helped with referrals and gave us the belief that he could break through many barriers.

Let me be clear, we would not have considered adopting our son if we felt we had no support in Ketchikan to serve his needs. Early Learning provided that support.

I am writing to support adding 5.7 million dollars to the state budget for the Infant Learning Program.

The Infant Learning Program has not received a funding increase from the State of Alaska in more than thirteen years. During that time, the cost of travel staff, professional services, insurance, mileage, and basic operations has continued to rise. Programs are expected to serve more families each year with the same level of funding, and this has placed Alaska ILP providers under significant strain.

Research across the country shows that children who receive infant learning or early intervention services need fewer and shorter special education services in the K through 12 system. Many children who graduate from ILP do not require special education at all once they enter school. Investing early reduces long term state costs and improves lifelong outcomes.

Alaska also has one of the most restrictive eligibility criteria in the nation. A child must demonstrate a fifty percent developmental delay to qualify. Children must fall very far behind before services can begin. Families especially in rural Alaska do not have access to private practice support and ILP is often their only option. More families need access earlier and more consistently.

The Infant Learning Program is underfunded statewide. Programs report waitlists staffing challenges reduced travel capacity for rural communities reduced frequency of home visits and higher turnover. Children cannot wait months for services. When delays deepen, they become harder and more expensive to address.

Decades of research from universities and national early childhood organizations show that early childhood intervention pays for itself over time through reduced special education needs increased family capacity improved long-term independence and better health outcomes. Every dollar invested early saves multiple dollars later.

The Infant Learning Program stabilizes families strengthens communities and opens futures for Alaska children. I respectfully ask that five point seven two million dollars be added to the state budget for the Infant Learning Program. Alaska children and families deserve consistent timely and effective early support.

Thank you for your time, Tandra



Tandra Thompson
Executive Director
Community Connections
Phone (907) 225-7825 x301
Fax (907) 225-1541

"If not us, then who will bring care and comfort? And if not now, when will hope begin?" — John Lewis

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From: Diane Deniger <Diane.Deniger@comconnections.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 9:24 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: FY27 Budget

To whom it may concern,

My name is Diane Deniger from Thorne Bay, AK, and I'm writing in support of expanding Infant Learning Program supports in FY27. There has been no increase in the budget for almost 13 years, and I would encourage you to support the Infant Learning Program service expansion to infants and children experiencing a 25% delay by adding this into the House budget for FY27 and beyond. This program is extremely beneficial to our families living in rural areas who may need more support without private practice to help out.

Thanks for your consideration,
Diane

DIANE DENIGER
Office Services Coordinator
Community Connections
(907) 826-3891

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From: Marjorie Alejano [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 1:28 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: ILP

“My name is Marjorie Magbanua and I’m writing in support of **expanding Infant Learning Program supports in FY27**. We were overjoyed to see the Legislature include this long-sought increment for ILP expansion in FY26 – THANK YOU – and today we ask you to do it again. Please support Infant Learning Program service expansion to infants and children experiencing a 25% developmental delay.

My son receives services in Sitka, 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.

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 promise to result in a 400% return on investment for the State of Alaska. Data show that a \$5.72 million increase in funding for ILP generates nearly \$35 million in savings to the state’s annual special education spend. Nearly half of the children who experience between 50% and 25% developmental delay and receive early intervention services will **not** need higher cost special education services when they get to K-12 schools.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Magbanua

From: Patricia Gormley [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 11:00 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Infant Learning Program

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

My name is Patricia Gormley and I'm writing in support of expanding Infant Learning Program supports in FY27. We were overjoyed to see the Legislature include this long-sought increment for ILP expansion in FY26 – THANK YOU – and today we ask you to do it again. Please support Infant Learning Program service expansion to infants and children experiencing a 25% developmental delay.

I am a parent of a child who benefited from the 0-3 program as well as an elementary teacher. In my role, I have seen the impact early intervention has had on my home community and most importantly on my own child's future. Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% to 25% developmental delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money. This includes in school districts where funds are already too low. If we can help students get services sooner, it will allow more students to be ready to learn without additional help once reaching school.

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 promise to result in a 400% return on investment for the State of Alaska. Data show that a \$5.72 million increase in funding for ILP generates nearly \$35 million in savings to the state's annual special education spend. Nearly half of the children who experience between 50% and 25% developmental delay and receive early intervention services will not need higher cost special education services when they get to K-12 schools.

In closing, please support expanding ILP programs from a 50% to a 25% developmental delay in FY27 and beyond! Thank you.

Kind regards,
Patricia Gormley, M.Ed

From: Calista A. Elzey <caelzey@alaskacenter.org>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 4:04 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Expansion of the Infant Learning Program (ILP)

To whom it may concern,

My name is Calista Elzey and I am a developmental therapist at the Alaska Center for Children and Adults in Fairbanks. I am writing to urge the House to support expanding ILP eligibility from a 50% to a 25% developmental delay in the FY27 budget. This investment offers a 400% return for the state, saving nearly \$35 million in future special education costs. More importantly, it ensures our youngest Alaskans get the support they need when it matters most. Please fund the ILP expansion.

Thank you,



Calista Elzey, LMSW

Developmental Therapist

Cell: (907) 888-2585 (call or text)

Fax: (907) 456-6124

1020 Barnette St., Fairbanks AK 99701

www.alaskacenter.org

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From: Kayla Parker <kparker@picak.org>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 2:55 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Infant Learning Program

My name is Kayla Parker, and I am writing in support of increasing funding for the Infant Learning Program. I provide services in Anchorage for PIC, and I hope that more families can continue to access these valuable early intervention services.

Thank you for adding \$5.72 million to the budget for Infant Learning Programs. This investment allows us to continue helping young children develop the skills they need to be ready for school while also saving the state millions of dollars in future special education costs.

Thank you for your time and consideration towards these important matters.

Kayla Parker

Early Intervention Developmental Therapist
Programs for Infants & Children [PIC Alaska](#)
Direct Phone: (907) 550-3014
Address: 161 Klewin St. #103, Anchorage, AK 99508

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From: Leslie Smith <l.smith@havenhousealaska.org>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 11:41 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for Child Advocacy Center Funding in the FY Operating Budget

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting Child Advocacy Centers serving children and families across Alaska. The **\$5.5 million included in the budget** reflects the Legislature's recognition of the essential role CACs play in responding to child abuse and supporting multidisciplinary teams throughout the state.

I also strongly urge the committee to **maintain the additional \$1.5 million increment** intended to offset reductions in federal **Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)** funding.

Child Advocacy Centers serve as a coordinated response to child abuse. When a child discloses abuse, CACs provide a safe, child-focused environment where trained forensic interviewers, advocates, law enforcement, child protection workers, and medical professionals work together to ensure children are protected and supported. This coordinated approach reduces trauma for children while strengthening investigations and improving outcomes for families.

Federal VOCA reductions have created significant uncertainty for victim service providers across Alaska. Without stable funding, CACs face real challenges maintaining essential services such as forensic interviews, family advocacy, and multidisciplinary team coordination.

The **additional \$1.5 million** will help ensure CACs can continue providing these critical services and maintain the infrastructure that allows communities across Alaska to respond effectively when children experience abuse.

Every child deserves to be heard, protected, and supported. Stable funding for Child Advocacy Centers helps ensure that when a child finds the courage to speak, Alaska's system is ready to respond.

Thank you for your continued support of Alaska's children and the professionals working every day to ensure their safety and healing.

