

Michael Mason

From: Jaclynn Babcock [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:02 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277 - Against

My name is Jackie Babcock and I am a homeschool mom of 5 years and a small business owner of 2 years. I am a vendor with homeschool programs and the MSBSD as an educator to elementary age students in the STEM field. I am writing to express my frustration with bill SB 277 and the removal of my choice as a mom to support my kids as best as I can.

My mother worked for the MSBSD for 18 years and I was educated by MSBSD public schools all 13 years. I support our caring teachers and staff in our schools but I could no longer trust the structure of the system to keep my kids' education as the priority. When we started homeschooling 5 years ago, I did select the Mat-Su Central correspondence option, but last year when MSC received their new building the district immediately changed the very culture of MSC. Due to the changes, I switched our family to IDEA and we have been happy with our support.

I believe the MSBSD can change and improve to bring back students to schools and Mat-Su Central, but they have to start listening to parents' concerns. Removing funding for parents, like myself, to do what we feel is the best for our families will only make more people choose to go away from the district. I believe the money should follow the student and not just given to a district school based on where we live. I also believe parents have the choice where their student enrolls to best support their education.

Thank you for considering my opinion on this matter.

Jackie Babcock
Represented by AK-27 & AK-N

From: Jackie Ostroot [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 2:59 PM
To: Senate Education <Senate.Education@akleg.gov>
Cc: Rep. Justin Ruffridge <Rep.Justin.Ruffridge@akleg.gov>; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman <Sen.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Löki Tobin <Sen.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mike Cronk <Sen.Mike.Cronk@akleg.gov>
Subject: SB 277 Comment

Dear Senators/Representatives,

I am writing as a parent from the Kenai Peninsula with a long personal connection to Aurora Borealis Charter School and to Alaska's homeschooling community.

My father was one of the original teachers at Aurora, and I attended the school myself from 4th through 8th grade. Because of the education I received there, I have always believed that if I were not homeschooling my own children through the IDEA correspondence program, Aurora would be the only local school I would consider enrolling them in.

Aurora has consistently demonstrated strong academic results, but one of the key reasons for its success has always been the culture of parent involvement. Families who enroll there understand that education is a partnership between parents and teachers, and that expectation makes a real difference.

From my perspective, Alaska's education challenges are not primarily about funding. Teachers can only do so much if families are not engaged in their children's learning. In many schools, parent-teacher conferences are sparsely attended. I recently heard that during the most recent conference period at Nikiski Middle/Senior High School, only around sixty parents attended across the entire school.

If we want stronger outcomes for students, we need to examine the deeper issues that influence educational success. That includes encouraging meaningful family involvement, identifying curriculum approaches that lead to better results, and ensuring that students truly master essential skills before moving forward. Advancing students who have not yet learned foundational skills does not ultimately serve them well.

Programs like Aurora Borealis Charter School and correspondence homeschooling through IDEA demonstrate that strong academic results and character development are possible when families and educators work together.

Our experience with IDEA has also shown me how important it is that families have different correspondence options available. The IDEA office has always felt welcoming, family-oriented, and easy to navigate when visiting or seeking support. In contrast, when I visited the Connections program through the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, the environment felt much more bureaucratic and chaotic, with a busy cubicle-style layout that did not feel as accessible for families. I recognize that some families may prefer that structure, but our experience illustrates why it is important that multiple correspondence programs remain available so families can choose the environment that best supports their children.

I hope the Legislature will be careful not to weaken programs that are clearly working for Alaska families. Instead, I encourage policymakers to study what makes these models successful and consider how those lessons could benefit students across our state.

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

Sincerely,

Jackie Ostroot

Nikiski, AK

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Jacquie Goss [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 8:51 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Sb 277

Good morning,

I'm writing to request that you make no changes to the correspondence programs in Alaska. Things are going fine with children in these programs. Please find another way to fix the failing schools. My children have attended Raven for 3 years and they are both testing in the top 90% for the AK Star tests and the Alasaka Reads testing. We are able to educate our children for a fraction of the cost and are successful. We really appreciate our correspondance school, Raven.

Thank you,
Jacquie Goss
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Jasper & Milton Michener [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 10:28 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; 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. Bert Stedman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Cathy Tilton; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: Opposition to SB 277 - Defend Alaska Families' Right to Educational Freedom

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Jasper Michener, and I am writing as a former teacher and school counselor in the Mat-Su School District, and now as a mother preparing to homeschool my children.

