

Michael Mason

From: Alana Nickell <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 8:31 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please Oppose SB 277 – Protect Educational Choice for Alaska Families

Dear Members of the Alaska Senate Education Committee,

My name is Alana Nickell, and I am an Alaska homeschooling parent writing to respectfully express my opposition to SB 277 as currently proposed.

My family chooses to homeschool because we believe parents should have the ability to select the educational model that best meets the individual needs of their children. Alaska has long supported educational flexibility and parental involvement, and statewide correspondence programs have made it possible for families like ours to provide a high-quality education while remaining active members of our local communities.

Programs such as statewide correspondence schools give families structure, accountability, and educational support while still allowing parents to remain directly involved in their children's learning. These programs are not a replacement for public education, they are an important part of Alaska's public education system that serves students whose needs are different from a traditional classroom setting.

As a homeschooling family, we are deeply concerned that SB 277 would limit school choice by redirecting funding away from statewide correspondence programs and toward districts of residence, regardless of where students are actually enrolled or receiving services. The practical effect of this change would be to reduce or eliminate access to programs that many Alaska families depend on.

For our family, homeschooling is not simply a preference, it is the educational path that allows our children to thrive academically, socially, and personally. Removing or weakening statewide correspondence options would take away meaningful choice for parents and students across Alaska, including military families and those living in rural or unique circumstances.

I respectfully ask you to:

- Oppose SB 277 in its current form, or
- Amend the bill to preserve funding and access for statewide correspondence programs and homeschooling families.

Alaska's strength has always been its willingness to support diverse communities and unique educational needs. Please continue to protect parental choice and educational flexibility for families like ours.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your thoughtful consideration of Alaska's students and families.

Respectfully,

Alana Nickell

North Pole, Alaska



Michael Mason

From: Judy Miller [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 4:54 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Fwd:

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

From: Fritz Wozniak [REDACTED]
Date: Tue, Mar 17, 2026 at 3:58 PM
Subject: Fwd:
To: <Judymiller313@gmail.com>

To: <Senate.Education@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Robert.Yundt@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Matt.Clamann@akleg.gov>, <Senator.mike.cronk@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Forrest.Dunbar@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>, <Senator.James.Kaufman@akleg.gov>, <senator.scott.kawasaki@akleg.gov>, <senator.scott.kawasaki@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Kelly.Merrick@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Robert.Myers@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Donald.Olson@akleg.gov>, <Senator.George.Rauscher@akleg.gov>
Cc: <Senator.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Cathy.Tilton@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov>, <Senator.bill.wielechowski@akleg.gov>, <Senator.bill.wielechowski@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Robert.Yundt@akleg.gov>

Sent from FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 16, 2026
North Pole, Alaska

Alaskans Against Common Core Reject Senate Bill 277: Legislation Targets Correspondence Programs and Undermines Parental Freedom from Centralized Control

Alaska families who rely on flexible correspondence study programs — the state’s primary public homeschool option serving more than 23,000 students — are strongly opposing Senate Bill 277. Introduced just days ago by the Senate Education Committee, the bill redirects critical funding away from innovative, parent-led programs and toward traditional brick-and-mortar districts, further eroding the educational freedom that protects Alaska families from one-size-fits-all, top-down standards.

SB 277 fundamentally alters how correspondence students are counted for state funding. Instead of the funding following the student to the statewide correspondence program they actually attend (such as IDEA Homeschool through Galena City School District or Raven Homeschool), the bill assigns those students’ Average Daily Membership (ADM) to the school district where the family lives — specifically the school with the lowest current ADM in that district. This redirection strips resources from successful choice programs operated by smaller and rural districts and funnels the money to traditional schools that many families have deliberately opted out of.

“Correspondence programs like IDEA and Raven have empowered Alaska parents to tailor education to their children’s needs and reject centralized, Common Core-style standards with minimal bureaucracy,” said Barbara Haney, founder of Alaskans Against Common Core. “SB 277 dismantles the financial model that makes these programs possible. Families who choose flexibility and personalization are now being punished so that declining enrollment in conventional schools can be artificially propped up. This is not education reform — it’s an attack on parental rights and another step toward the centralized control we have fought for over a decade.”

The bill also doubles the administrative fee districts can skim from charter school budgets, raising the cap from 4% to 8%. Many charter schools operate with homeschool-like flexibility and serve families seeking true alternatives to standardized education. Less money reaching the classroom means fewer resources, larger classes, or program cuts for these choice options as well.

While the bill includes a modest increase in the Base Student Allocation and allows students to keep curriculum materials when they leave a program, these minor concessions do not offset the structural damage. The net effect is a clear shift away from Alaska’s nationally recognized model of educational freedom toward centralized, traditional schooling that limits parental authority.

Alaskans Against Common Core has long warned that centralized education policies — whether labeled Common Core or disguised in funding formulas — threaten the ability of parents to direct their children’s education without interference. Correspondence programs have thrived precisely because they respect parental authority and deliver results without excessive oversight. SB 277 threatens to end that era of choice.

Alaskans Against Common Core calls on the Senate Education Committee to reject SB 277 in its current form. We urge all Alaska families, educators, and legislators who value parental rights and educational freedom to contact their senators immediately and voice opposition before the March 18 hearing and any further committee action.

For more information

Alaskans Against Common Core

Email: [REDACTED]

Senate Education Committee Email

Senate.Education@akleg.gov

Current Committee Members & Their Individual Emails

- Senator Löki Tobin (Chair) — Senator.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov
- Senator Gary Stevens (Vice Chair) — Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov
- Senator Jesse Bjorkman — Senator.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov
- Senator Jesse Kiehl — Senator.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov
- Senator Robert Yundt — Senator.Robert.Yundt@akleg.gov

Senate Emails:

- Jesse Bjorkman – Senator.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov
- Matt Claman – Senator.Matt.Claman@akleg.gov
- Mike Cronk – Senator.Mike.Cronk@akleg.gov
- Forrest Dunbar – Senator.Forrest.Dunbar@akleg.gov
- Cathy Giessel – Senator.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov
- Elvi Gray-Jackson – Senator.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov
- Lyman Hoffman – Senator.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov
- James Kaufman – Senator.James.Kaufman@akleg.gov
- Scott Kawasaki – Senator.Scott.Kawasaki@akleg.gov
- Jesse Kiehl – Senator.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov
- Kelly Merrick – Senator.Kelly.Merrick@akleg.gov
- Robert Myers – Senator.Robert.Myers@akleg.gov
- Donny Olson – Senator.Donald.Olson@akleg.gov
- George Rauscher – Senator.George.Rauscher@akleg.gov
- Bert Stedman – Senator.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov
- Gary Stevens – Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov
- Cathy Tilton – Senator.Cathy.Tilton@akleg.gov
- Löki Tobin – Senator.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov
- Bill Wielechowski – Senator.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov
- Robert Yundt – Senator.Robert.Yundt@akleg.gov

Make sure you send an email to Senate.Education@akleg.gov my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Aleah Stein <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 10:39 AM
To: Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Senate Education
Subject: I OPPOSE SB277!!!!

I oppose SB277!

Homeschool district funding needs to be left ALONE! The funding should always follow the child, no matter where they live versus their school of choice!

NO TO SB277

Aleah Stein

Michael Mason

From: Alecia Watkins <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 10:32 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

Dear Senator,

My name is Alecia Watkins. I am writing to ask you to vote NO on SB 277.

I am the mother of two very wonderful children who are in fourth grade and third grade. My eldest child has Autism and is medically complex. Our week consists of therapies, appointments, and other life-enhancing activities, which would not be possible in the context of the setting of a traditional school situation. My son almost had to repeat math this year as he grappled with a particular concept. I emailed our homeschool correspondence contact teacher, and together we came up with a plan, suspecting that due to his extended illness over the year, he experienced some regression. Due to the individualized nature of homeschooling and the relationship we have built with our school of choice, we paused our advancement in the lessons and instead went back to where he was comfortable to see if we could rebuild the foundation, suspecting perhaps the extended illness caused regression. As we reviewed the math course, he still was not advancing past the same problematic concept. As always, I was able to reach out to our Cyberlynx contact teacher, with whom we have such a great rapport, and together we brainstormed. Our contact teacher did some research and found an abstract way to do math that not many have heard of, which completely clicked with my son. Instead of holding him back a grade or losing him in a system, we were able to focus on his individual needs, find a way that works for him, and now he is thriving in math. This same situation occurred in Language Arts and other subjects, as he has unique learning styles. Our school of choice has teachers with unique skills and teaching techniques that enable me, as the parent, to pivot mid-school year if necessary to best fit the needs of the individual child.

This is just one example of how the team at our chosen correspondence school has helped both of my children thrive in their education. We initially tried the correspondence school in our district. It was not a good fit for my son's unique needs, nor for my daughter and her unique learning style. We often do school year-round due to frequent breaks for illness, medical trips, or hospitalization. My son also has an IEP and is supported by district therapies. I have full support of his correspondence teachers if any of those therapists are not a good fit or have any issues with communication. Both of my children are thriving in their education. In some areas are beyond average, and in some areas are right where they should be, only because we were able to choose the best program to fit their individual needs. This also includes the money from the allotment that goes towards being able to choose the best program for physical education that gives both children the best opportunity to thrive based on their individual needs.