Sincerely,



HAVEN HOUSE
havenhousealaska.org

Leslie Smith
Central Peninsula Children's
Advocacy Center Manager

l.smith@havenhousealaska.org
907-283-4455 fax: 907-283-4486
601 Frontage Rd. Ste. 102
Kenai, AK 99611
On Call: 907-690-6186

From: Jason Custer <jason.c@aptalaska.com>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 11:37 AM
To: House Finance; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Calvin Schrage
Subject: Letter of Support - Renewable Energy Fund Program
Attachments: AVEC APT IPEC Joint REF Letter 2-24-2026.pdf

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee.

I wanted to share a joint letter from Alaska Village Electric Cooperative, Alaska Power & Telephone Company, and Inside Passage Electric Cooperative – together serving 100 Alaska communities – urging funding support for the Renewable Energy Fund at a level consistent with recent historical practice - \$14.2m – and at minimum no less than \$10m.

This is particularly important given the recent increase in oil prices associated with the Iran war.

The letter is attached and below. Thank you.

February 25, 2026

Dear Members of the Alaska State Legislature.

We represent Alaska Village Electric Cooperative (AVEC), Alaska Power & Telephone Company (AP&T), and Inside Passage Electric Cooperative (IPEC). Collectively, our utilities serve more than 100 communities across Alaska — including many with the highest energy costs and the most challenging geographic, logistical, economic, and weather conditions in the state. Our organizations have decades of experience designing, permitting, constructing, and maintaining hydropower, wind, solar, and battery energy storage projects in Alaska.

We respectfully urge you to include robust funding for the Renewable Energy Fund (REF) in the FY budget at a level consistent with recent historical practice — \$14.2 million — and at minimum no less than \$10 million. Over the past three years, the Legislature has invested an average of \$14.2 million annually in this highly successful program.

The Renewable Energy Fund is Alaska’s flagship energy investment program. Through objective, data-driven evaluation criteria administered by the Alaska Energy Authority, the REF ensures that funded projects are technically sound, financially responsible, and deliver strong public returns. For nearly two decades, REF has been the State’s most effective tool available to lower energy costs, strengthen energy security, and reduce dependence on imported diesel by substituting locally produced, clean resources.

The fiscal case for continued investment is compelling. REF-funded projects currently offset an estimated 13 million gallons of diesel each year. Valued at a conservative \$4 per gallon, that equates to approximately \$52 million in annual fuel savings statewide. That savings figure exceeds the current annual payout capacity of the Power Cost Equalization (PCE) Endowment and is equivalent to a 5% annual draw on a \$1 billion fund.

Without these renewable investments, PCE would be able to cover only about half of its statutory obligation. Because the State is the primary beneficiary of reduced PCE payouts, continued REF funding is not only an energy policy decision — it is a sound fiscal strategy.

The Renewable Energy Fund enjoys broad, bipartisan respect across Alaska. Nearly every utility has utilized the program, and virtually every community — along with schools, families, and businesses — has benefited from it. Sustaining this program at \$14.2 million will protect its effectiveness and momentum. At a minimum, we urge an appropriation of no less than \$10 million to ensure the program remains viable and impactful.

Thank you for your service to the State of Alaska and for your careful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

William R. Stamm

William Stamm, President & CEO – AVEC

Jason Custer

Jason Custer, VP Corporate Development – AP&T

Brandon Shaw

Brandon Shaw, CEO - IPEC

Jason Custer, CMA, PMP
VP of Corporate Development

📍 136 Misty Marie Lane

Ketchikan, AK 99901

☎ (907) 617-3773

✉ jason.c@aptalaska.com

🌐 aptalaska.com



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From: Jessica Pyatt [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 11:31 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Early Learning

My name is Jessica Pyatt and I'm writing in support of 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 I ask that you take that same step again.

I am writing to encourage expansion of ELP. I am writing as parent whose child benefited from ELP x2 and as a physical therapist who has worked with a couple of children. ELP literally saves lives. Often the lives of mothers in crisis with little to now external support from the medical system, our modern individual American society, or otherwise on how to care for their child. In Sitka we have NO lactation support through the hospital. Despite them having a certified lactation consultant on staff - the hospital will not offer the services as it does not make them 'enough' money (even through it is 100% covered by insurance under the ACA). Thus in Sitka new moms under the stress of trying to keep their baby alive and fed only have one option: an OT at Early Learning. And it is not just feeding. There is family support, social emotional support, maternal mental health, speech therapy, motor milestones. All things that if addressed early can save on costs in the future.

Please look at the big picture costs. Yes there is some upfront costs but if we support families early we prevent increased costs to the State down the line. Early Learning prevents and saves special education costs, medicaid costs, OCS costs, medical costs, department of corrections etc. Many of us do not come from backgrounds that give us the foundation to be parents, thus we need the social services to assist in breaking generational gaps in this knowledge.

If we want to a future in our state we need to support families in the state. Otherwise all familie

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 maintain this commitment in FY27.

Jessica Pyatt
Sitka, AK
[REDACTED]

From: Rita Short [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 10:29 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support Early Childhood Funding in HB263

Dear House Finance Committee Members and House Leadership,

I'm writing to ask you to include several important early childhood investments in **HB263, this year's operating budget**. These programs support Alaska's youngest children and help working families stay stable. Continued funding is critical to keep these efforts going.

Please include the following items at these levels:

- **\$7.5 million for the ROOTS Award** – This program helps retain early childhood educators by providing financial support to those working in child care. It plays a key role in keeping experienced teachers in the field and maintaining stable, high-quality programs for families.
- **\$5.72 million for the Infant Learning Program (ILP)** – ILP provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities. These supports help children build important skills early and often reduce the need for more intensive services later in school.
- **\$680,000 for Head Start** – Head Start supports school readiness by focusing on the whole child, including early learning, health, and family engagement.
- **\$500,000 for Parents as Teachers (PAT)** – Parents as Teachers is a home visiting program that helps families strengthen parenting skills and support their child's development from the start.
- **\$400,000 for Best Beginnings Imagination Library** – This program provides free books to young children across Alaska, helping build early literacy skills and a love of reading.

Investments like these make a real difference for children, families, and communities across Alaska. Thank you for your time and for considering support for these important programs.

Sincerely,

Rita Short
Kotzebue
Special Education Teacher at NWABSD
[REDACTED]

From: Cristine Aki <caki@picak.org>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 9:51 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: ILP Funding

My name is Cristine Aki, and I am contacting you in support of increasing funding for the Infant Learning Program. I provide services in Anchorage for PIC, and my hope is that more families get to receive these valuable services.

Thank you for adding \$5.72 million to the budget for the Infant Learning Programs so we can continue to help kids, support their school readiness, save Alaska millions of dollars in special education costs in years to come, and further invest in the future of Alaska.

Cristine Aki, M.S. CCC-SLP
Early Interventionist/Speech-Language Pathologist

161 Klevin St., STE 103
Anchorage, AK 99508

907-215-1108 Direct
907-561-8060 Main
907-563-3172 Fax
caki@picak.org

From: Ashley Davis <adavis@bbahc.org>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 9:36 AM
To: House Finance
Cc: Rep. Bryce Edgmon
Subject: Support for Child Advocacy Center Funding in the FY Budget

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for your continued support of Child Advocacy Centers serving children and families across Alaska. The \$5.5 million included in the budget for CACs reflects the Legislature's recognition of the essential role these centers play in responding to child abuse and supporting multidisciplinary teams.

I also strongly support the \$1.5 million increment included to help offset the FY27 loss of federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding. VOCA cuts will significantly impact victim services in Alaska, and this additional funding will help ensure CACs can continue providing critical services such as forensic interviews, advocacy, and coordination with law enforcement and child protection partners.

The loss of VOCA funding for our CAC will mean the loss of funding for the majority of the salary of our Forensic Interviewer/Case Manager, as well as a portion of the salary of the CAC Director.