I care deeply about education in Alaska. I have served in our system, supported students and families, and worked alongside dedicated educators. That is exactly why I am speaking up now.

SB 277 raises serious concerns for families like mine.

Let me be direct: I do not support any policy that limits my right to choose how, where, and through whom my children are educated.

Alaska has long been a state that respects parental authority and educational freedom. Homeschool and correspondence programs are not loopholes, they are intentional, valuable options that serve thousands of families whose children thrive outside of a traditional system.

From my professional experience, I have seen firsthand that a one-size-fits-all approach does not serve every child. Families need flexibility. Children need individualized support. Parents need the ability to make decisions without unnecessary restriction or pressure.

Policies that shift control away from families, whether through funding mechanisms, increased oversight, or limitations on program access are not neutral. They fundamentally change the landscape of educational choice.

I chose to homeschool with intention. I chose it based on my training, my experience, and my understanding of my children's needs. I should not have to defend that decision against policies that make it harder, more restricted, or indirectly coerced.

I also want to be clear: my appreciation for the educators and colleagues I worked with in Mat-Su has not changed. This is not about opposition to public education. This is about protecting the freedom for families to choose alternatives without penalty or limitation.

Parents, not systems, are the primary decision-makers in a child's education.

SB 277 risks undermining that principle.

I urge you to carefully reconsider any portion of this bill that would weaken homeschool and correspondence program flexibility, restrict access to resources, or shift authority away from families.

Alaska families are not asking for more control we are asking you not to take away the freedom we already have.

Please stand for parental rights. Please stand for educational choice. Please oppose SB 277 in its current form.

Respectfully,
Jasper L. Michener
Wasilla , Alaska

Michael Mason

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 12:24 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Kelly Merrick
Subject: SB 277

Good afternoon,

I would like to persuade you to vote against Senate Bill 277. I live in the Anchorage MOA; however, my children attend a homeschool outside of the district. I specifically chose a school outside of my district, because of the reasons below, which include but are not limited to:

- Anchorage Homeschools, as well as the traditional brick-and-mortar schools, did not meet the needs of my children academically or socially
- Specialized activities and resources are not available to support dyslexia
- Anchorage district policies and procedures do not align with family values
- I already pay one of the highest property taxes in Anchorage, which is supposed to help with the school district budget. Yet when my students attended one of the local brick-and-mortar schools, the building was in terrible repair, and most of the teachers refused to support my children's learning.

If SB 277 passes, all the reasons I specifically chose a school outside Anchorage become null and void. I would be rewarding the Anchorage School District for their behavior on not supporting students, allowing the buildings to lapse in maintenance and sustainment, the IT systems are not secure and they are extremely outdated, and lastly, since funds are involved, Anchorage would be able to justify their demand to follow academic/social policies and procedures to others.

If a student would like to be dual-enrolled in two different school districts, there is already a procedure in place that splits the student's allotment based on the number of credits involved. There is no doubt in my mind that if a student wishes to participate in extracurricular activities at a school outside of their own (i.e. Band or Football), then that "class" is equal to 1 High School credit. At that point, the student becomes dual-enrolled, and each school receives the appropriate funding; however, to have a blanket bill that enforces one ideal over another takes away the parents' choice.

Please vote against SB 277.

Respectfully,
Jean Davidson
Eagle River

Michael Mason

From: Jedediah Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 2:55 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB277

Good afternoon,

I am writing this message as a lifelong Alaskan to express my strong opposition to SB277 in its current form. I am the successful result of a family that homeschooled me all the way through 12th grade. My wife and I are committed to homeschooling our children because I have seen firsthand the failure of the traditional schools to properly educate and guard our children against perversion and drug use, use funds wisely or keep their ideologies out of the classroom. My wife served as a public school teacher for 8 years and it should be very telling that so many former teachers are now homeschooling their kids.

The traditional public school system needs an overhaul on a fundamental level, it does NOT need to start taking additional funding from programs that are experiencing growth and educational success. That is exactly what SB277 threatens to do. Do not support the bill in its current form. We don't need more governmental overreach in our school programs, we just need to be supported and left alone to get the job done.

Sincerely,

Jedediah Smith

Michael Mason

From: Jennifer Weed [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 12:54 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB277

My name is Jennifer Weed, I reside in Wasilla, Alaska.

I strongly oppose SB277.