The homeschool correspondence programs in Alaska have been proven to be not only effective but essential time and time again. My husband and his siblings have all graduated from the Idea Homeschool Correspondence program based in Galena, Alaska. When we moved to Wasilla, my husband and I looked at a couple of different options. We visited the Idea office in Wasilla and then eventually went with Matsu Central for two years. As stated above, the Matsu Central Correspondence program was not the right fit for my family, and my son was not thriving. Because of the ability and freedom to choose what school we take our children to, they are thriving. This is part of what makes Alaska the best state to raise children in. This is one of the main reasons we moved back from Washington. Making these proposed changes in SB 277 to the homeschool and charter systems will be detrimental to our children's future and to the welfare of our great state.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Alecia Watkins

Michael Mason

From: Alexandra Stanton <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 11:10 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB277 Wasilla Parent Testimony

To whom it may concern-

I strongly oppose the restrictions this bill proposes as a parent who has had three kids in the public schools and worked in the schools. My children were struggling with basic concepts like reading, addition, reading a clock and when I spoke with teachers (who were stretched so thin with too many kids and expected to deal with behavior kids) I was told they were doing great they participate in class they're a delight. My kids have made huge improvements since we switched to homeschool supported with IDEA here in Wasilla. They are confidently and joyfully learning, they are learning to enjoy reading (classrooms made it a punishment and told me kids they were "dumb"). Taking away our ability to utilize their funds allotted for their education, funds I pay into as a tax payer, is quite frankly pathetic. Stop forcing these kids to have to learn in ineffective classrooms filled with so many behavior kids (that teachers have to parent and teach or resort to using another student as an "emotional support" for the problem child just to get through the day. This is directly what happened to my daughter and while it brought peace to the classroom my daughter was then constantly being distracted and felt responsible for keeping another child's emotions in check so everyone but her could learn!) Let parents parent and teach their kids the way we see fit, and let our tax dollars pay for that where best supports us. It is absurd that we as parents are having to fight educators so hard to educate our children. Support Alaskan families. Don't take away our ability to do what's best for our kids.

Respectfully

Alexandrea Stanton RN, BSN, OB-RNC
WASILLA AK, 99654
[REDACTED]

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Michael Mason

From: Alexis Cook <a[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 5:49 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Comments on SB277

Hello Senate Education Committee Members,

My name is Alexis Cook and I am currently a homeschool mom to four children in Valdez Alaska and SB277 will have a very big impact on my family's situation.

From my understanding, one of the changes with SB277 is the change of where the money goes depending on where a student is enrolled versus the district that they live in. Here in Valdez there is no correspondence school within our district. We only have the Valdez public school. There is only one local correspondence office, which is FOCUS and it is within the Chugach district. That is all that Valdez has to offer. We are currently enrolled with Cyberlinx through the Wasilla office, but they are with the Nenana school district. By directing the funds to the districts based on where the student lives, you are sending money to a district that does not serve the student academically and has no options for homeschool students within its district, while harming the program that has been a tremendous help to our family. Potentially making the correspondence program unavailable in the future to our family due to a lack of funds to be able to support our students. Then leading to homeschooling independently as the only homeschooling option, which results in homeschoolers not being qualified to participate in high school sports or other extra curricular activities since ASAA requires homeschoolers be enrolled with a correspondence within the state.

I ask you to please rethink this bill and consider how this affects students who don't live in bigger communities and very limited to no options.

Thank you for your time,
Alexis Cook

Michael Mason

From: Alicia Jensen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 10:47 AM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing as an Alaska correspondent school parent to oppose SB 277, specifically Sections 7 and 4.

Families choose correspondence programs based on what best fits our children's needs—not based on where we live. This bill would tie students back to their district of residence instead of the program they are enrolled in, which undermines school choice.

Funding should follow the student to the program providing the education. If it does not, correspondence programs will not be able to provide allotments or the support families rely on.

Many families will not switch to their local district program which are widely inferior to statewide options. Many that are able will choose to homeschool independently, negatively impacting funding further.

Please protect family choice and ensure funding continues to follow the student.

I respectfully urge you to oppose Sections 7 and 4 of SB 277.

Sincerely,
Alicia Jensen
Sterling, AK

Michael Mason

From: Amber <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 11:29 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277 A Concerns

Dear Members of the Alaska Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong concerns regarding the proposed SB 277 Version A. As a parent deeply invested in my child's education, I believe this bill represents a significant step in the wrong direction for Alaska families.

My child is currently enrolled in a correspondence program through our local Mat-Su School District. However, due to dissatisfaction with our current program, we have been seriously considering transferring next year to the IDEA program through the Galena City School District. Based on my understanding of SB 277 Version A, this type of choice may no longer be a viable option. This is deeply troubling. Families should have the freedom to choose the program that best meets their child's needs without being restricted by funding structures that do not make sense.

My child is very bright, naturally curious, and loves learning. Science is his favorite subject, and he is constantly asking questions, exploring new ideas, and going beyond what is typically expected at his grade level. He regularly chooses to spend extra time conducting science experiments at home, simply because he enjoys learning and discovering how things work. In a traditional school setting, he would likely be held back by a pace that does not match his ability or enthusiasm. Through homeschooling and correspondence education, he is able to move ahead, dive deeper into subjects like science, and take full advantage of opportunities for enriched, hands-on learning. He is thriving in this environment in a way that would be difficult to replicate in a one-size-fits-all classroom.

I am also deeply concerned that this bill reduces students to little more than funding mechanisms. The idea that funding could be directed to a district in which a child is not even enrolled is not only confusing, but fundamentally unfair. It raises serious concerns about accountability and whether decisions are being made in the best interest of students, or systems.

Additionally, this proposal creates a strong incentive for families to leave district programs entirely. If the funding tied to my child does not follow him to the program that actually serves him, then it calls into question why we would remain enrolled in any district program at all. Families like mine have the option to independently homeschool. If forced into a system that limits choice and misallocates funding, we may choose to withdraw completely, which removes all funding from districts, rather than participate in a structure that does not serve our children well. Independent homeschooling would allow us to continue providing a high-quality education without unnecessary bureaucracy or government direction.

Alaska has long been a leader in supporting flexible, family-centered education. This bill undermines that legacy. I strongly urge you to reconsider SB 277 Version A or make substantial revisions to ensure it protects educational choice, aligns funding with actual student enrollment, and preserves the correspondence programs that so many families depend on.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,
Amber Eckard
Wasilla

Michael Mason

From: Lia Yenter [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 11:14 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Vote No SB277

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

My name is Amelia Yenter, and I'm a 16 year old constituent in District O. I am currently in 11th grade, and have been enrolled in IDEA my whole life. I'm writing to you in opposition of cutting correspondence schools funding in Senate Bill 277.

To me and the thousands of other kids enrolled in IDEA and similar correspondence schools, this is a pressing personal issue. Although many aspects of the bill are good, the bill also redirects funding away from these organizations and toward the districts in which the students reside. This will effectively bankrupt correspondence schools so students like myself have no choice but to choose between a favorable social life and an optimized education.

Many people worry that students enrolled in correspondence and homeschool programs lack socializing opportunities or a proper education, but through correspondence programs students not only get to interact with others in their district, but also with peers across the state. I take part in the Academic Decathlon program at IDEA, and through it I have gotten to work with dozens of bright homeschooled kids from all over the state. Just this month (March, 2026), our team got the honor of competing at the state competition, placing first and beating the runner ups by over 2,000 points. Our team will be competing at nationals for the 4th year in a row, but unfortunately this year we don't have enough funding for food on the trip.

It's painful to see students accomplishing so much only to be told they won't be rewarded for their dedication to learning. That's why aspects of the bill like counting correspondence students as 100% of a full student and raising the Base Student Allocation would be beneficial, so we have funding to continue performing at such high levels. This funding should stay within the organizations providing these opportunities rather than rationed out to the districts the students are a part of. By changing which districts receive this money you take away the choices of parents and students to choose how they are educated. You can argue they are still given a choice, but when the choice is to follow the money to a school that doesn't best suit my interests, or to continue homeschooling without the resources for a good education, it makes you realize just how little a choice that actually leaves these families.

In addition to that, correspondence schools are the best option for many students with disabilities or mental health needs who can't thrive in the traditional school setting, as well as kids like me who are ambitious about their goals of higher education and enjoy the flexibility that comes with correspondence schools. It is also the best option for children in rural communities that may not give them the best educational opportunities or learning curriculum for their needs. Correspondence schools provide distance and local educational opportunities that may otherwise be unavailable, including programs and clubs such as Academic Decathlon, Lego Robotics, Student Council, Chess Club, and even Yearbook.

There is no shortage of community or intelligence among homeschoolers, and removing correspondence funding destroys the community surrounding them, as well as the right to choose how your child is educated. Students in rural communities or with disabilities deserve the same opportunities presented to traditional schools, and they deserve to receive them in a way that allows them to thrive. There is no denying the brilliance of these students, and we should be encouraging them to learn rather than taking away these opportunities.

Being part of IDEA has fundamentally shaped my life, and I can't imagine a way I could have the accomplishments and experiences I have if I had grown up in a traditional school. That's why I implore you to oppose the funding redirection provisions of SB277 or push for amendments that keep correspondence funding in the organizations serving these students. These students deserve to keep these earned opportunities without fear of losing them.

Thank you for your time and commitment to helping Alaskan students and families.

Sincerely,
Amelia Yenter

Michael Mason

From: Amy Poage [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:53 AM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt
Subject: SB 277 concerns

My name is Amy Poage and I reside in Fairbanks Alaska. I am an employee of Galena City school district. I am writing this letter on my own behalf and not representing my employer. While SB 277 raises legitimate concern for my own employment, my focus is on the broader impact on students and families. I am asking that you reject SB 277 as currently written. I do support an increased BSA, I support Special Education funding for correspondence programs, I support increased CTE funding for all students and increased transportation funding as well.

However, within the less than evident language in SB 277 regarding section 4 and 7 in particular, that would take away funding for statewide out of district programs and send those dollars to districts of residence; I believe the effect of this bill would be the closure of statewide correspondence programs with the expectation that students will return to local building-based schools, thereby increasing enrollment, increasing funding and solving the financial issues districts are currently faced with. Based on more than 25 years of experience in education, I do not believe this approach addresses the underlying causes of district enrollment and funding challenges.

Students that are not sitting in a classroom now, will not return just because schools like IDEA, Raven and CyberLynx are no longer. There are numerous outside organizations, schools and programs nationwide that will continue to serve students, not to mention independent homeschooling.