Thank you for supporting Alaska's children and the professionals working every day to ensure their safety and healing.

Sincerely,

Ashley N. Davis, Ed.D., CTSS
Program Director
Nitaput Child Advocacy Center
Forensic Services Department Manager
Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation
PO Box 130 Dillingham, AK 99576
(907) 842-9674
<https://bbahc.org/cac>
Crisis line: 1-888-865-0799

Our mission is to provide an age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, and timely response to reports of child abuse in the Bristol Bay region.

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From: Donna Kelley <dkelley@picak.org>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 9:30 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: ILP funding 2026
Attachments: Outlook-logo

My name is Donna Kelley and I am writing in support of increasing funding for the Infant Learning Program in Alaska. I have been an early intervention provider for over 35 years. For the past 13 years I have provided services in Anchorage through Programs for Infants and Children (PIC). These services are vital to young children experiencing developmental delays and differences, and the investment of intervention at this age will save significantly on services related costs in the long run. My hope is that more families with young children will be able to receive these valuable services.

Thank you for adding \$5.72 million to the budget for the Infant Learning Programs so we can continue to help kids and help them be ready for school as well as saving Alaska millions of dollars in special education costs in years to come.

Best,

*Donna Kelley, M.Ed., OTR/L,
Team Manager/Early Interventionist
Infant Family Specialist, IMH-E® (Level II)
Direct: (907) 550-3097
Email: dkelley@picak.org*



From: Amanda Sialofi <amanda.sialofi@ilisagvik.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 9:24 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: A Note of Thanks: Critical Funding for CDVSA and Victims' Services

Uvlaalluataq (good morning), Members of the Subcommittee for Health and Social Services,

I wanted to reach out and send a sincere thank you for your recent budget recommendations. The support you've shown for survivors and the agencies that serve them is truly meaningful.

Specifically, I'm so grateful for the recommended \$1.2 million increase to the CDVSA grants. This is what actually keeps the lights on; it ensures our shelter doors stay open, and our crisis lines are staffed 24/7 so that no one has to face a reaching-out moment alone. The \$500,000 for legal services and \$592,000 for the Violent Crimes Compensation Board are also huge. For a survivor, having an advocate during a divorce or the funds to rebuild after a crime isn't just "assistance"—it's the difference between staying in a violent situation and finally moving beyond it. Additionally, seeing the \$1.5 million increase for Child Advocacy Centers gives me a lot of hope that we can keep these vital investigations moving forward to protect our children.

Thank you for recognizing that these services aren't just line items, but essential tools for safety and justice. I truly hope you'll continue to protect these funds as the process moves forward.

Quyanaqpak (thank you)!

Nayaanḡaq (best regards),



Amanda Sialofi, MS, MPhil | she/her
Dean of Administration
[Ilisagvik College](https://www.ilisagvikcollege.edu) | PO Box 749 | Utqiagvik (Barrow), AK 99723
Direct: 907-852-1768
Email: amanda.sialofi@ilisagvik.edu

Quyyatigigiga iḡuuniḡnigalu savagnigalu nunḡanni Iḡupiat.
I am thankful to live and work on the lands of the Iḡupiat.

From: Amy Simpson <asimpson@picak.org>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 9:00 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support Infant Learning Programs with \$5.72 million increase

Chair and members of the committee, I am Amy Simpson, Executive Director of Programs for Infants and Children. Every year, PIC provides individualized services to more than 690 children and families who qualify for Part C services. PIC receives more than 900 referrals every year. Hundreds of children and families who have significant developmental delays never receive services because they don't meet Alaska's restrictive eligibility requirements. We need to act now to allow every child to succeed in school and life.

I want to **thank you** for your continued support of the Alaska Infant Learning Program. Last year, this committee demonstrated **strong leadership** by adding \$5.72 million to the operating budget because you recognized a simple truth: when we help children with developmental delays early, the state saves money later.

Unfortunately, last year that vision was not shared by the governor.

I am here today to respectfully ask you to **reaffirm** your commitment — to add the \$5.72 million back into the budget, expand eligibility, and ensure that infants and toddlers across Alaska receive the early support that sets them on a path toward success in school and in life.

The need is urgent. ILP has not received a funding increase since 2013. In that time, the cost of doing business has risen dramatically, many of our costs have increased by 25 percent or more. Programs have stretched every dollar, doing more with less for over a decade.

But there is a limit. When funding does not keep pace, children receive fewer services during the very window when intervention is **most** effective.

We have weathered years of reduced resources, a pandemic, and historic inflation. We have also demonstrated that investing now can avoid an estimated \$35 million in future special education costs. But those savings only happen if we act early.

This is not just an expenditure. It is a **strategic** investment in Alaska's children. I urge you to invest in our youngest Alaskans and help secure better outcomes for their futures — and for our state.

Thank you!

Amy Simpson

Executive Director
Programs for Infants and Children
907-550-3024



From: Amy Simpson <asimpson@picak.org>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2026 8:06 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: FW: Infant learning Programs

From: Amy Nicolaisen [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 7, 2026 9:59 AM
To: House.Finance.Committee@akleg.gov
Subject: Infant learning Programs

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

My name is Amy Nicolaisen and I am writing in support of increasing funding for the Infant Learning Program. I receive services in Anchorage and my hope is that more families get to receive services like I have for my child.

My son has benefited greatly from the incredible care and support we receive in helping him reach his milestones. He has progressed from rolling over to crawling and now we are working on walking and language development. The providers are incredibly kind and patient, they offer support and encouragement to not just my son but our family. They are in communication with his healthcare team in an effort to meet his changing needs. I appreciate their incredible breadth of knowledge and dedication to young children.

Thank you for adding \$5.72 million to the budget for the Infant Learning Programs so they can continue to help kids and help them be ready for school. And saving Alaska millions of dollars in special education costs in years to come.

Sincerely,

Amy Nicolaisen (Proud PIC Parent)

--

Amy Nicolaisen
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99509

[REDACTED]

From: Amy Nicolaisen [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 07, 2026 10:18 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Infant Learning Programs

My name is Amy Nicolaisen and I am writing in support of increasing funding for the Infant Learning Program. I receive services in Anchorage and my hope is that more families get to receive services like I have for my child.

My son has benefited greatly from the incredible care and support we receive in helping him reach his milestones. He has progressed from rolling over to crawling and now we are working on walking and language development. The providers are incredibly kind and patient, they offer support and encouragement to not just my son but our family. They are in communication with his healthcare team in an effort to meet his changing needs. I appreciate their incredible breadth of knowledge and dedication to young children.

Thank you for adding \$5.72 million to the budget for the Infant Learning Programs so they can continue to help kids and help them be ready for school. And saving Alaska millions of dollars in special education costs in years to come.

Sincerely,

Amy Nicolaisen (Proud PIC Parent)

--
Amy Nicolaisen
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99509
[REDACTED]

From: Austin Ahmasuk [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 05, 2026 9:23 AM
To: House Tribal Affairs; Senate Finance Committee; House Finance
Subject: HB 263 needs substantial improvement

My name is Austin Ahmasuk from Nome, AK. I am writing to encourage the Legislature to adopt a budget that better reflects the realities, needs, and values of Alaskans. We consistently express the same priorities: strong public schools, safe communities, clean air and water, affordable living, and a government that works with us rather than against us.

The structure of our state budget does not fully reflect those values. Much of our public spending supports agencies and programs that provide limited or uncertain benefit to Alaskans. Essential services like education, local public safety, water and wastewater infrastructure frequently operate under chronic instability.