This is my 27th year of homeschooling predominantly, though not exclusively, through the IDEA program.

Homeschool families enrolled in statewide programs should not be forced to absorb the consequences of local district budget failures, including those in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District. SB 277 would strip away both our funding and our freedom, fundamentally jeopardizing our children's educational future and the rights of parents to choose what is best for their families. While I would appreciate increasing the Base Student Allotment (BSA,) something educators have long advocated for, I ask what would be the point if those funds didn't directly benefit the students? The threat of not having funding would not encourage me to enroll my child in a district program, I would simply become an independent homeschooler.

I have always been proud that Alaska has been a leader in supporting parental rights in education, making this bill especially disappointing and causing me to lose confidence in our state's commitment to those principles.

I respectfully urge you to veto this bill.

Sincerely, Jennifer Weed

[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Jessica Bertram <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 10:00 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Opposition to SB 277

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Jessica Bertram, and I am writing in opposition to SB 277.

This bill removes a fundamental right that Alaskan homeschooling parents have long relied upon: the ability to choose the correspondence program or school district that best meets their child's educational needs. For decades, Alaska families have been able to enroll in statewide programs regardless of where they live. SB 277 would effectively eliminate that option by directing funding to the local district instead of the program the family has chosen.

I am deeply concerned that this proposal prioritizes district budgets over student needs and parent choice. Some districts, including the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District (MSBSD), have expressed concern about financial shortfalls. However, rather than addressing why families are choosing alternatives, this bill would redirect funding from programs parents actively use to districts that may provide little or no service to those students.

Many families withdraw from their local district because the educational environment, policies, or programs do not align with their needs or values. Parents should retain the right to make educational decisions in the best interest of their children without losing access to publicly funded correspondence options.

I have also personally observed changes in district policies that have made it more difficult for independent educational providers to serve homeschool families. For example, when the new Mat-Su Central School facility opened, independent vendors were no longer welcomed in the same way as before. Previously, vendors could offer classes and services that enriched students' education. Limiting that access reduces opportunities for families rather than expanding them.

In addition, local districts do not always provide the flexibility, individualized support, or specialized opportunities that correspondence programs offer. Families choose these programs specifically because they meet needs that traditional districts do not.

I am also an approved vendor who works with multiple statewide correspondence schools. My small business provides educational services directly to homeschool students and families. SB 277 would significantly impact my ability to operate, as well as the broader network of tutors, instructors, therapists, and small businesses that support Alaska's homeschool community. The loss of statewide programs would not only affect families but would also harm a growing sector of the state's economy.

Most importantly, this bill would reduce educational opportunities for students. Redirecting funds away from the programs families actively use would limit course options, enrichment activities, and individualized learning pathways — even though those students would not necessarily receive equivalent services from their local district.

Alaska has long been recognized as a national leader in educational choice, particularly in supporting homeschool and correspondence options across a vast and diverse state. SB 277 would move us in the opposite direction.

I respectfully urge you to oppose this bill and preserve the ability of Alaska parents to choose the educational setting that best serves their children.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jessica Bertram

Mat-Su Learn and Inspire, LLC



Michael Mason

From: Kelson Davis [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 12:34 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Robert Myers
Subject: SB277 Concerns

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

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. I saw a bunch of activity on social media the last few days and wanted to look into it myself. I think a lot of the substance in the bill is helpful, especially sections 2, 3, 6 and 11-20. However section 7 is seems to be incredibly harmful to homeschool families such as mine. I reside in the Fairbanks North Star Borough - unfortunately, I disagree with the school board on a number of issues. I initially enrolled my children in a public correspondence school outside of the Fairbanks district because of it, but have kept them enrolled out of district because the support I've received from my children's assigned teacher in the other district has been phenomenal. They assist me with benchmark tracking, educational material selection, and make sure my child gets opportunities to attend their clubs and activities, paid for with these dollars that follow my children. The local district does not educate my child, assist in decision making, make sure benchmarks are on track, or provide any support services to my family. In fact, my local district seems to be against any sort of cooperation with these correspondence programs. These dollars should go to the district that is providing the education. I am respectfully urging you to preserve parental choice and allow these funds that follow each child to stay within the district that is actually providing the education, not the district in which the student physically lives.