Statewide correspondence programs are able to serve students with only 90% of the BSA. This percentage may sound high when some public officials have stated funding per student ranges anywhere from \$12,000 to \$50,000, but in 2025-2026 IDEA received \$5,994 per student, for example. IDEA receives 50%, 25% or even smaller percentages of some school's typical funding. Given the funding realities, this bill is not cost-effective. Statewide correspondence programs are the best value for state educational dollars, there is no disputing this.

The economic impact of job losses of staff that are working in these programs, disruption in education and support for thousands of Alaska families and students and local community impacts would be devastating.

My son graduated from a statewide correspondence program. He could not attend the local school and the school district did not have options that were compatible with his learning style. He would not have been able to graduate with a diploma had it not been for IDEA. He is now working in a successful career with the same company for over 4 years, here in Alaska. What will happen to students like him in the future? What happens to the single young woman that has a baby to take care of and cannot attend her local school when she can participate in one of the statewide programs? What happens to the students that have to leave school to work a full-time job to help provide for their families and can't complete schoolwork within regular hours? How do you serve the remote students in the far corners of our state, where there are no schools? I ask you to reflect on the state of educational support during COVID. Statewide correspondence programs can serve students in a moment's notice, enrollment is never turned off and students are not turned away. Local schools are not equipped, prepared or staffed to work with students in these kinds of scenarios en masse.

This bill will eliminate the programs that are built to serve all kinds of students and families across this state that are not getting the educational support they deserve and those that may not fit into the mold. This bill does not address their needs and therefore does not serve all Alaskans. This bill does not support parental choice.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you and your colleagues to reject SB 277 as written and pursue solutions that preserve statewide correspondence programs while addressing district funding challenges.

I welcome any feedback or questions you may have. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amy Poage



Michael Mason

From: Andrew McLay [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 2:11 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: I Oppose SB277

Dear Senators,

I write to you today in regards to SB277 that is currently in committee before you. According to the proposed text of this bill, thousands of homeschooling families and children would be denied freedom of school choice through removal of funding through the redirecting of funds for simply not being in the same district. This is unacceptable. As an IDEA alumni myself, programs like this have been invaluable to the furthering of education and learning across our vast state of Alaska.

As a resident and as a business owner, I pay my fair share of taxes in the KPB that go directly to funding our local school district. However, if I want to homeschool my children, I should not be penalized (by the withholding of state funds) for wanting to choose the program with the best support and best resources just because that program isn't based out of my district.

I am aware that there is a growing deficit in regards to education. And it is a problem. But this backdoor money grab is certainly not the answer. Education should be a priority, and we should be making it easier to access rather than imposing further restrictions and trying to squelch the freedom of school choice. Therefore, I urge you to reject SB277 as it is currently written and any further bills that seek to limit and punish correspondent and charter schools.

Andrew McLay
Owner | Vantage Point Media LLC
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Andrew Lockwood [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:49 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Senate Education; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Mike Cronk; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. George Rauscher; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Cathy Tilton; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Robert Yundt
Subject: SB 277

Good evening, Senators,

With respect, I must admit I am deeply troubled by the implications of sections of the upcoming education bill. I live in the Matsu Borough, and my family of five children was happily enrolled in our own district's homeschool program with no thought of leaving. We did last year because our district leadership made decisions to dramatically change our program without consulting or engaging with us. We remonstrated, spoke up at board meetings, and sounded alarms about how the changes under consideration would create a program that no longer met our family's needs. In response, we received apathy, gaslighting, a string of broken promises, and outright deception from district officials. We left in large part over a failure of leadership, and found at IDEA all that we no longer had at MSBSD: a caring homeschool support system.

As a resident of the Matsu Borough and an IDEA parent, I am ardently opposed to a bill that presses us to return. I hope you will see that that is receiving from our representatives at the state the same we received from our public servants at the local level: apathy to our family's needs, concerns, and treatment. The bill as written doesn't require us to return to the district that failed us, but it does withdraw our support systems if we don't. Let us not pretend that the bill as written wouldn't make it financially impossible to maintain statewide programs like IDEA and Raven. For my family, the choice presented is to homeschool in MSBSD or homeschool independently, with no support, financial or otherwise. To be clear, we would choose independence. That is how strongly we feel.

It is strange and incongruous to me that the predominantly white urban districts, with far more dense populations, developed economies, and local resources, are so envious of predominantly Native rural districts, who have far greater infrastructure challenges and far fewer resources to meet them. Why shouldn't Galena or Yukon-Kuskokwim receive the benefits of so ably serving so many students from elsewhere? There is nothing IDEA or Raven are doing that MSBSD, Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau couldn't be doing as well. In my experience, Matsu chose not to listen to us, and Galena chose to value and serve us. Why shouldn't the state allow money to flow to the districts that choose the latter course over the former?

Our district superintendent recently made the point quite publicly that other districts are unfairly paying for fine things in Galena. It was said that the "big five" should not have paid for Galena's pool. Embarrassing errors due to AI usage aside, I wish we would take a moment to consider the implications of his point, and those of other urban school districts frustrated by the loss of funding to Galena and Yukon-Kuskokwim. Are Wasilla, Palmer, Anchorage, Fairbanks, or Juneau short on swimming pools? Do they not have basketball courts? Do we believe, like these money-strapped superintendents are implying, that our urban districts are entitled to these things, while village kids

should not be getting them because they live in smaller communities, too few in number to merit such luxuries? Is it truly an injustice to see Galena get what kids who live in the “big five” have?

We should also consider that what those rural districts have was not gained by legislative coercion, but earned by meeting the unmet educational needs of thousands of students around the state. Is this not your goal as legislators? Why punish those who are accomplishing your goal for their success, and reward those who are not?

To be clear, I do empathize with the plight of those who are suffering from school closures. Like my own family, many of our public school students are being hurt by a failure of district leadership to listen to them and focus district resources on meeting their needs. While this may be controversial among my fellow homeschoolers, I can personally support putting an increase in state funding into brick-and-mortar schools rather than homeschool programs. I have what I need; they don't. As long as it doesn't withdraw funding from the places homeschool families currently direct it by their choices, I would support a compromise where educational increases go to the home districts who are dealing with deficits. Some see this as a bailout for their poor decisions, and I can't help but agree, but I don't want our boundary school kids to suffer for it any more than my own.

Any bill, however, that sees funding follow the student's residence rather than their enrollment, I must ask you to oppose. It will simply permit districts like mine to continue ignoring our needs and making the same mistakes, knowing that our funding is theirs regardless of how they treat us. As it stands, they must try to be competitive in the homeschool market, even if reluctantly. If you legislate the competitive element out of our state's educational market, they are free to design programs as they please, not as the people they serve do. It is, therefore, not just a choice of where we homeschool, but of how we homeschool, that is being revoked. I pay taxes to my borough, and still contribute to my local school district even though I collect no services from it. I would like to see state contributions enter the coffers of the school I choose, the one that actually serves my family.

Thank you for considering my points.

Respectfully,
Andrew Lockwood

Michael Mason

From: Angie Hall <krinersgirl@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:44 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please read

I do not condone SB 277 and to be clear as a homeschooling mother this 'advocating for the State to restrict school choice by limiting the ability of students to enroll outside of district boundaries and otherwise to take away the freedom we currently have to choose a statewide program that honors my family and my child's needs' is NOT who we are as America, nor Alaskan. I do not condone, please revise and do not approach our freedoms through our children.
-Angela A. Hall

Michael Mason

From: angie Jensen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:11 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: We All Benefit from Good Teachers

Dear Senate Education Committee,

As a long-time Alaskan resident, I fear the consequences we are creating by continuing to underfund public education. I want to know that our young people are competent enough to take care of our community when I'm old and don't have the ability to do it myself.

Effective teachers are required for our prosperous future. We need to support them with good pay and benefits, so they want to be here. We currently do not have enough educators, and the best ones are leaving. The families who rely on them are also leaving.

We also made a mistake using test scores to measure success. It's forcing schools to become less effective, and students don't like school because they are restricted to learning what's on the test.

Teachers know how to light students up about learning, so let them do it and support them while they are making it happen. I'm grateful to anyone who is still doing this valuable work! Especially, under the circumstances we've put them in.

We can do better.

Angie Jensen
2110 Patriot Circle
Anchorage, AK 99515
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Angie Regier <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:11 AM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Robert Yundt
Subject: SB 277 Public Comment

Dear Senate Education Committee and Members,

My name is Angie Regier. My family resides in Juneau, and we homeschool with Interior Distance Education of Alaska (IDEA). As you well know, this correspondence school is based out of Galena, AK. We have homeschooled our three children through IDEA since we moved here from Kansas in 2016 and our oldest son is graduating this May. Our family has benefited greatly from the resources, support, and encouragement from the IDEA staff in the SE Alaska office here in Juneau. I especially appreciate the balance of accountability and freedom afforded to us by this correspondence school. I have a degree in Elementary Education and have taught grades Pre-K, 1st, and 5th grades in public and private schools back in Kansas. Education has been my career and life focus, and homeschooling my own children is one of my greatest joys.

I have become aware of some concerning items included in the latest Senate education bill, SB 277. Here are the points I would like to address:

- **Section 7** – Shifting the funding for the students enrolled in a state correspondence school from the program district to the district the student resides in would be catastrophic for the state correspondence schools. My children are not enrolled in Juneau Public School or HomeBridge (the Juneau public school correspondence program), so I'm not entirely sure why they should get funding for my children. We would not receive any benefit from this in our homeschool. This makes no sense. With the language of the bill, particularly this section, it would essentially bankrupt correspondence schools like IDEA, forcing them to close and leaving hundreds of families without the support and resources of the school they have relied on. How does this benefit those Alaskans? My children would not thrive in the Juneau Public School system, and I have no desire to enroll them in HomeBridge, which is far more restrictive than IDEA. We would be forced to homeschool independently, leaving us without the support and resources my children have used to help them thrive in their education.
- **Section 4** – While this seems like a mitigation of the above concern for those that live in very small communities, the language of the bill does not seem to require local districts to cooperate and provide funding through a state correspondence program. There is also no cap on additional fees that the local district may charge the state program. Additionally, this section seems to suggest that a family may only utilize a state correspondence program if there is just no other option for them. What happened to having options for homeschooling families?