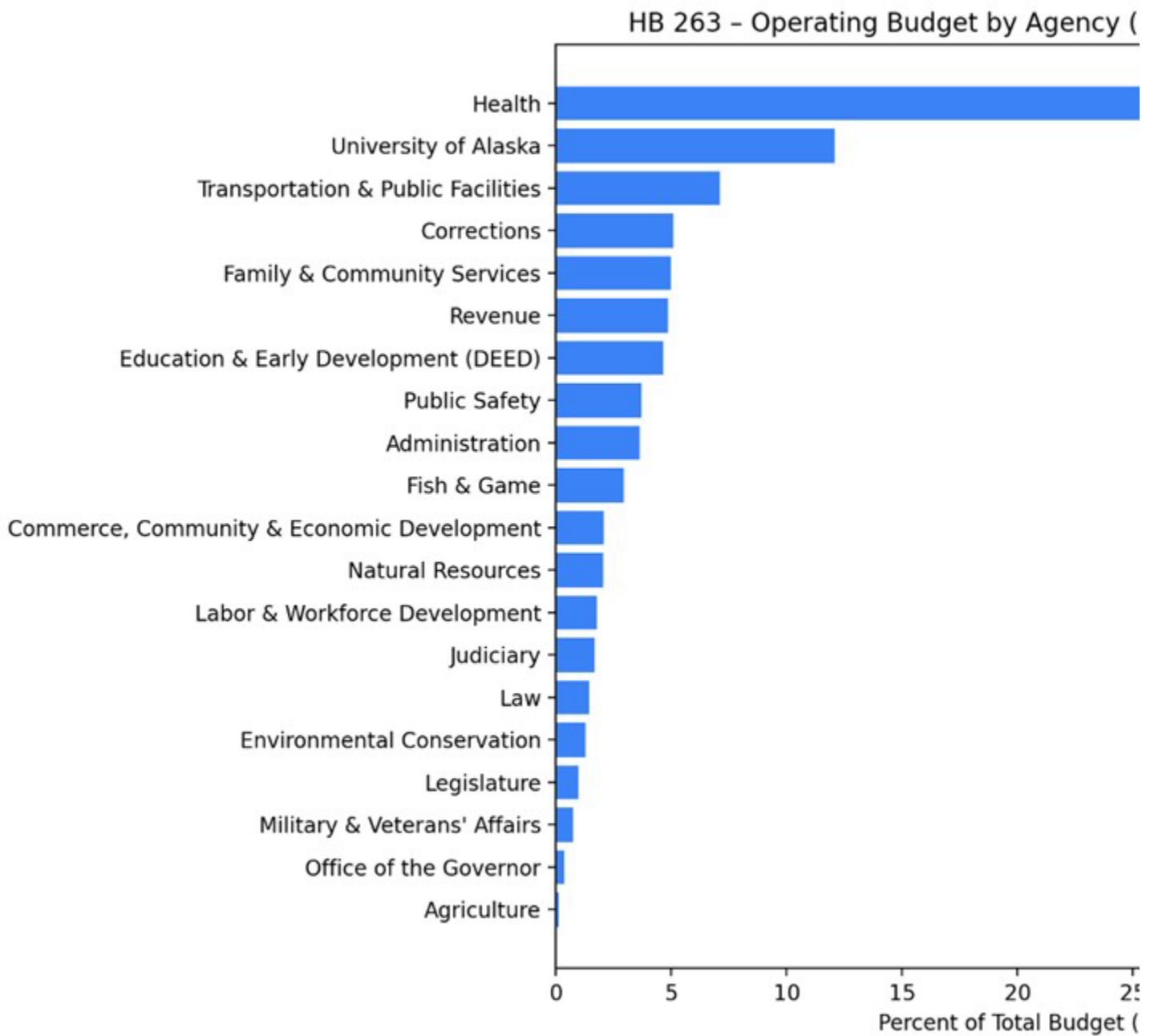


Figure above shows approximate percentage breakdown in the present form of HB263

A people centered budget should improve the lives of Alaskans. With that in mind, the Legislature should rebalance the budget in several key areas.

Strengthen Education and Workforce Development

Alaskans overwhelmingly support stable, adequately funded public education. This includes K-12 schools, early childhood programs, vocational education, and the University of Alaska system. These investments pay lifelong dividends in local employment, healthy communities.

The Legislature must prioritize increased and stabilized K-12 funding, career and technical education (including trades training and growing our own teachers).

For decades, Alaska's schools especially in rural and village communities have relied on hundreds of out-of-state and international teachers, including many who serve under H-1B visas. These educators have brought commitment, professionalism, and care to Alaskan students, and **they deserve our gratitude for stepping into difficult positions that would have otherwise gone unfilled**. Their work has kept many schools open and functioning.

At the same time, the reliance on outside recruitment highlights a deeper truth: Alaska has NOT meaningfully invested in growing its own educators for generations, and the teacher shortage in our village schools is not a sudden crisis it is the predictable result of long term **UNDERINVESTMENT** in education and growing our own teachers.

A stronger Alaska begins with building local teachers, especially in rural districts where turnover is high and stability is essential. We know from decades of research and lived experience that students learn best when schools have teachers who understand local culture, language, and community life. A "grow-your-own" approach supporting paraprofessionals, high school students, community members, and local residents in becoming certified teachers is not only more sustainable, but also more aligned with Alaska's values and long-term educational needs.

We can honor and appreciate the teachers who come here from around the world while still recognizing the urgent need to grow our own. These two truths coexist, and both matter. The future of Alaska's education system depends on building stable local teachers that keeps our schools rooted in the communities they serve.

Reinforce Public Safety Where It's Needed Most

Public safety concerns are widespread across both rural and urban Alaska. Strengthening VPSOs, supporting troopers, improving emergency response capacity, and building robust reentry programs all create safer, healthier, more stable communities. Expanding front line safety not administrative layers should be a core budget priority.

Protect Clean Air, Clean Water, and Community Health

Clean water, clean air, and healthy lands are essential to every Alaskan. They support subsistence, fisheries, public health, and our state's history.

A budget that reflects our values would strengthen:

- Village water and sanitation systems
- Environmental protection, oversight, and testing
- Spill response and prevention
- Air and water quality monitoring

These programs consistently deliver high public value at relatively low cost.

However, in one of the wealthiest nations on earth, communities in rural Alaska still rely on honeybuckets (plastic buckets lined with trash bags) that families must carry and dump by hand. This is not a historical curiosity. It is a present day reality.

Across Alaska, villages continue to face:

- Chronic freeze-ups that shut down water lines
- Sewer main failures that last for weeks
- Lift stations that break down
- Water plants that run out of parts or operators
- Communities where elders, children, and families still carry human waste in buckets

These conditions would never be acceptable anywhere else in the United States. They should not be normalized, and they should not be tolerated in Alaska. If in the capital offices at Juneau or any well-served district there was lost running water for weeks, or had families carrying their own waste in freezing temperatures, it would be treated as an immediate emergency.

In rural Alaska, too often, it is treated as an annual and everyday fact of life. The budget must reflect a basic truth: No Alaskan should live without safe, reliable water and sewer. Not ever. Lets consider the inequity plainly; if residents of any

urban center (again imagine with the halls of the capitol in Juneau) had to empty their waste by hand during the winter, our state would declare a crisis. The same urgency must apply to rural Alaska, the need is real, and the consequences are profound for public health, dignity, and daily life. Ending honey buckets is not an aspiration. It is a moral obligation.

Reduce Spending on State Entities With Limited Public Benefit

One of the most effective ways to rebalance the budget without harming essential services is to reduce or reshape programs whose benefits do not reach most Alaskans. A primary example is the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA).