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

Jessica Davis
Fox, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Jessica Sidelinger [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 5:24 PM
To: Jessica Sidelinger
Subject: Reject Senate Bill 277 (Version A)

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jessica Sidelinger. I was born and raised in Alaska, and attended Grace Christian School in Anchorage from Kindergarten through 12th grade. My parents worked incredibly hard in order to send both my sister and I to an exceptional school where we received a stellar education. After getting married, my husband and I moved to Halibut Cove, Alaska, where we raised and homeschooled our two boys for 17 years. We have since moved to Kasilof, where we have continued to homeschool, which we feel has benefited their overall education, especially after speaking with other parents who have expressed dissatisfaction with their children's public school environment and education. My husband and I have never lived in an area that offered the type of education I was accustomed to, nor could we afford it, even if there was.

We have always boasted to other families in the lower-48 about the freedom we have in the great state of Alaska to choose how we want to educate our children, and it has been brought to our attention that this might be changing in the future. I am writing to implore every single person who has a voice to reject Senate Bill 277 (Version A), which contains language that would eliminate most statewide correspondence programs in Alaska. Because of IDEA, we have had the opportunity to tailor each educational path for our sons, based on their abilities and interests, including the opportunities for post secondary education through the local colleges.

If this bill is allowed to pass and we lose our funding and right to homeschool, my children, who are 3rd generation Alaskans, will be forced down a path that does not benefit their overall education and well-being. Please stand for the families that currently have this choice, and reject Senate Bill 277.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jessica Sidelinger
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Jessica Talbot [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 7:12 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

Good evening,

I am writing to say that SB 277 is outrageous. WE THE PEOPLE who want to maintain control of OUR children's education do not want this! We like having our homeschool systems the way it is now (in fact it's one of the reasons I moved to Alaska) and we do NOT want government interference in our homeschooling. If we wanted that we would send our kids to the public schools.

This would be the first step into having the governments "education" system pushed into our own personal homes. (Which I'm sure the government understands and that's their entire plan of trying to push this through! We see it and we know what the government is trying to do. We aren't stupid!). But know that we as Alaskan citizens do not want this, and since WE pay for YOUR salary you should not be putting this into law because it's not what we want. For once, respect our decisions and stay out of our business!

Thank you,

A concerned and angry Alaskan citizen.

Michael Mason

From: Jolene Anderson [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:39 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Sb277

Please do not take away our rights for our decision of our children's education!!

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Jonathan Yoder <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:25 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB277

Hello,

I am writing today to share my opposition to passing SB277.

My family currently homeschools through a correspondence program. From my understanding SB277 will cause an end to that and hand over more control to the local school districts who have a history of downward spiraling performance. I can not support giving more control to failing organizations in hopes that they will improve operations while jeopardizing my families quality education.

Respectfully,
Jonathan Yoder

Michael Mason

From: B & K Green <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 5:37 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Oppose SB 277

Good evening Senate Education Committee,

I am a parent of two children in the Anchorage School District. I am writing tonight to voice my opposition of SB277.

We've had the opportunity to school our children in a variety of settings over the course of their educational journeys. Settings included neighborhood brick and mortar, private, homeschool with vendors(outside of district) and hybrid homeschool(within our district.) Each (different) choice was beneficial for the success of our students.

Please reconsider passing SB277 as written.

Thank you for your consideration,
K Green

Michael Mason

From: Kaetlyn Strong <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 2:42 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please Oppose SB 277 – Protect Homeschool Families Like Mine

Dear Senator,

I am writing as an Alaska parent to express my deep concern about SB 277 and the potential impact it could have on statewide correspondence programs like IDEA.

My child is currently enrolled in a correspondence program, and it has been one of the most effective decisions we've made for his education. It allows me to be directly involved in his learning while still providing structure, accountability, and access to quality curriculum and resources that we otherwise would not have.

This is not just a preference for our family — it is what works.

My child thrives with a flexible, individualized approach. He has strengths in areas like math, science, and hands-on learning, but also needs extra support in reading. The correspondence program allows us to meet him where he is, instead of forcing him into a one-size-fits-all system that doesn't serve him well. Eliminating or restricting these programs would not improve education — it would remove a system that is already working for thousands of Alaska families.

From a practical standpoint:

These programs are cost-effective compared to traditional schooling

They encourage strong parental involvement

They support diverse learning needs across urban and rural communities

From a personal standpoint: This would directly disrupt my child's education, take away resources we rely on daily, and limit my ability to give him the education he deserves.

Parents like me are not asking for more — we are asking to keep what is already working.