I do appreciate some parts of the bill, including funding for transportation (Section 3), the ability to keep homeschool materials purchased through a correspondence program (Section 2), and increased BSA (Section 6).

I do not see a reason to include Section 7 at all. There isn't a problem with state correspondence schools, and many Alaskan families are very happy with the way these programs support their homeschooling journeys. Section 7 seems to be solely about restricting homeschool families and taking away their freedom to do what is best for their children.

Sincerely,

Angie Regier

Juneau, AK

Michael Mason

From: Barbara Haney <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 12:18 PM
To: Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt; Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin
Cc: Sen. Robert Myers
Subject: Opposition to SB 277

Subject: Strong Opposition to SB 277 – Please Reject This Attack on Alaska’s Correspondence Programs

To: Senate.Education@akleg.gov
Senator.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov; Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov; Senator.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov;
Senator.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov; Senator.Robert.Yundt@akleg.gov

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

I am writing as an individual Alaska parent and longtime advocate for parental rights and educational freedom to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 277.

This bill is not education reform — it is a direct assault on the flexible correspondence study programs that thousands of Alaska families, including my own, rely upon. SB 277 redirects critical funding away from the parent-led programs families have deliberately chosen (such as IDEA Homeschool and Raven Homeschool). Instead of the money following the child to the program they actually attend, it will be reassigned to the local resident district. This punishes successful choice programs and artificially props up traditional brick-and-mortar schools that many families have opted out of. It also doubles the administrative fees districts can skim from charter schools, further weakening alternative education options.

Alaska’s correspondence programs have thrived precisely because they respect parental authority and deliver results with minimal bureaucracy. SB 277 dismantles the very financial model that makes that freedom possible. Families who choose flexibility and personalization would be punished under SB 277.

Below my signature is a press release summarizing these concerns by Alaskans Against Common Core. I urge the committee to reject SB 277 in its current form and protect Alaska’s nationally recognized model of educational freedom.

Please record my strong opposition and vote NO on this bill at the March 18 hearing. Alaska parents are watching.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,
Barbara Haney, Ph.D

My views expressed in this email do not necessarily reflect the views of any board or commission upon which I serve.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 16, 2026
North Pole, Alaska

Alaskans Against Common Core Reject Senate Bill 277: Legislation Targets Correspondence Programs and Undermines Parental Freedom from Centralized Control

Alaska families who rely on flexible correspondence study programs — the state’s primary public homeschool option serving more than 23,000 students — are strongly opposing Senate Bill 277. Introduced just days ago by the Senate Education Committee, the bill redirects critical funding away from innovative, parent-led programs and toward traditional brick-and-mortar districts, further eroding the educational freedom that protects Alaska families from one-size-fits-all, top-down standards.

SB 277 fundamentally alters how correspondence students are counted for state funding. Instead of the funding following the student to the statewide correspondence program they actually attend (such as IDEA Homeschool through Galena City School District or Raven Homeschool), the bill assigns those students’ Average Daily Membership (ADM) to the school district where the family lives — specifically the school with the lowest current ADM in that district. This redirection strips resources from successful choice programs operated by smaller and rural districts and funnels the money to traditional schools that many families have deliberately opted out of.

“Correspondence programs like IDEA and Raven have empowered Alaska parents to tailor education to their children’s needs and reject centralized, Common Core-style standards with minimal bureaucracy,” said Barbara Haney, founder of Alaskans Against Common Core. “SB 277 dismantles the financial model that makes these programs possible. Families who choose flexibility and personalization are now being punished so that declining enrollment in conventional schools can be artificially propped up. This is not education reform — it’s an attack on parental rights and another step toward the centralized control we have fought for over a decade.”

The bill also doubles the administrative fee districts can skim from charter school budgets, raising the cap from 4% to 8%. Many charter schools operate with homeschool-like flexibility and serve families seeking true alternatives to standardized education. Less money reaching the classroom means fewer resources, larger classes, or program cuts for these choice options as well.

While the bill includes a modest increase in the Base Student Allocation and allows students to keep curriculum materials when they leave a program, these minor concessions do not offset the structural damage. The net effect is a clear shift away from Alaska’s nationally recognized model of educational freedom toward centralized, traditional schooling that limits parental authority.

Alaskans Against Common Core has long warned that centralized education policies — whether labeled Common Core or disguised in funding formulas — threaten the ability of parents to direct their children’s education without interference. Correspondence programs have thrived precisely because they respect parental authority and deliver results without excessive oversight. SB 277 threatens to end that era of choice.

Alaskans Against Common Core calls on the Senate Education Committee to reject SB 277 in its current form. We urge all Alaska families, educators, and legislators who value parental rights and educational freedom to contact their senators immediately and voice opposition before the March 18 hearing and any further committee action.

For more information
Alaskans Against Common Core
Email: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Beth Hunter [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 10:56 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277 Please read !!!!!

To whom it may concern:

Please listen and do not pass this bill homeschool saved my children my two daughters I have there stories which I will tell you ! First though homeschool is our right and the state funding for our children should only be used for where our children our put by there parents to receive there education!

Otherwise picture this my daughter 4 grade with an IEP doing great until her special education teacher decided what she knew was best which was absolutely not. The case pulled my child was pulled out of her regular classes no more history no more science to do reading and math for eight hours a day a child who had zero behavioral problems at all she was there because she had dyslexia she was not supposed to be pulled from a regular classroom she chose to do that anyways.

Then one day while French braiding her hair I had noticed that she had had a bald spot behind her ear when she was pulling her hair out, which was very strange behavior for her so I started paying attention. This teacher started giving her the same homework every single day, even though I wasn't allowing her to continue to keep doing it, and then we went in for an IEP meeting with said special education teacher, and found out with a links advocate. That she was doing all of this it was not OK to do without my permission and that my little fourth grader was stupid and needed all the help she could get this teacher still works for the school district at Cottonwood elementary school and should be fired. I pulled my child from school educated her myself and I've had zero problems. She is graduating this year on time because of my efforts and being able to have the homeschool was life-saving. We should be able to have these options. Second child was in Middle School being bullied to the point where I brought charges against the child for bullying and because it's against the law principals did nothing my child finally got fed up and fought back, and they tried to punish her. This girl tried to push my daughter out of a bus, which was on video. She tried to push her down the stairs that was on video and all they said was this we have a no contact order which the child broke continually so my child finally took it into her own hands and handled it which then they tried to punish her so we pulled her from school and homeschooled her she has graduated has a family of her own! She works with horses training them because of what we were able to do because of Raven. Rave was there to help us and she was able to do things to better her life through Raven if this is not an option for parents in our situation, what are we supposed to do deal with what the government gives us I think not choices. It's America. Leave her choices alone thank you so much for your time and consideration. Have a lovely day Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Billy & Melissa Callaway [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 8:24 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB277

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing as an Alaska homeschool parent to oppose SB 277, specifically Sections 7 and 4.

Families choose correspondence programs based on what best fits our children's needs— not based on where we live. This bill would tie students back to their district of residence instead of the program they are enrolled in, which undermines school choice.

Funding should follow the student to the program providing the education. If it does not, correspondence programs will not be able to provide allotments or the support families rely on.

Deciding to homeschool our children was not a decision that we took lightly. After many months of consideration our family chose to take our children out of public school and teach from home. We chose IDEA(Galena) over the schools in the district we live in because:

- IDEA is phenomenal at fairly and efficiently administering the allotment.
- There are many businesses offering educational services for kids that will accept direct billing from IDEA.
- Also, IDEA's local offices offer a multitude of community activities for the children enrolled in their correspondence school

This bill will be devastating to IDEA as well as other statewide correspondence schools, local businesses who accept direct billing from statewide homeschool programs, and the homeschooling families.

Please protect family choice and ensure funding continues to follow the student.
I respectfully urge you to oppose Sections 7 and 4 of SB 277.

Sincerely,

The Callaway Family

Michael Mason

From: Brandi Wadkins [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:24 AM
To: Senate Education; Tobin@akleg.go; gary.stevens@akleg.gov; bjorkman@akleg.go; kiehl@akleg.gov; yundt@akleg.gov
Cc: Brandi Wadkins
Subject: SB277

As an Alaskan on the Kenai Peninsula, who has chosen to utilize one of the correspondence education programs that this great State has to offer, I do NOT support SB277.

The mere fact that you would rather destroy the wonderful programs that we have serving families all over the state of Alaska shows how out of touch you are with this demographic. Children and families are being served in the best possible way by these programs. The same children may or may not be served as well with local offerings, I do not believe my own children would be better served there.

I know that when our family made the choice to go with a correspondence program over the local program we asked around, I talked to current and past users of the local program, I talked with a representative of the local program. My decision came to these three things: attitude (the representative for the local program was less than enthusiastic when representing the program), control (the local program offered less curriculum choice for parents, more control for the local program) and funding (more funding was being kept for local administrative use instead of being allotted to the family).

This choice was made for our family over a decade ago. I am sure things have changed on the local level, hopefully for the better, but my family, my children, are invested in their current program. They have relationships with their contact and activity teachers. They have built trust and confidence in the program and appreciate the great effort that this program has put into bettering their offerings for our children. We have seen fantastic growth and improved offerings for our children over the past decade. Things that otherwise would not be available to them. My daughter has been playing violin for 8 years now. She plays in two local orchestras. I do not for one minute believe that the local public schools would be offering her that same opportunity.