AIDEA has become known for, investing public money into high-risk megaprojects with uncertain or minimal returns. Prioritizing projects that often lack local consent or community benefit. Holding large administrative and financial structures with limited transparency. Supporting developments that may conflict with clean air, clean water, or subsistence resources

These concerns have been raised by communities, auditors, and independent analyses over multiple years. AIDEA's returns on investment have been inconsistent, and several of its major projects have either stalled or faced significant public opposition.

Reducing AIDEA's budget footprint or redirecting portions of its funding would not harm essential state functions. Instead, it would free resources for services Alaskans rely on every day.

Programs with limited public benefit is the best place to find savings, especially when education, public safety, and our environment have needs.

Reinvent Government to Work With Communities

Alaskans do not ask for "more government" or "less government" we ask for a government that works better for us. A more Alaska centered allocation of funding would emphasize:

- Front line services instead of administrative overhead
- Tribal–state partnerships where tribes provide superior outcomes
- Regional offices empowered to solve community problems
- Local control and community driven decision making

A budget that reflects local realities builds trust, reduces waste, and improves outcomes.

If you rebalance HB 263 using community centered ideas for change, a shift of the listed areas might look like the following:

Category	Current Share	Improved share for Alaskans	Reasoning
Health + Human Services	~38%	38–40%	Keep strong; improve behavioral health, elder care, rural access
Education (K–12 + Higher Ed)	~17%	20–25%	Stabilize schools; grow workforce; support early learning
Public Safety	~4%	5–6%	Strengthen VPSOs; rural enforcement
Environment / Water / Sanitation	~1.5%	3–4%	Essential for public health & subsistence
Transportation	~7.%	7–8%	Maintain essential access & infrastructure
Administrative / Corporate Entities	~10–12%	5–7%	Reduce overhead, speculative megaproject spending

The Legislature has an opportunity to produce a budget that truly reflects what Alaskans value most. By strengthening education, public safety, environmental health, and essential services while reducing spending on agencies and programs that provide limited or uncertain benefit.

Rebalancing away from entities such as AIDEA, the Alaska Oil & Gas Conservation Commission, the Alaska Gasline Development Corporation, and other commissions whose primary role is to promote or subsidize industrial resource development and moving those dollars into programs that directly serve Alaskans is a reflection of what Alaskans value. Those development authorities often pursue high risk, speculative ventures that may or may not deliver tangible benefits to Alaskans. Meanwhile, many rural communities still struggle with basic needs like reliable water and sewer, safe housing, affordable energy, stable schools, and consistent public safety. Aligning the budget with the real needs of Alaska means choosing investments that improve everyday life rather than subsidizing projects that too often bypass our communities. The shifts I am proposing honors the responsibility of state government to ensure that state resources should serve the people first.

Alaska thrives when we invest in our people, our communities, and our lands.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Austin Ahmasuk

Nome, AK

From: Emily Johnson [REDACTED]
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

From: Courtney Moore [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2026 7:37 PM
To: House State Affairs; House Finance; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education funding and oil taxes

Hello Legislators, thank you for reading this and putting it on the record.

This is a blanket support email for upcoming committees and testimony opportunities to raise oil taxes, get rid of the per barrel tax credits, tax S corps, close all loopholes and fund our children's educations and other opportunities to make Alaska better for working class families and people.

I support HB152, SB92, the changes made to 289, the \$150 tax per Alaskan, taxing out of state workers, seasonal sales tax- the whole kit and kaboodle. I appreciate the 17% oil tax that Wilicowski presented, and hb152 that Galvin presented. I do not support corporate oil taxes sunseting in 2031 like Dunleavy proposed. I do not support DOC getting anymore money, I support cuts to their spending.

I have three children, their class sizes are already 30-35 kids, I'm still renting because I can't afford an overpriced home, my rents been raised 5 times in 2 years, the most recent was another \$170 hike. I never could afford daycare, \$2700 is what it would cost me PER month to have afterschool care from Camp Fire for 2.5 hours a day for 3 kids, I was quoted \$1700 a month with a 10g deductible for ACA in November, I live basically paycheck to paycheck- I'm exactly who you worry about raising taxes for. Please raise them. I believe everyone will be fine and figure it out. The people that protest the most about funding social services, public services, education are for the most part oil boomers that came up and were able to raise a family on one income and buy a home for 180g. Their homes are paid off, their retirements- funded, their children- grown. Working class Alaskans are slowly drowning year after year.

I'm still deeply in love with Alaska, I was born here, raised here, have birthed 3 children here. I would like to stay here and have our future be here. We have to start fully investing in education, child care, affordable housing or we are going to go down with the ship.

Thank you for letting me provide written testimony.

Courtney Moore
99501

From: Jessika Aldridge [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 2:20 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Urgent Request to Support Campbell STEM Elementary

Hello,

I am writing as a parent of two young boys who currently attend Campbell STEM Elementary, and as a proud alumna of Campbell Elementary myself (1994–2001). My younger brother attended in the 2000s, and even my uncles were students there in the late 1980s. This school has served generations of my family and remains a cornerstone of our community.

Beyond the deep personal connection, I am profoundly grateful that my children have the opportunity to attend a school so intentionally focused on STEM enrichment and real-world application. Campbell STEM Elementary provides an educational model that prepares students not only academically, but practically - equipping them with problem-solving skills, collaboration experience, and critical thinking abilities that will serve them throughout their lives.

As the only STEM-focused elementary school in our state, Campbell STEM fulfills a unique and essential role. Closing it would be a short-sighted decision with lasting consequences - not only for current students, but for the long-term vitality of our local economy and workforce. Strong, forward-thinking STEM programs are not luxuries; they are investments in our state's future competitiveness and innovation capacity.

Campbell STEM serves students who may not always thrive in traditional classroom environments. It fosters curiosity, creativity, collaboration, and empathy at a time when many children struggle with disengagement. The school has built more than a curriculum - it has built a culture. Students are not treated as data points or budget line items. They are known and valued. Dr. Whitt and the dedicated faculty understand each child's strengths and challenges and intentionally cultivate an environment where students feel seen, heard, and capable of success.

Closing this school would not simply relocate students; it would dismantle a carefully cultivated community that affirms children's potential and encourages them to innovate and lead. It would also send a troubling message that specialized, forward-looking educational programs are expendable.

I am equally concerned about the process by which this decision has moved forward. The accelerated timeline, limited transparency, and shortened window for meaningful community input have deepened the divide between families and decision-makers. Despite these constraints, community engagement was substantial - a clear reflection of how much this school matters. The rushed nature of the decision, combined with the recent bond measure intended to improve Campbell STEM, has understandably led many in our community to question whether our voices are truly being considered.

The perception that such a significant decision could be made hastily - and, as described by administration, effectively reduced to a "coin flip" - undermines public trust. Our families deserve thoughtful research, transparent reasoning, and meaningful dialogue before a decision of this magnitude is finalized.

Our city needs Campbell STEM. Our students need Campbell STEM. If we are serious about preparing the next generation to contribute meaningfully to our state's future economy and workforce, we should be expanding access to innovative programs like this - not eliminating them.

I respectfully urge you to push back against this decision and advocate for sustained investment in Campbell STEM Elementary. The future of our children and our community depends on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jessika Aldridge

From: Austin Ahmasuk [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 9:00 AM
To: House Finance; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: comments on HB263

My name is Austin Ahmasuk resident of Nome. I am writing to express concerns regarding HB 263, the FY27 Operating Budget, and to strongly urge the Legislature to prioritize critical needs that directly affect the health, safety, and future of Alaskan communities. After reviewing the bill, I am concerned that HB 263 includes broad departmental appropriations but does NOT sufficiently protect or prioritize the areas that matter most to the well being of Alaska's people and environment: education, environmental protection, fish and game management, and rural sanitation.