I respectfully urge you to oppose any part of SB 277 that would eliminate or weaken correspondence programs. Please protect educational choice, parental rights, and the students who are thriving because of these programs.

Thank you for your time and for considering the real impact this decision will have on families like mine.

Sincerely,

Kaetlyn parker

Wasilla ak

March 18, 2026

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Senator Löki Tobin

State Capital

Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Tobin and senate education committee members,

I am writing to provide public testimony and consideration on section 4 of SB No. 277.

As a family with three school age children, we chose to homeschool our children in 2025 due to a number of reasons, one being fundamental disagreements between our family and the conducts of the school district. Not wanting to fully leave the community and state that I grew up in in order to provide education to our children in a better learning and growing environment, we opted to homeschool. We live in Southeast Alaska but are a part of the Galena School District through the Statewide IDEA program. My children and I receive all of our school resources and support from the IDEA program yet the property taxes my household pays go toward the operations of the local school facility and school district. The only time my children utilize the local school district is for extracurricular activities. In which case, facilities are needed and the local school district spends considerable funds on coaches and travel for my children. Our local school district has considered opening and offering a homeschool branch district. Yet our family will most likely still not participate as it would be formed and regulated by the same district that's current practices and protocols we disagree with.

While I see that AS 14.14.110(a) reads "(a) When necessary to provide more efficient or more economical educational services, a district **may** cooperate or the department may require a district to cooperate with other districts..." making me unsure if a cooperative arrangement would always be required between a school district and correspondence study program. Yet, incase this amendment means a cooperative agreement is always needed, or put more power in the school district to invoke services from a correspondence program, when considering the final language that goes into SB No. 277, please consider these realities:

- There are a number of Statewide correspondence programs, having to do an agreement with all of the different one's families may use in a community could become an administrative burden for the small local school districts as well as for the correspondence program.

- The correspondence program provides the bulk of the work and services to the family, not the local school district, and should receive the bulk of the state funding allocation.
- Federal indirect rate when using de minimis is 15%, 8% is not sufficient for administrative costs. Federally negotiated indirect rates are often much higher than 15%, that State of Alaska's is closer to 50%.
- It is already law that if a student uses the local school district for any services, the local school district gets a percentage of the student allocation based on number of services the student is receiving through the local school district. This seems fair and reasonable.
- There is not a way for me to pay the school any of my family allotment for the extracurricular activities my children participate in and extracurricular activities are not considered services that allow the school district to receive a percentage of the state allocation.

While I agree that the local school district should receive a percentage of funding if a family is using resources or services from the local school district, I disagree that the language in this bill should favor the control by and the funding towards the local school district over the correspondence program that is actually providing the family the resources and services needed for the child's education, or over the families choice to seek support from a different school district. I urge you to reconsider the suggested language or strike the suggested amendment since school districts can already receive allocation funds for the work they are supporting the student in and rather create a vehicle for which allocation or family allotment can be used to support the cost of extracurricular sponsored through the local school district.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kaitlyn

Michael Mason

From: KALEN MAXWELL [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:09 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Senate Bill 277

Dear Senator,

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?

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,
Kalen Maxwell
Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Kari Butler <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 6:34 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; 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: Senate Bill 277

This bill will be a DETRIMENT to Alaska. While our public schools are receiving poor grades and yet, more funding, you are wanting to take away choices for parents and students in Alaska relegating them to education that is inferior and not tailor made for each child. I.D.E.A. helps and encourages me and my family, a homeschooling family since 2000 with I.D.E.A., to fit our curriculum to meet our children's needs not the other way around. We do out of the box curriculum due to the special needs of some of our children and they are involved in choosing the trajectory of their educational needs and wants.

Our Alaska constitution as written:

Public Education The legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State, and may provide for other public educational institutions. Schools and institutions so established shall be free from sectarian control. No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution.

Our public schools are not free from sectarian control; they are controlled by the unions and the almighty dollar. Most believe that the answer is more money. . . I don't, I believe Parents should be in charge of our schools, not the administrations and take a page out of the correspondence schools and charter school handbook, you want better test scores, involve the parents, have them have onus for their child's education, create and use and develop curriculum that is relevant to 2026. By wiping out correspondence schools and eventually charter schools you are taking away the competitive edge to better the public schools and make them even more complacent than they currently are. By voting this bill down, you can start to build up the public schools, not with money but with structure, not with taking away the rights of the people, but by giving the rights back to the people and keeping choice. Understand, a vote for this bill is a nail in the coffin of public schools, correspondence schools, charter schools and choice. Understand, a vote against this bill is a vote for freedom of choice of the people for the people and by the people.