It appalls me that you would like to see that destroyed, because that is the road you are embarking on. For shame.

Instead, wouldn't it be a better idea to examine the who, what, where and why we use these programs. See the value in self-directed/determined education and perhaps try to encourage that in our local areas. If local schools and programs were to improve their approach and outcome, perhaps it would entice parents with equal opportunities for their child's education, instead of just trying to steal the funding for these correspondence programs to redirect to underperforming districts.

Local Public school administration needs overhauled, not our correspondence programs which are working quite well.

Signed,
a 12+ year correspondence program user,
Brandi Wadkins
Soldotna, Ak

Michael Mason

From: Brittany & Christopher Gould / Price [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 3:41 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: No to SB 277

Hello. My name is Brittany Gould. My phone number is (907) 748-8448. I am emailing to say I **DO NOT** support this bill. I am a stay at home homeschooling mother to three young children and this will not have an extremely impact on many local families.

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Camileah Boyko <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:01 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Vote Against SB 277

Dear Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to you today as a parent and a constituent to express my deep concerns regarding the current language in Senate Bill 277 (Version A), specifically Sections 4 and 7.

Our family relies on the flexibility and specialized support provided by statewide correspondence programs. These programs are a vital part of Alaska's educational landscape, allowing parents to choose the model that best fits their children's unique needs, regardless of where they live. As currently written, Section 7 of SB 277 would effectively shutter these programs by directing all state funding to a student's district of residence, even if that district is not providing the educational services. Furthermore, Section 4 offers no real protection, as it leaves the survival of these programs entirely at the mercy of local district agreements and uncapped administrative fees.

The strength of Alaska's education system has always been its diversity of options, but I am deeply concerned about the unforeseen consequences SB 277 would have on our local economy. If statewide correspondence programs are shuttered, where does that leave the small businesses that depend on us? Our families don't just "stay home"; we actively support a robust network of Alaskan tutors, music teachers, and local vendors. We frequent our museums, utilize local Parks & Rec programs, and partner with small businesses for specialized field trips. If these programs go bankrupt and families are forced into private homeschooling or out-of-state options, what happens to the appropriated funds currently flowing into our local communities? Is the state prepared for the ripple effect of local vendors perishing and educational funding being diverted to the Lower 48?

I respectfully ask that you reconsider the funding mechanisms in SB 277 to ensure that statewide correspondence programs can continue to operate and serve Alaskan families. Please protect our right to choose the best education for our children.

Thank you for your time and for the difficult work you do representing our community.

Sincerely,

Camileah Boyko

Michael Mason

From: Cara E <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 12:41 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Concerns about SB277

To whom it may concern:

I have read some of the proposals contained in SB277 with great concern. I am a parent of children enrolled in a correspondence school outside of our school district according to residence. The language in this bill says that my children would be counted in our residential school district, not the one of the correspondence school. The concerning part to me is that the state money allotted for them for education would then go to our local school district instead of the correspondence district. In theory the local district would potentially share some of that allotment with the correspondence school; in reality, that would not happen. The Anchorage School District would certainly keep all of that money, despite the fact that my children do not participate in any special education programs, neighborhood school sports, or technical education within the Anchorage School District. What effect would this have? For our family, it would mean that I would unenroll my children from the correspondence school and we would homeschool independently. I know that we are not the only family that would do that. I would rely more heavily on free/used curriculum and the local library, and my children would enjoy fewer electives, but overall it would not affect our homeschool greatly. There would be no student allotment going to ANY school district for my children in that case.

There are other families that would struggle more - perhaps parents that don't have backgrounds in education or access to thrift stores with cheaper book options instead of buying new. Parents who homeschool in Valdez would have no access to a local correspondence school, and I would not be surprised if other towns had a similar issue.

I am certain that the passage of this bill would not improve the education of most correspondence school students. In fact, I suspect it would negatively impact students in school districts that benefit from their correspondence schools (notably Galena and Yukon, due to IDEA and Raven). I am relatively certain that this bill would not fix the budget problems of any Alaskan school district. Please remove the bill component changing the way students are counted and therefore the way that funds are allotted for the good of more Alaskan students. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cara Ewings

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Carolyn Morrison <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 10:48 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: opposed to SB 277

Dear Education Committee:

I'm writing to you in opposition to the Senate Bill 277. Section seven of said bill will effectively devastate and cripple many of the correspondence programs of the state.

- I currently have my children enrolled in IDEA, and we live physically in the Mat Su School District. IDEA has worked out very well for my family and our needs, and crippling IDEA by giving the Mat Su school District my students BSA is a deplorable proposal.
 - School choice is imperative for excellent education in Alaska. IDEA provides services and opportunities that many other school districts do not. One opportunity given to my children through IDEA is the chance to participate in Academic Pentathlon (middle schoolers) and Academic Decathlon (high schoolers), a rigorous national academic competition. IDEA literally has the ONLY Academic Pentathlon team in the state. The students of IDEA learn leadership, teamwork, and academics through participation in this extremely rigorous competition. Each public school district and correspondence program has unique opportunities in classes, clubs, and extracurriculars--parents and students need the chance to choose what unique opportunities are the best for their families.
- If my child is enrolled in IDEA or Raven or Cyberlynx Correspondence programs, their BSA should follow them.... If my child is enrolled in Mat Su Borough School District or Anchorage School District because we choose to go to public school and live in those school districts, then the BSA should follow them to that district. This bill would effectively shut down school choice as state-wide correspondence schools can no longer effectively run.
- This bill is a money grab for school districts and the brick-and-mortar schools who are in the red. If school districts want more funding for their brick-and-mortar schools, the school districts need to look at WHY families are leaving in droves to various correspondence programs. I have had parents tell me that they are leaving the Mat SU Borough School District (MSBSD) due to high credit graduation requirements for high school—requiring students to take high school credit in eighth grade, summer classes or take five years to graduate. Another reason parents have told me they are leaving MSBSD is the changing of Mat-Su Central into a hybrid program. Then of course, there are families leaving MSBSD because Superintendent Trani made some erroneous accusations against correspondence programs at a school board meeting in February as he relied on AI for his information—which turned out to be hugely false. In addition, there have been two bus drivers strikes in the past three years, and MSBSD is considering closing down three schools, making going to a brick-and-mortar school even more difficult.
 - One has to wonder if the increase to 100% of the BSA is because this is an effort to close down correspondence programs
- The sections saying that correspondence programs now can receive 100% of the BSA instead of 90%, and that parents can keep all materials provided by the correspondence program means almost nothing since all the entire BSA is going to the school district the student resides in versus the school district/correspondence program the student is actually enrolled in. There are nearly 3,000 students who live within MSBSD boundaries but are enrolled in IDEA....I have had friends who really love going through Twindly Bridge or Mat-Su Central correspondence programs in the MSBSD, and I know many who love going through IDEA or Raven—and the beauty of having all these choices is that families can choose the correspondence or brick-and-mortar school or charter school that is the best choice for the particular

students (and I know some families who have students in a brick-and-mortar school AND a correspondence program AND a charter school)

- Effectively shutting down correspondence programs statewide will have a ripple effect on the economy. Allotments of correspondence programs are used in a wide variety of local businesses for physical education, career development, and curriculum. Those businesses will suffer greatly financially if correspondence programs are slashed because the student allotments are going to districts that the students are not even enrolled in, therefore causing programs to shut down, and families going independent and not spending so much, or going to national homeschooling programs, or back to brick-and-mortar schools.
- Oppose the 4% to 8% increase to administrative service fees section, this just makes running an organization more difficult.
- I am concerned about where the budget is coming from while at the same time, I can appreciate increased money for the following:
 - 90% to 100% BSA for correspondence programs (IF section 7 is taken out and the money goes to the correspondence programs the students are enrolled in)
 - Increased BSA for all students
 - Increased transportation funding
 - Increased funding for brick-and mortar special education students
 - It would be nice if correspondence program special education students also receive funding

Sincerely,
Carolyn Morrison

Michael Mason

From: Chantel C <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:58 AM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Kelly Merrick; Steven Chapman; anield@yksd.com; Adriel Mathew
Subject: Urgent Request Regarding Section 7 of SB 277 Version A

Dear Members of the Alaska Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to you as a parent and advocate for my children, who are educated through Raven Homeschool, a correspondence program sponsored by the Yukon-Koyukuk School District. I am deeply concerned about Section 7 of SB 277 Version A, which would allocate funds to the district in which a child resides rather than to the school in which they are enrolled.

My decision to homeschool was driven by the specific needs of my children. My oldest was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder at age seven. Traditional schooling during Kindergarten did not meet his needs, but thanks to Raven Homeschool and the one-on-one support he receives at home, he has flourished. Despite a language delay, he now tests in the average range for language arts on statewide STARS testing and in the 76th percentile for math.

My second son, in first grade, has a genetic condition called Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia. This condition requires precise daily medication and close monitoring. Any lapse in his treatment, such as during illness or injury, can be life-threatening. A traditional school environment, even with nurses or aides, cannot safely meet his needs without severely restricting his participation in learning and social activities. Raven Homeschool allows him to receive a high-quality education while ensuring his health and safety.

If funding for programs like Raven Homeschool is transferred to the district of residence rather than the district of enrollment, my children and many others with special needs would lose access to the educational opportunities that have enabled their growth, learning, and social development. This change would not address the reasons families choose homeschooling; it would simply reduce the options available to children who most need them.

I respectfully urge you to amend SB 277, Section 7, to ensure that funding follows the child to the school they actually attend. Our children depend on this support, and programs like Raven Homeschool are essential for providing safe, individualized, and effective education.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to the children of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Chantel Chapman
23111 Eagle River Road
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: RiggJaw <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 12:43 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Subject: Senate Bill 277

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing on behalf of my daughter to oppose the passing of Senate Bill 277 Version A.

We tried to keep my daughter in public school for years with all the support the school could offer us, and it was good support. It did not work out and we began to homeschool her.