These areas are not optional. They are foundational to the survival and resilience of communities across the state.

1. Protect Funding for Alaska's Schools

Many districts across Alaska are struggling with outdated facilities, teacher shortages, escalating operational costs, and deeply inadequate Base Student Allocation support. HB 263 establishes general education support allocations, but the needs on the ground far exceed these amounts.

I strongly oppose any amendments or reallocations that would:

reduce operating support for K–12 education and their infrastructure,
shift funds away from classroom instruction,
or limit the ability of districts to recruit and retain qualified teachers.

The future of Alaska depends on stable, fully resourced schools.

2. Maintain Strong Environmental Protection and Public Health Services

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is tasked with protecting air, water, food safety, community sanitation, and environmental health. HB 263 seems to maintain DEC operating funds, but does not increase capacity in areas where needs are acute including rural sanitation, food safety, spill prevention, and environmental monitoring.

I urge the Legislature to reject any cuts or diversions affecting DEC and instead strengthen:

environmental monitoring and oversight (air and water) programs,
water/wastewater oversight and infrastructure,
spill response readiness,
and contaminated site management.

Our pristine environments must remain that way and is foundational to public health.

3. Support Fish & Game Management and Subsistence Resources

The Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) receives departmental funding under HB 263, but, again, it appears only at baseline levels.

Given declining fish stocks and increased pressures on subsistence resources, ADF&G needs stable or increased funding not reductions or reallocations.

I urge the Legislature to protect funding for:

subsistence research and monitoring,
wildlife conservation and habitat management,
fisheries management necessary for hundreds of rural communities,

These resources define who we are as Alaskans and must be protected. Fish and Game use is one of the constitutionally protected uses in Alaska. Our constitution provides public access to fish and wildlife with sustained yield management obligations and we are one of the few states that affords the public a right to be involved in fish and game management through strong public processes such as advisory committees.

4. Make Rural Water & Sewer a Priority Alaskans Should Not Still Live With Honey Buckets

Hundreds probably thousands of households in rural Alaska still rely on honey buckets, conditions that would be unthinkable in any other American community. Many communities have been waiting since the 1970s for safe drinking water and sewer systems. This is an ongoing inequity with direct consequences for health, dignity, and community stability.

While HB 263 provides departmental operations funding, I am not convinced it includes any dedicated boosts to address sanitation in unserved communities. Rural water/sewer needs require coordinated state commitment, and they should not be overshadowed by lower priority appropriations or discretionary programs.

I strongly urge the Legislature to:

reject any reallocation that pulls money away from rural sanitation,
protect funding for community water and wastewater operators,
preserve public health positions essential to sanitation planning, and
ensure that operating budget decisions do not undermine capital investments needed to end honey bucket use.

Water and sewer infrastructure is not a luxury. It is a basic human right.

5. Oppose Any Diversions of Funding Toward Lower Priority Projects

Although HB 263 contains no specific funding for large development projects such as mines or port expansions, it is important that no operating funds or last minute amendments divert resources away from rural sanitation, environmental health, education, or fish and game management.

Given the scale of unmet needs in rural Alaska, every available state dollar should support the health, safety, and resilience of communities not subsidize projects that do not meet basic public health or education priorities.

Conclusion

For decades, Alaska has deferred critical investments in sanitation, education, and environmental health especially in rural and Indigenous communities. At the same time, pressures on wildlife, fish stocks, and environmental systems have increased.

I respectfully ask the Legislature to ensure that the FY27 Operating Budget:

Maintains or increases support for schools,
Strengthens environmental and public health capacity,
Protects fish and wildlife management, and
Does not divert any funds away from long overdue rural water and sewer needs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Austin Ahmasuk

██████████

Nome, AK 99762

From: Robin Bond [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2026 10:30 AM
To: House Finance

Please stop wasting Alaskan's hard earned \$. Please stop wasting our money on your pay raises and taking trips to the capital to meet when you can meet in anchorage or willow (where the capital is suppose to be....) . Alaskan's are tired of the over budget spending and taking the PFD for the government spending short comings. Start operating under budget like public officials are suppose to do. As most Americans are loosing faith in our state and federal government rapidly , I think it is vital to stop braking the law because. Taxation without representation is theft.....and it isn't looking good and I would at least like to see my state do the right thing and stop making us hate you all for starving us and working us to death foe your pleasure... TIA ! This email is for all these noted.

House.Finance@akleg.gov

Representative.Neal.Foster@akleg.gov

Representative.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov

Representative.Calvin.Schrage@akleg.gov

Representative.Alyse.Galvin@akleg.gov

Representative.Sara.Hannan@akleg.gov

Representative.Nellie.Unangiq.Jimmie@akleg.gov

From: heather anne [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2026 3:51 PM
To: House Finance; House Education
Subject: FUND OUR SCHOOLS and SUPPORT OUR KIDS

The Alaska State Constitution guarantees public education for all of Alaska's children. While it doesn't set funding levels, it implies that schools will be fully funded to guarantee success. How can our kids be successful when classrooms are too full, teachers are forced to teach subjects they aren't trained in (art vs. music, for example), sports are cancelled and special education is diminished. These are just a few examples. The state needs to raise the BSA to support our kids and help them be successful, contributing members of society. Alaska needs our kids to stay in the state and help it grow.

Raise the BSA. Support our kids. Period.

Sincerely yours,

Heather A. Coletti, Alaskan resident for over 25 years

From: Shelly Shupe [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 16, 2026 9:32 AM
To: House Finance; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Calvin Schrage; Rep. Alyse Galvin; Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Nellie Jimmie
Subject: Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend statute

Good morning House Finance majority members.

First, I'd like to thank you for your service.

I am emailing this morning to express my extreme displeasure with our PFD being zeroed out in the budget by House Finance. I will add that I have been extremely displeased with the PFD shenanigans of our legislature over the last decade since Governor Walker betrayed Alaskans with the courts to change our PFD and its traditional distribution.

You are our lawmakers for goodness sake. Why has the legislature not brought forward a constitutional amendment or whatever it would legally take to change the PFD statute instead of breaking the existing one year over year over year by taking money from Alaskans including those most financially vulnerable? Is it because it would have to be put in front of the people to vote on? I can not pretend to understand all of the ins and outs of changing this statute but it baffles me that you all want to continue to take and spend our share but don't exercise your power to do so by changing the law. I would appreciate some kind of summary explanation from you on why you haven't.

When asked "what is the current Alaska state statute for the permanent fund dividend", GROK on X (Twitter) says this:

The current Alaska state statute governing the **Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD)** is primarily found in **Alaska Statutes Title 43, Chapter 23** (Permanent Fund Dividends), with key related provisions in **Title 37, Chapter 13** (Alaska Permanent Fund and appropriations from its earnings). The core framework remains in place as of February 2026, under **AS 43.23**. This chapter covers eligibility, application processes, determination of the dividend amount, payments, deductions, and related matters. The official compilation is hosted by the Alaska Legislature (akleg.gov) and the Permanent Fund Dividend Division (pfd.alaska.gov).

Key Sections in AS 43.23

- **AS 43.23.005:** Eligibility requirements. An individual must have been an Alaska resident for the entire qualifying year (typically the calendar year prior to payment), intend to remain a resident, and meet other criteria (e.g., not incarcerated for certain felonies). Parents/guardians can apply for minors or disabled individuals.
- **AS 43.23.025:** Amount of dividend. The commissioner of revenue determines the per-person amount by October 1 each year, based on funds available in the dividend fund (transferred from the Permanent Fund's earnings reserve account under AS 37.13.145), minus administrative costs, prior obligations, etc., divided by the number of eligible recipients.
- **AS 43.23.045:** Dividend fund establishment and management.
- **AS 43.23.140:** Exemptions and levies (e.g., partial protection from garnishment).
- Other sections address applications (filed January 1–March 31), allowable absences, contributions (e.g., Pick.Click.Give), penalties for fraud, and more.