Kari

Loving Proverbs 31 wife to David for 30 plus years

Blessed Mom to Sheena, Kristopher, Kyle, Laura, Dakota, KimberLee, Daniel, KayLea, and Bryce; Grandmother to Tripp and Kella; Foster Mom to many
Wearer of many hats: wife, mother, farmer, Doula, wanna-be midwife. . .

"Life is not counted on the amount of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away."

Michael Mason

From: EK C <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 5:29 AM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt
Subject: OPPOSE SB 277

Dear Esteemed Members of the Senate Education Committee,

Alaska's correspondence program is long standing and has been very successful. Alaska was a pioneer in this. In a time when other states are starting to model things similar to Alaska's and increase school choice support, for some reason the Alaska legislature wants to set back our programs and lessen school choice, which leaves me scratching my head as to why.

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. Why would a district get money that is providing zero services to that student? Of course the end result would the statewide programs like Idea, Raven would have to quit providing services for out of district students. If districts want their local children to stay in district then they need to make improvements to meet the need of the children and parents in those districts.

* Many families will not switch to their local district program. They will choose to homeschool independently, which means no district receives funding at all. *

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,
Katy Cullison
Eagle River

Michael Mason

From: Kelia Dean [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 11:22 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please Oppose SB 277 – Protect Homeschool Families and Educational Choice in Alaska

Dear Senator/Representative,

I am writing to you as a homeschooling parent in North Pole, Alaska, deeply concerned about Senate Bill 277 (Version A) and its potential impact on my family and thousands of others across our state.

My children are currently enrolled in a statewide correspondence program, and this model has been an incredible blessing to our family. We do not homeschool simply by preference, but out of necessity due to ongoing health challenges in our family. The flexibility of a correspondence program allows us to meet our children's educational needs while also caring for their physical well-being in a way that traditional school settings cannot accommodate.

In addition, because homeschooling is so widely supported in Alaska, my children have a strong and vibrant community. They have many friends, participate in group learning opportunities, and are part of a network that supports them mentally, emotionally, and physically. This is not an isolated experience—it is a thriving community that exists because families have access to meaningful school choice.

As written, SB 277 would effectively eliminate statewide correspondence programs by redirecting all education funding to the local district of residence—even when that district is not providing any services to the student. This would leave programs like IDEA without funding and force them to shut down.

This is not simply a funding change—it is a removal of meaningful school choice.

If this bill passes in its current form:

- Families like mine would lose access to the programs that best meet our children's needs
- Many families would be forced out of homeschooling due to lack of support options

- The strong homeschool communities across Alaska would shrink significantly

With fewer choices, fewer families will be able to homeschool. This will fundamentally change the dynamics of our communities—and not for the better. The support systems that currently help children thrive will be diminished or lost altogether.

At the same time, local districts are already facing significant challenges. Redirecting funding without providing additional capacity or solutions does not strengthen education—it places further strain on systems that are already struggling. This bill does not solve an existing problem; it creates new ones for families and districts alike.

I chose a statewide correspondence program intentionally. It provides flexibility, individualized education, and support that aligns with my children’s needs and our family circumstances. Our local district cannot offer the same model or level of support.

I respectfully ask that you:

- Oppose SB 277 in its current form
- Protect statewide correspondence programs and the families who rely on them
- Preserve true educational choice for Alaskan families

I do support positive efforts to strengthen education across Alaska, including increased funding for students, special education support for correspondence students, and expanded career and technical opportunities. These are areas where we can move forward together.

Please consider the real families behind this issue. Homeschooling is not just a preference for many of us—it is a necessity, and it is supported by a community that helps our children succeed in ways that matter deeply.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your willingness to listen to the voices of your constituents.

Sincerely,

Kelia Dean

North Pole

Michael Mason

From: Kelly McBride [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 12:03 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: concerns regarding SB 277

As a parent relying on parental choice and a special education administrator in a rural district, I want to raise urgent concerns about SB 277—specifically Section 7, which would eliminate statewide correspondence and homeschooling programs in Alaska.