Homeschooling has been amazing for her and her healthy development, both behaviorally and educationally. I in no way believe this would have been possible in public school.

Currently she continues to flourish with her homeschooling and have even had a very respectable counselor say she may never be ready for public school. If this bill were to pass it would be detrimental to her and our family.

Please consider this when deciding on this bill and let me know if there's anything else I can do or provide.
Thank you.

Christine Lee

Michael Mason

From: Cindee Brown-Mills <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:01 AM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Jesse Kiehl
Subject: Concerns Regarding SB 277 Funding Provisions for Correspondence Schools

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I'm writing to share my concerns about the parts of SB 277 that would shift funding for statewide correspondence programs into local school districts.

I want to start by saying that I do support many aspects of this bill. However, this particular provision feels like a step in the wrong direction for families like mine.

Our experience with Raven Homeschool has been incredibly positive. My high schooler struggled in the traditional school setting here in Juneau. It simply wasn't the right fit for her. Since transitioning to Raven, she has truly found her footing. She is more engaged, more confident, and doing well academically in a way we hadn't seen before.

That's why this proposed change is so concerning.

School choice matters. Families know their children best, and having the ability to choose an educational path that actually works can make all the difference. Funding should follow the student. It shouldn't be redirected somewhere else and left up to interpretation or discretion.

As I understand it, this bill would allow local districts to receive funding for students they are not directly educating, without requiring that those funds be shared with the correspondence programs families have chosen. That creates real uncertainty. It puts programs like Raven at risk and could limit options for students who are thriving outside the traditional system.

I also want to be honest that I don't feel confident local districts will consistently pass that funding along. Without clear requirements, families are left hoping the system will work in their favor, and that's not something we should have to gamble on when it comes to our children's education.

I appreciate the work that has gone into this bill and the effort to improve education across Alaska. But this piece does not reflect the needs of families who rely on correspondence programs. Please reconsider this provision and ensure that funding stays tied to the student and the program that is actually serving them.

Thank you for your time and for listening to families like mine.

Sincerely,
Cindee Brown-Mills

cc: Senator Jesse Kiehl

Michael Mason

From: Clayton Arnold [REDACTED] >
Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2026 8:32 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: NO SB277

I am most concerned about SB277 and how this will impact the students within my home.

In Section 7, it states that the district in which the student resides will received the funding, even if they are enrolled with an out of district program (like IDEA or Raven or many of the other such programs). How do you anticipate that working for those programs? How will IDEA continue to give allotments to their 7800+ students if they are only funded for the student who actually live there. Per Dr. Trani's presentation at the school board meeting on February 4th, over 2600 students enrolled with IDEA are from the MatSu alone. IDEA would not be able to continue to operate as a statewide program and provide the current allotment to its students. I image that Raven and other programs would be the same.

This would effectively make students go to only the correspondence programs within their district. In the MatSu, there are 4 that I am aware of;

- Twindly Bridge who already has a lottery and only takes approximately. 600 students.
 - Knik Charter who per the DEED website only has about 30 correspondence students.
 - Midnight Sun Charter School is just starting a correspondence portion of their school
 - MatSu Central which has about 2800 students per the DEED website
- (<https://education.alaska.gov/compass/ParentPortal/SchoolProfile?SchoolID=338010>)

I have two students enrolled in a statewide program and another enrolled in MatSu Central. With the statewide program, I was able to get my ILP's done before July so I was able to start their new school year on July 1st, but was not able to get an ILP meeting with MatSu Central until into September. I saw other parents who were scheduled into late September. If you take the 3896 students who are currently with outside school districts and effectively force them back into the MSBSD, how is (likely) Matsu Central going to accommodate over double their current enrollment? They won't. They will have to turn kids away and what then?

Some families will go independent, but what about those that cannot afford to homeschool without the allotment? Force kids who are thriving at home into a school they are not likely to do as well? Many families have left the brick and mortar schools for a reason.

I know my children would not do well at a brick and mortar school. I have two children testing (MAP scores) in the 90th and 99th percentile for math and reading. I would have to decide if my child doing two levels of math higher than grade level would have to return to doing math he completed in 1st grade?

No, we would go independent and the school district would still lose out on that money and the state would lose many good programs. Still not balancing the MSBSD budget.

If the school districts are struggling to balance their budgets (which they are in the MatSu as we all know), they should work on improving their programs to entice families back. Not force them back because someone else has built a superior school and they don't want to the put the work in to compete.

Thank you for hearing our concerns,
Clay Arnold

Michael Mason

From: Crystal Johnston [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 10:28 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: 277 Bill

My name is Crystal Johnston and I am a mother in the North Pole area and I am opposed to the SB277 bill. This bill hurts many homes in the state of Alaska. To pass a bill like is basically trying to force students to public schools.

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: David Hall <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 7:10 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

Good morning,

It has been brought to my family's attention that SB 277, if accepted and approved by the legislative body and governor, has the potential to reduce or abolish access to correspondence homeschooling programs, such as the IDEA program my children currently participate in. We recently moved back to Alaska after a 4 year stay outside of the state. One of the incentives for us to return to Alaska was the ability to utilize the correspondence homeschooling program supported by the Alaska education system. My children had two very different reasons for needing this dynamic educational access.

My middle child, a senior, was able to spend this year completing her required credits while having the flexibility to participate in pilot instruction. She will graduate in June and likely get her pilot's license before that. The IDEA homeschooling system not only allowed the flexibility and the time for her to complete this intensive training, but also helped us with the costs of some of the training. In this example, one should see the economic viability of the program beyond the educational process. A young woman has been trained to be a pilot in Alaska, learning a trade that she intends to proceed in continued operation and growth, which will ultimately contribute to the economic value of her presence in the state. I could spend much longer talking about how this training has given her confidence and maturity beyond what she was experiencing in a traditional education system.

Additionally, our youngest child has experienced medical setbacks that have prevented her from institutional learning opportunities. In our previous state of residence the solution to her needs was to provide a homeschooling teacher that she met with twice a week for several hours to teach her all subjects. While this teacher was both phenomenal in her skills and in her care for our daughter, the process lacked peer experiences and varied styles of learning. In moving back to Alaska and experiencing the cooperative learning environment sponsored through IDEA homeschooling parents and taking part in hands-on learning classes, we have seen the physical and mental health of our daughter improve. She has made good and lasting friendships and can learn in ways that are effective for her style of processing and communication. She has a renewed vibrancy of life and we know that part of that success is because of the way the education system through the IDEA correspondence schooling program is meeting her where she is as a student and as a person.

I understand the desire to put money into the district school systems. Education is important to all no matter the form in which it is administered. But, I urge your consideration for continued educational opportunities for those who do not thrive in systematic environments. This type of educational opportunity persists with great value for the state as a whole. In most cases, students are being raised in an academic manner that provides strong moral development and community involvement. My experience has shown me that the students in the IDEA program are seen for the potential of their gifts and that those gifts are cultivated and grown, building confidence and knowledge in the students that filter back into the community in which they live. Most of my daughters' friends, and my daughters, all

have jobs in local retail stores supporting the local economy. Education is a long game beyond the classroom when it comes to the life of the individual. The proper investment in that development has lasting positive effects for communities and the state of Alaska as a whole. I would urge the committee to reconsider the portions of SB 277 that limit funding in any way to correspondence education programs, such as IDEA homeschooling.

Respectfully,
David Hall



Michael Mason

From: David Reeves [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:31 AM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Mike Cronk; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. George Rauscher; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Cathy Tilton; Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: Strong Opposition to SB 277 – Reject This Attack on Parental Rights and Homeschool Freedom Immediately

Dear Senator Tobin, Senator Stevens, Senator Bjorkman, Senator Kiehl, and Senator Yundt,

As an Alaska parent, I am writing to express my fierce and unequivocal opposition to Senate Bill 277. I am appalled and deeply disgusted by the Senate Education Committee's decision to introduce this legislation, which is nothing short of a blatant attempt to subvert the will of responsible Alaska parents who have chosen flexible, parent-directed education for their children through correspondence programs.

SB 277 redirects funding away from successful, innovative correspondence programs—like IDEA Homeschool and Raven Homeschool—that serve over 23,000 students and empower families to reject centralized, one-size-fits-all standards. By assigning students' Average Daily Membership (ADM) to the district where they live (specifically the lowest-enrollment school), rather than the program they actually attend, this bill strips resources from parent-led options and funnels money back to traditional brick-and-mortar districts that many families have deliberately rejected. This is not reform; it is punishment for exercising educational choice and a transparent effort to prop up declining enrollment in conventional schools at the expense of families who value personalization and minimal bureaucracy.

The bill's increase in administrative fees for charter schools—from 4% to 8%—further undermines alternatives that offer homeschool-like flexibility. While minor provisions like retaining curriculum materials or a modest Base Student Allocation increase are dangled as concessions, they do nothing to offset the severe structural damage to Alaska's model of educational freedom.

I am extremely disgusted by this committee's actions. You are actively working to undermine parental authority and impose centralized control over education—precisely the kind of top-down interference that responsible parents have fought against for years. This bill threatens to dismantle the very programs that allow families to tailor education to their children's unique needs without excessive government oversight. It is an outrageous assault on parental rights, and I hold the Senate Education Committee in contempt for advancing it.

I urge you in the strongest possible terms to reject SB 277 in its current form immediately. Do not proceed with this bill. Listen to the thousands of Alaska families who rely on correspondence programs and who are watching in horror as their educational freedoms are targeted.

I expect my voice—and the voices of countless other parents—to be heard and respected. Failure to reject this bill will only confirm that this committee prioritizes bureaucratic control over the rights of responsible parents.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to confirmation that SB 277 has been rejected.