Related Provisions in AS 37.13 (Permanent Fund)

- **AS 37.13.140:** Defines "income available for distribution" (historically a 21% average of the fund's net income over five years, excluding unrealized gains/losses).
- **AS 37.13.145:** Earnings reserve account; requires transfer of 50% of income available for distribution to the dividend fund (though this has been subject to legislative appropriation overrides).

When asked "what does it take to legally change an Alaska state statute with a constitutional provision", GROK on X (Twitter) says this:

To legally change an **Alaska state statute** that is tied to or implements a **constitutional provision** (e.g., statutes in AS 37.13 or AS 43.23 related to the Alaska Permanent Fund and Permanent Fund Dividend, which implement Article IX, Section 15 of the Alaska Constitution), the core process remains the standard legislative one for any statute. However, the constitutional tie adds important limitations and considerations. **Changing the Statute Itself** The Alaska Legislature can amend, repeal, or replace statutes through the regular bill process (as described previously: introduction, committee hearings, floor votes in both houses, conference if needed, gubernatorial action). This requires only a **simple majority** vote in each house (at least 21 in the House, 11 in the Senate) on final passage, plus gubernatorial approval (or a 2/3 override of a veto).

- Statutes implementing constitutional provisions are still ordinary laws and can be modified legislatively as long as the change does **not violate** the underlying constitutional text.
- For example, the legislature has repeatedly adjusted PFD-related statutes (e.g., formula interpretations, appropriation mechanics, or administrative details) without amending the Constitution, though such changes often spark litigation if they appear to conflict with constitutional intent (as in cases like *Wielechowski v. State* in 2017, which clarified that PFD amounts require annual appropriation despite statutory formulas).

If a proposed statutory change would **conflict with** the Constitution (e.g., attempting to spend Permanent Fund principal for non-investment purposes, which Article IX, § 15 explicitly prohibits), it would be **invalid** and subject to being struck down by courts. The legislature cannot override constitutional mandates via statute alone. **When a Constitutional Amendment Is Required** If the desired change to the statute cannot be achieved without altering the **constitutional provision** it implements (e.g., changing the 25% mineral revenue deposit requirement, redefining allowable uses of principal, or mandating automatic PFD distributions in a way that dedicates funds contrary to current interpretations), then the **Alaska Constitution** must first be amended. Only then can conforming statutes be enacted or adjusted. Alaska's constitutional amendment process (per **Article XIII**) is as follows:

1. **Proposal** — Amendments are proposed by a **two-thirds vote** of each house of the legislature (at least 27 in the House and 14 in the Senate). This is typically done via a **joint resolution** (e.g., House Joint Resolution or Senate Joint Resolution).
 - Citizens cannot directly propose constitutional amendments via initiative (unlike statutes).
 - The legislature can also call a **constitutional convention** (either directly or via voter referendum every 10 years), which has plenary power to propose broad revisions, but no convention has been held since statehood.
2. **Ballot Placement** — The lieutenant governor prepares a ballot title and proposition. It appears on the next general election ballot.
3. **Voter Ratification** — A **simple majority** (50% + 1) of votes cast on the proposition approves it.
 - If approved, the amendment takes effect 30 days after certification of election results (unless the amendment specifies otherwise).

4. **Post-Amendment** — Once the Constitution is changed, the legislature can then pass conforming statutes via the regular majority-vote process to implement the new provisions.

Practical Examples and Context

- --The Permanent Fund itself was created by a 1976 voter-approved constitutional amendment (adding Article IX, § 15).
- Attempts to "constitutionalize" aspects like a guaranteed full statutory PFD formula have involved proposed amendments (e.g., resolutions introduced in various sessions), but none have passed the legislature and been ratified by voters as of February 2026.
- The legislature has used statutes to create mechanisms like the Earnings Reserve Account or percent-of-market-value draws (e.g., via SB 26 in 2018), but these operate within the constitutional bounds of principal protection and income deposit rules.

In summary:

- Pure statutory changes → standard legislative majority process (possible unless unconstitutional).
- Changes requiring alteration of the constitutional provision → two-thirds legislative vote to propose + voter majority ratification, followed by statutory implementation.

I'd like to hear from each of you why you voted this way. Please don't refer me to some stream of the committee or some news source. You work for the people. ALL of the Alaska people when conducting committee business. I'd like for you each to explain you logic to me

Kind Regards,

Shelly Shupe [REDACTED] Moose Creek, Alaska

From: Austin Ahmasuk [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 13, 2026 10:46 AM
To: House Finance; Senate Finance Committee; Senate Community and Regional Affairs; House Community and Regional Affairs
Subject: Education is mandatory; the port of Nome funding is discretionary

Dear Senators and Representatives,

Education is a constitutional duty. Article VII, §1 of the Alaska Constitution directs the Legislature to “establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children,” a mandatory, continuing obligation. Ports and harbors are not mentioned anywhere in the Constitution as core state mandates, yet the Alaska Legislature appropriated \$175 million in May 2022 which could have covered a significant portion of deferred maintenance for our schools. The Legislature has failed to uphold its constitutional mandate to the youth, teachers, and schools of our state.

Alaska’s finance article (Art. IX) restricts appropriations to public purposes and guards against dedicated funds, underscoring that discretionary capital projects should yield when they crowd out constitutionally required services like education.

Our Constitution makes K-12 a non-negotiable state obligation. Deep-draft harbor expansion worthy or not is a discretionary capital project. When revenues are limited, constitutional duties must be ensured.

This week’s budget debate regarding the decades of lack of adequate funding for schools shows an urgent, unmet constitutional need in K-12 education.

When we’re laying off teachers and closing programs, it is indefensible to prefer a discretionary port expansion that will not benefit the state over the Constitution’s promise to our kids. The port of Nome appropriations must be revoked. The Alaska Legislature has failed its many school districts across Alaska. The Port of Nome project’s funding pathway is volatile, high-risk, the State should reprogram its share.

I believe Article IX and prudent budgeting favor reprogramming discretionary capital to constitutional mandates. The Legislature must ensure appropriations serve a broad public purpose and avoid de facto dedication to special projects. In a constrained revenue environment constitutional mandates are the most defensible public purpose.

There is a very narrow public purpose for the Port of Nome. It is not needed for national security, not needed for any appreciable economic benefit across the state and when balanced against an explicit constitutional command to “establish and maintain” public schools education must take precedence.

The unexpended and unobligated balance of State appropriations for the Port of Nome Modification beyond amounts required to satisfy the City of Nome’s non-federal sponsor obligations should be repealed and reappropriated to the Department of Education & Early Development, Major Maintenance Grant Fund (AS 14.11.007) to address REAA school facility needs. Doing so would align State spending with Article VII, §1 obligations

Until BSA adequacy and REAA facility obligations are materially addressed, discretionary State capital appropriations should prioritize school construction and major maintenance over non mandated projects like the port of Nome modification.

Alaska’s Constitution draws a bright line: public education is mandatory. Ports are not. The recent procurement history shows cost volatility and cost overruns. Meanwhile, our classrooms are shedding teachers and programs and facility maintenance is not adequate. Please revoke funding for the port of Nome modification, the Legislature has let decades of deferred maintenance lag and not provided the necessary funding the education our youth deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Austin Ahmasuk
Nome, AK

From: Nicole Gricius [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 06, 2026 10:57 AM
To: House Education; Senate Education; House Finance; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School Funding Decisions Affect My Family

Dear Alaska Legislators,

I'm writing as a parent and community member to urge you to do everything you can to fully fund our public schools and halt harmful cuts, consolidations, and further degradations. My kids are current students at Paul Banks and West Homer elementary. They swim on the swim team, receive services from the schools, contribute to the community, and have thrived in the KPSD school system.

There's a well-known rule in the outdoors: leave the campsite better than you found it. It's a simple ethic to govern how we show up to care for our public resources, but a powerful one, and I think it applies here. When it comes to our schools, cutting resources does not follow the campsite rule; it leaves lasting harm for the children and communities who come after us. When you accepted a role as a public servant, was that your goal? Is your legacy going to be defined by shutting down vibrant, high performing schools, taking teachers out of classrooms, and leaving everything a little worse than you got it? I hope not.

Our schools are foundational infrastructure, not a line item on a budget. There is no fat left to be trimmed, anything you take away or fail to provide is meat and potatoes. Strong schools define communities: they anchor neighborhoods, attract families, support working parents, and give children stability, opportunity, and hope. When schools are weakened, the effects ripple outward—on student outcomes, teacher retention, family well-being, and the long-term health of the entire area. If you want there to be good doctors and nurses willing to live here and provide care for you in your old age, focus on education of local children now.

There is also a direct connection between school quality and economic health. My own family is part of that story. We chose to move here and invest in this community while holding out-of-state remote jobs *because* the schools are excellent. The lion's share of our income comes straight from the lower 48 and into the local Kenai Peninsula economy, from the Credit Union that carries our mortgage to local spending, property taxes, hockey fees, and the like. The connection between the economic health of the community and the school system isn't vague or theoretical, it is concrete and immediate. If the schools didn't impress us, we wouldn't be here. Do you want to hurt the economy of your local community, or do everything you can to better it?

Balancing budgets and advancing agendas on the backs of children and educators is not a neutral act. In the face of hard choices, be thoughtful. If you are complicit in stripping the schools of what they need to thrive, you are complicit in causing real, preventable harm to your community that may never be undone and that will ripple for years. Also, make sure someone checks your math. If your solutions don't make sense in ten years, they don't make sense.

Fix the dysfunctional budget calendar. Further increase the BSA and improve the formula to account for inflation. Leave things better than you found them.

Thank you for your time and for considering the long-term impact of these choices. Your reply to this message is appreciated.

Dr. Nicole Gricius

From: Austin Ahmasuk [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 30, 2026 12:24 PM
To: House Finance; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Schools Are a Constitutional Duty, The Port of Nome Is Not Revoke Its Funding Now

Dear Senators and Representatives,

Alaska's Constitution requires the State to provide a sound basic education for every child. That is a binding obligation. Today, Alaska is failing to meet that obligation, as evidenced by crumbling school facilities, flat operating support that has not kept pace with inflation, and a lawsuit filed by districts asserting constitutional violations.

By contrast, the Port of Nome Modification Project is a discretionary capital expansion. The port of Nome is not constitutionally mandated. Even project advocates and federal documentation present it as a long term infrastructure and navigation efficiency improvement. In reality it is only important to very few stakeholders and NOT needed for national security or any of the other aforementioned reasons. Compared to the immediate, constitutionally required needs of schoolchildren the port of Nome expansion is not needed.

I respectfully request that the Legislature revoke state funding for the Port of Nome Modification Project and publicly commit to prioritizing K-12 operating support and school facility safety statewide.

Schools are a constitutional duty; the port of Nome is not. A recent KYUK/ProPublica report documents claims that Alaska is failing its constitutional obligation to ensure a sound basic education and points to chronic underfunding, dangerous building conditions, and insufficient BSA growth. It appears the situation is a constitutional failure with real consequences for students and communities.

The State is operating or projected to operate under a deficit; discretionary capital has tended to crowd out urgent needs. In April 2025, the Legislature approved a capital budget and clawed back \$10 million from the Port of Nome among other projects which is proof that discretionary capital spending is constrained and highlights the situation we are in now with scarce state resources.

The educational crisis is immediate; the port's benefits are entirely speculative. When you consider that the entire GDP of Alaska is 10 times less than the city of Seattle, Washington the real question is whom will the port of Nome benefit and how will it benefit the State? The answer is it will benefit very few and most certainly not the nation or the state in any appreciable manner. It is as I have said many times it is development purely for the sake of development.

USACE materials and external coverage frame the port as a buildout intended to improve navigation, enable larger vessels, and potentially support economic and defense activities over time. Those are long term claims that are not supported by evidence. Meanwhile, school districts are struggling today with unsafe buildings, staff reductions, and learning losses exacerbated by underfunding. Fiscal responsibility should favor the constitutional emergencies. By favoring capital projects the legislature has created a discrepancy by catering to special interests in Nome that are not representative of the larger community or that will address critical state constitutional requirements.

Even in Nome, the K-12 system is at risk now. In 2025, Nome Public Schools faced a proposed nearly \$2 million local funding reduction amid uncertainty over state support an 11% hit that illustrates the fragility caused by statewide underfunding. Prioritizing the port while local schools brace for cuts sends the wrong message about state values.

Please consider revoking remaining state appropriations for the Port of Nome Modification Project and suspend any new state commitments tied to it until the Legislature certifies that K-12 constitutional obligations are fully funded statewide.

I believe the Legislature should enact a multi year, inflation indexed increase to the BSA and stabilize district operations, acknowledging that the 2025 \$700 increase was widely seen as insufficient relative to inflation and cost growth.

It is important to create an emergency school facilities remediation program, prioritizing rural and state owned buildings identified as hazardous or failing, and publish a transparent project queue with timelines and cost estimates.

A commission to study the true cost of delivering a sound basic education across Alaska's diverse regions is needed.

Alaska's children cannot wait. Given a structural deficit and documented educational harm, revoking state funding for the Port of Nome Modification Project is an essential step to realign our spending with our highest legal and moral duty.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Austin Ahmasuk

From: Loren Rancourt [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, August 30, 2025 12:58 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Public Funds Should Guarantee Public Access to the Law Library - Notice of Legal Action

Dear Alaska House Finance Committee,

I am writing to raise a concern about the current hours of the Alaska State Law Library, including the Anchorage branch at the Boney Courthouse. The library is closed to the public until noon each day, but during those same morning hours it remains open for judges and court staff only. Open to judges ONLY on fridays.

Because the library is funded entirely with public tax dollars, this creates a troubling two-tiered system: taxpayer money supports access for one group, while ordinary citizens are locked out for half the day. This runs counter to the principles of equal protection in Article I, Section 1 of the Alaska Constitution, which guarantees equal rights and opportunities under the law.

The Alaska Supreme Court has held that “the right of access to the courts is fundamental” (Bush v. Reid, 516 P.2d 1215 (Alaska 1973)). And the U.S. Supreme Court has long recognized that there can be no equal justice when public resources are distributed unequally (Griffin v. Illinois, 351 U.S. 12 (1956)). Restricting law library access to judges in the mornings—while excluding the very citizens who fund it—undermines public confidence in our justice system.

I respectfully request that the Legislature review this policy when considering Judiciary appropriations, and ensure that future funding for the State Law Library guarantees meaningful public access throughout the day, not just limited afternoon hours. Similar to UAA’s library hours (4 AAC 57.064). Consistent with President Donald Trump’s policy of returning to pre-covid era hours in public services.

Thank you for your service and for your commitment to equal justice for all Alaskans.

Respectfully,

Loren Rancourt
[REDACTED]
Anchorage AK 99501
[REDACTED]