Sincerely, David Reeves North Pole, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Denis Gardella [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 10:03 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB277

Good Morning Committee,

I can imagine that you are getting TONS of response to this proposed legislation that two of you co-authored. With 23,000 homeschoolers and their families and organizations, I can almost audibly hear them! I believe I understand your reasoning behind introducing such legislation and in a sense, I applaud you for your desire to more equitably distribute state funding. I don't think you see the problem here in its entirety though, This great funding imbalance is driven primarily by families that just don't want their kids in a failing and expensive system. Does that sound harsh? Just look at the report card to the public.... for many years now! Need I say more academically? Just read the news to see how parents' children are being indoctrinated in schools and not being told about it! So many controversial issues! If I were raising kids now, there is NO WAY I would send them to a public school. NO WAY! I know public school teachers who will not enroll their kids in public school! Anyhow, keeping it short, I join my voice with the chorus of others against this sb277.

Thanks for your time

Denis Gardella

Michael Mason

From: Dominique & Michael Gore <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 6:41 AM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Senator.Jesse.Keihl@akleg.gov; Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Mike Cronk; Senator.Forest.Dunbar@akleg.gov; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. George Rauscher; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Cathy Tilton; Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: SB277

Dear Senate education Committee and Senators,

I am writing on behalf of my opposition to many parts of SB277 that is getting ready to go up for discussion.

My family is going into our 7th year of homeschooling, this year we will have all 3 of our kids reaping the benefits of homeschooling. We use IDEA, which has been the greatest umbrella for us. SB277 would close IDEAs doors and make us choose a nationwide option instead. This would hurt my children greatly as they have built a community of friends, staff, teachers, and fellow parents that support and understand what we are doing.

I loved so much that our State allowed parents the right to choose what is best for our kids'. For some, public school is the best, at one point we thought that too until our son was being bullied and not given an environment to learn at his best potential. Since pulling him from our zoned public school, we have seen immense growth not just in his academics but a confidence we never saw before. And the one thing he always tells his younger siblings is - being homeschooled you won't have to endure being bullied. That was his takeaway from public school.

IDEA has been such a blessing for our family in so many ways and it would be devastating to see things change where they may not even exist.

I get MSBSD is wanting more money, maybe they could do so other ways. Our taxes on a local level already get shuffled to MSBSD in some way or another, but that being said, my children shouldn't be forced into something we don't agree to. As I said before, we will seek a nation wide homeschool if our school doors shutter. That how important choice is for us.

Matsu has always had a large populous of homeschooling families, and that number is ever growing, the number is huge percentage too of statewide homeschoolers. This shouldn't be taken away from us. What growth IDEA and all other homeschool programs Alaska offers has, they shouldn't have to give up what they are doing because the Senate thinks a bill that makes no sense to harm all these kids and families is the best solution. The local districts should not be in full control over the funding the homeschoolers receive where we will be forced into something we don't want, or there will be a mass surge of people seeking nationwide options.

For some families, they rely heavily on their homeschool base and their allotments to teach their families, and these dollars aren't thrown out the window, these are frugal people spending the money on

what best benefits their children and stretching those allotment dollars. To me, it isn't about potentially losing the allotments my children get, its about losing their school. IDEA is their school. It is where they take classes, meet friends, visit with contact teachers, staff, check out books, and so much more.

I hope that the legislature thinks long and hard about the impact SB277 will have on the communities because it truly is sad to think that we may be losing our homeschool over government overreach on parental rights and choice.

Our freedom as parents don't need to be governed - we have a right to choose for our family.

I am only 1 family among THOUSANDS who choose homeschooling in Alaska. This affects not only our families but all the local businesses that we use for classes for our children..

Just to name a few that we use:

Matsu Learn and Inspire LLC - Jess Bertram has been astronomical in my children's growth with various classes she hosts.

Learning Essentials - a small business curriculum store right here in Wasilla.

Sonjas Studio of Dance

Okamotos Karate

Denali Gymnastics

Rock Gym

Palmer Pool Swim Lessons

Paint Nights with Sara

MSBSD athletics

Field trips at local farms, gardens, etc.

And the list can go on and on.

But these businesses, not just from me but from countless families get monies from the homeschool allotments to cover the activities for students. For a lot of families these opportunities for their kids wouldn't be possible if it weren't for our allotments. It's sad to think of a lot of these businesses potentially shutting down too as a result of homeschools closing.

We are standing our ground and fighting for our right to homeschool and choose what benefits our family the best and we will fight the long fight as we need.

Please take into consideration not only mine, but all the testimonies you will be getting I am sure, from our homeschool community.

Thank you,
Domenique Gore



Michael Mason

From: Elizabeth Whitaker <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 3:30 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt
Subject: SB277

Dear Education Committee Members,

My name is Elizabeth Whitaker. I am a homeschool mother in Unalaska (Dutch Harbor). I would like to urge you to oppose legislation that would take away our school choice such as SB277. I am on an island in the Bering sea, 900 miles from Anchorage. If I am forced to choose a correspondence school in my district, I would have no choice at all.

IDEA allows me to afford to educate my children way out here when we have so few options already. Taking away my tax dollars which I use for education and giving them to my local public school, would not change my decision to homeschool. Rather, it would cause me to homeschool more poorly and without resources.

Our correspondence school students are thriving and should not be bled to try and prop up a failing public school system. Please uphold school choice and oppose any legislation that would shutter IDEA and other such beneficial homeschooling programs.

Thank you.

Beth Whitaker

Michael Mason

From: ELLEN ANDERSON [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 8:46 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

I am against SB277 and request you do not support or vote for it. This bill will negatively affect the thousands of homeschool families and will only give more money to the school district.

Ellen Anderson

[REDACTED]
Wasilla, AK

Michael Mason

From: Ellen Locker [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:06 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277 Concerns

Dear Senator Bjorkman

I am writing as a constituent and a homeschooling parent to express my concerns regarding SB 277 and to respectfully urge you to reconsider its current form.

I appreciate the effort to address Alaska's education funding challenges, and I recognize that the bill includes provisions that may appear beneficial—such as increasing the Base Student Allocation and raising correspondence funding. However, these positives are outweighed by several provisions that could have significant unintended consequences for families across our state.

As a homeschooling parent, I deeply value the flexibility and independence that allow me to provide a tailored education for my children. This approach works well for our family because it allows us to meet individual learning needs, support different learning styles, and provide opportunities that are not always possible in a traditional setting. Policies that reduce flexibility or impose additional constraints risk undermining that success.

I am particularly concerned about changes affecting correspondence programs. These programs are essential for thousands of Alaskan families and provide access to resources, support, and educational opportunities that make homeschooling viable. Changes to how correspondence students are counted and funded could reduce the flexibility and sustainability of these programs, ultimately limiting educational choice.

Additionally, provisions such as increasing the amount districts can take from charter school budgets—from 4% to 8%—may seem modest but would have a real impact on classrooms, teachers, and students. Charter schools succeed because of their ability to remain flexible and student-focused, and diverting additional funds away from them risks weakening some of the highest-performing educational options in the state.

Section 7 of the bill is especially concerning. Restricting funding for programs like the Galena City School District to only students physically located within the district would effectively dismantle statewide correspondence programs. The consequences of such a change would be far-reaching, including:

- Loss of access to statewide homeschooling programs
- Reduced parental ability to direct their children's education
- Fewer educational choices for families
- Negative economic impacts on communities that support homeschool students

Alaska has long been a leader in offering flexible, innovative education options that reflect the unique needs of its families. SB 277, as currently written, risks reversing that progress.

I respectfully ask that you oppose SB 277 in its current form or work to amend it in a way that protects correspondence programs, maintains support for charter schools, and preserves the educational freedom that Alaskan families depend on.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your thoughtful consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Ellen Locker

Michael Mason

From: Emily Manzione Adams [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 9:13 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Regarding SB 277

Hello! My name is Emily Adams and I'm a homeschooling parent of 5 children and we live in North Pole, Alaska. We have lived in Alaska for 5 years now, moving from Wyoming then first to Juneau, and now we've settled in North Pole. I have always homeschooled our children, starting in Wyoming. Once we moved to Juneau, I was introduced to the wide variety of homeschool resources and programs that Alaska provides. I was thrilled. I quickly enrolled my children with IDEA Homeschool and we have loved having offices full of activities to go to and teachers and staff to support our homeschool journey. When we decided to move to North Pole 2.5 years ago, one of the biggest draws in that decision was that my kids could stay with IDEA and that they had an even bigger office with more opportunities. Now IDEA has opened a second office in this region in North Pole, 5 minutes away from our home. The convenience cannot be overstated. My kids love the teachers and staff and all of their excellent classes and clubs, which makes socializing with other children a breeze. My children have excelled in school and at home, and a large part of it is from the support of IDEA Homeschool. My concern about this new senate bill is that IDEA will no longer receive funding because it is a statewide program. Funding being allocated to only districts of residence severely restricts my choice of how to educate my children. Please reconsider sections 4 and 7 in this bill. Please don't limit parents' choice in how to educate their children. What then is the draw of Alaska, if that freedom - among other things - is taken away? Not being from here, I've experienced homeschooling my children out of pocket and without support from local districts or the state. It's doable though not ideal. With the cost of living in Alaska, the freedom Alaska provides in certain key instances like this, is what keeps families like mine here instead of moving back down to the lower 48. Please reconsider those key sections in this bill and don't take that incentive for families like mine away. Thank you!

Respectfully,
Emily Adams

Michael Mason

From: Escape Drip Spa [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 10:04 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Cathy Giessel
Subject: Please Oppose SB 277 as Written

Hello,

I am a homeschooling parent in Anchorage, and my son is doing well in the program we chose for him. My concern with SB 277 is that it would shift funding and control back to our local district instead of letting that support follow the child to the statewide correspondence program that is actually serving him. For families like mine, this does not feel like more choice. It feels like less choice and more pressure to use whatever local option is left. Please Oppose SB 277 as Written please protect homeschool families' ability to choose the program that truly fits their child's needs.

Michael Mason

From: L Sloan [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:29 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Senate Bill 277

Hello, my name is Galena Sloan, I'm a homeschooling mother of 4. I urge you to reject SB277 that would negatively affect how my children are educated. Currently with IDEA we are able to use funding for a variety of resources. Our allotment also benefits several Alaskan Small Businesses who are vendors with IDEA. My children are exposed to a wide range of subjects and activities thanks to the current allotment thru IDEA. I urge you not to take away these resources from mine and all other homeschooled Alaskans.

Thank you,

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Michael Mason

From: Gina Gilbert [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 3:42 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Preserve Homeschool Freedoms in Alaska

Dear Committee Members,

In light of SB 277, I respectfully ask you to protect the rights and freedoms of homeschooling families as you consider legislation related to education in Alaska.

For many families like mine, homeschooling is not simply an educational alternative - it is a thoughtful and intentional choice that allows parents to take an active role in their children's development. It allows children to grow according to their unique interests, strengths, and learning styles while giving flexibility to pursue a broad and meaningful education. As parents, we are deeply invested in our children's learning and future, and homeschooling allows us to guide that process with great care.

Alaska has long valued independence, parental responsibility, and educational choice. I urge you to preserve those values by ensuring that any legislation protects homeschool freedoms and does not place unnecessary restrictions on families who are faithfully educating their children.

Please stand with Alaska families and protect the ability of parents to direct their children's education.

Thank you for your time and service to our state.

Respectfully,

Gina Gilbert

Kenai, AK

Michael Mason

From: g Z <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 12:06 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Re: SB277

Let it be known that your homeschool constituents are against this bill. The school district that is providing the services to our students should be the district that is receiving the funds for that student.

Historically, homeschool families are more responsible stewards of the funds provided for the education of their students than the bureaucrat public school systems that have no responsibility to those students. The districts that we live in receive the local property tax paid by the homeowners.

Please reconsider your position on this bill if you were leaning toward giving funds to districts that are not providing the educational support for the student.

Thank you,

Gina Zuiderduin
Homeschool family
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

Michael Mason

From: Gladwyne Yenter [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 11:02 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please oppose SB277

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

My name is Gladwyne Yenter and I live in Palmer, AK. My husband and I homeschool our 3 children and I ask that you please consider the impact Senate Bill 277 will have on the future of Alaska's economy and the Public Education system. We are part of the IDEA homeschooling community which is a correspondence program under the Galena School District. According to Section 7 of SB 277, if passed, means that we have lost our rights for school choice.

Living in Alaska has afforded us to educate our children with an abundance of resources and support through IDEA. Under SB 277, our funding is being threatened. We have homeschooled all our children for 11 years and wish to continue. They have thrived and found joy in learning independently and have reached goals that will enhance their future. My 2 teenagers are involved with the United States Academic Pentathlon and Decathlon for several years as part of IDEA's competitive team and both made it to the National competition last year. This year our eldest daughter and a team of other IDEA students from Mat-Su, Fairbanks, and Anchorage won the State championship earlier this month and they get to represent the Galena School district, IDEA homeschooling and our great state of Alaska at the national level in California next month. Enrolling in IDEA's correspondence program through the Galena School district has many benefits and I wish for funding to continue for us and many families who choose this route to educate our children.

Jason Johnson, Superintendent of the Galena School District was quoted on an Alaska News Source (KTUU) article on February 10th, "...You would see Alaska's Economy and Public Education system crumble as many of these families will opt for private homeschooling and/or join a national homeschooling movement. Such changes would have economic ripple effects. Local vendors would perish, millions of dollars would be erased from local businesses and money would flow to the Lower 48." I agree with the superintendent's response. I will not enroll my children in a brick and mortar public school. We use private local vendors for PE, Art, Music, curriculum, school supplies, just to name a few, and those vendors will be losing out on allotment money that could sustain and grow their business.

Section 7 of SB277 is forcing us to enroll our children in a public education system that is failing. Stealing money from families enrolled in correspondence programs will have a negative impact on Alaska's economy and education.

I respectfully ask that you please oppose SB277 as currently written and preserve parental rights for school choice, preserve equitable funding for correspondence programs, and continue to direct resources toward family-driven education that has been proven to work. Alaska's future depends on it.

Thank you for advocating on behalf of myself and many concerned homeschooling families. I appreciate your efforts and service.

Sincerely,
Gladwyne Yenter



Michael Mason

From: Glori Hulac [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 11:15 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Mike Cronk; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. George Rauscher; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Cathy Tilton; Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: URGENT: Oppose SB 277 – Protect Homeschool and Correspondence Programs in Alaska

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to urgently ask you to oppose Senate Bill 277 (SB 277) as currently written, particularly Sections 4 and 7, which pose a serious threat to homeschool and correspondence programs across Alaska.

Section 7 would redirect all state funding to a student's district of residence, effectively eliminating funding for statewide correspondence programs. This change would severely disrupt — and in many cases dismantle — programs that thousands of Alaska families depend on.

For families like mine, these programs are not optional; they are essential. They provide access to curriculum, resources, and support that allow parents to meet their children's unique educational needs. Removing or restricting access to these programs strips families of meaningful school choice and forces many students into environments that may not serve them well.

Alaska has long been a leader in educational flexibility, recognizing that one size does not fit all. SB 277 moves us in the opposite direction by centralizing control and limiting options for families who have thoughtfully chosen a different path.

This bill would not only harm homeschool families, it would impact students with diverse learning needs, rural families, and those who rely on correspondence programs for accessibility and stability.

I strongly urge you to:

- Oppose SB 277 in its current form
- Protect funding for statewide correspondence programs
- Preserve parental choice in education

Alaska families are paying close attention to this issue. Our voices matter, and we are counting on you to stand with students and families — not against them.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to serving the people of Alaska.

Sincerely,
Glori Hulac
Fairbanks, AK

Michael Mason

From: Hannah Mello [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 5:27 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Opposition to SB 277 - From a military homeschool family

To whom it may concern,

I am writing as a military spouse and a parent living in Fairbanks, Alaska who currently uses the IDEA homeschool program for my 3 elementary aged children. I strongly oppose SB 277 and it's negative impacts it would have on my family and other homeschool families in my community. My children and I rely on IDEA and our amazing contact teacher not just for funding, but for help with organization, structure, support, community, and educational opportunities that are difficult to provide on our own - especially with the general cost of living here in Alaska. Being a military family who is constantly uprooting our children, I have found IMMENSE relief in being enrolled with IDEA and the quality of life it has allowed myself and my children. The allotment has provided our children with curriculum that cater to their specific learning styles, allowed them to thrive in enrichment classes with IDEA every single week, and have provided endless opportunities for them to grow their skills, hobbies, and passions. With the cost of living in Alaska, it has been the one most important thing that has given my children a beautiful quality of life being able to have these experiences we otherwise would never be able to afford. As I said, I have 3 elementary aged children. All of which have different learning styles and needs - one with dyslexia, one with hyperlexia type III, and a child with ADHD. Being able to specifically cater to each of their individual needs with their curriculums, classes, and amazing support and suggestions from our contact teacher has made our homeschooling journey in Alaska the most rewarding experience and has taken a huge weight off of my shoulders as a homeschool mom - knowing I'm providing the best possible education for my children.

When it comes to SB 277 specifically, it appears to change how funding is distributed by tying it to a student's local district rather than the program they have chosen to attend that best fits their needs. This may seem like a meer administrative change, but the effect on our day to day life will be significant. IDEA and other Alaskan homeschool programs depend on that funding to operate at the caliber they currently do. If their funding is redirected, these programs will be forced to reduce services, cut allotments for their students, or potentially in worst-case scenario become completely unsustainable.

For my family, that would mean losing the quality of life and education that we have found with IDEA and the wonderful community and support and stability it has provided my family since the military uprooted my children once again. It could cause us to lose access to enrichment classes that are provided multiple times a week - catering to the individual passions and skills my children and other homeschool children have become accustomed to and that greatly enrich their day to day education, but also their childhood as a whole.

This bill does not appear to expand options for families like mine - it reduces them, or possibly eliminates them entirely. We love this beautiful state of Alaska that has long supported flexible education choices for our children. These homeschool programs are an essential part of that mission. We rely on IDEA to be our support and come alongside us to give our children the best possible education and provide opportunities we would not otherwise be able to afford or have access to. Alaska has been the best state we have ever had the privilege of raising our children in, largely due to the immense support we have received through IDEA.

Respectfully, I ask you to reconsider SB 277 and the impact it will have on homeschool families across this great state. Please protect the right to educational choice and ensure that funding continues to follow students to the programs that best serve them and their families.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,
Hannah White

Michael Mason

From: Heather & Andrew Lockwood [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 7:23 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

Hello,

My name is Heather Lockwood. I am a homeschooling mother of 5. We live in Wasilla (Mat-Su Borough), however, we have chosen to homeschool our children with IDEA (Galena School District).

I am very concerned about SB 277 (particularly section 7) and the effects it could have on our family. My understanding of the bill is that - if passed - MSBSD will receive funding for my students, despite the fact that MSBSD will not be providing services for them.

We homeschooled through MSBSD for 8 years, until MSBSD failed to provide our children with the educational services they needed to succeed. My children are now thriving because we found a correspondence program in IDEA that met their needs.

To give MSBSD my children's funding, rather than the correspondence program that has them thriving will lead to unfavorable educational outcomes. This bill will either leave them without any support/funding or force them back into a school district that has already failed them. This bill, as written, undermines school choice. This severely infringes upon my children's educational rights, along with the 3,000 other students in the Mat Su Borough who have made the same choice. This is not what Alaska stands for.

As parents, we are all doing what we can to support our children and give them their best chance. Our educational options are paramount to that. Thousands of parents across the states are choosing to homeschool outside of their home district because that best serves their family. Please do not limit that freedom.

Thank you for your consideration,
Heather Lockwood

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