While the bill includes positive elements, such as increasing the BSA, Section 7 would:

- Restrict districts from receiving funds only for students living within district boundaries.
- Redirect funding for all other students to their local district.
- Eliminate the ability of statewide correspondence programs to serve families.
- End meaningful school choice and severely limit parent rights.

Our district provides special education services to all eligible students, regardless of where they live, even though we receive only the 1.2 special needs funding multiplier for students residing within our boundary. Many students in statewide correspondence programs have intensive needs and would qualify for intensive funding in their neighborhood school—yet we support them without receiving that level of funding. Section 7 would end our ability to serve these students altogether.

This has real consequences. For example:

A parent enrolled her child with us after safety concerns in a traditional classroom—her non-speaking autistic son eloped from the playground and was missing for more than half an hour despite a 1:1 aide and was found by a grandparent before the school notified her. She now safely homeschools through a statewide program—an option SB 277 would remove.

I support increasing the BSA. However, I cannot support Section 7, which dismantles statewide programs, removes essential options for families—especially those with children with disabilities—and undermines parent rights in Alaska.

My own child attends a program of parental choice as I do not believe her needs can be met in our boundary school.

I urge you to prioritize the needs of all Alaskan families by opposing Section 7 and preserving essential educational choices. Your commitment to equitable opportunities can make a critical difference for students across our state.

Kelly McBride
Palmer, AK

Michael Mason

From: Kendra PIFER <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 1:45 PM
To: barbarahaney100@gmail.com; Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Cathy Tilton; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. George Rauscher; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Mike Cronk; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Subject: Concerned Citizen

Dear Senator,

I am writing to express my strong concern and opposition to SB 277 and the potential impact it could have on my family and many others like mine.

I am the parent of a child with autism. Years ago, we made the difficult decision to withdraw our son from the public school system due to a consistent lack of adequate resources, support, and understanding of his specific needs. The one-size-fits-all approach did not provide a safe or effective learning environment for him. There were repeated situations where he was placed in settings that heightened his stress and were not conducive to his well-being or development.

Since transitioning to a parent-led homeschool program with Idea, my son has made meaningful progress in both his education and personal growth. The flexibility and ability to tailor his learning environment have been essential to his success. This model has allowed me to meet him where he is, rather than forcing him into a system that was not designed for children like him.

SB 277 raises serious concerns for me. Redirecting funding away from correspondence and homeschool programs would directly affect my ability to continue providing my son with the education he needs. These programs are not a luxury for families like mine, they are a necessity. Removing or reducing support would place families in an impossible position and could force children back into environments that have already proven to be ineffective or even harmful. I had to fight tooth and nail to get basic rights for my son with the district, something I have never encountered with Idea.

I am also concerned about how this bill would impact parental choices more broadly. Every child is different, and families should have the ability to choose the educational path that best supports their child's needs, values, and future. For us, that includes the ability to guide aspects of our child's education in alignment with our beliefs and priorities.

I respectfully ask for those of you who support this bill to provide a clear explanation of how SB 277 would avoid negatively impacting families like mine. How will children with unique learning needs be supported if access to flexible, parent-led education is reduced? What safeguards will be in place to ensure they are not forced back into systems that have already failed them?

My child's future depends on access to an educational model that works for him. I urge you to carefully consider the real-life consequences of this bill and to protect the options that families, like mine, rely on.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

In Gratitude,
Kendra Pifer

[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Dillinger Koeckritz <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 2:05 PM
To: Senate Education

Dear Senate Education Committee,

My name is Dillin Koeckritz, and I am writing to you as an Alaskan resident and a strong supporter of homeschooling and parental choice in education. I respectfully urge you to oppose SB 277 in its current form, particularly the provisions outlined in Section 7.

This bill would fundamentally alter how correspondence and homeschool programs are funded in Alaska by requiring that funding be tied to a student's physical residence rather than the program they are enrolled in. As a result, statewide correspondence programs such as IDEA, Raven, PACE, and CyberLynx could lose the funding necessary to operate. Families across Alaska would lose access to the programs they have intentionally chosen to meet their children's educational needs.

Homeschooling offers significant advantages that are difficult to replicate in traditional public school settings. It allows for individualized learning tailored to each child's pace, strengths, and interests. Parents can ensure their children receive focused attention, a safer learning environment, and a curriculum aligned with their values and goals. Many families turn to homeschooling because local school options do not adequately meet their children's academic or developmental needs.

Additionally, homeschooling in Alaska has fostered a thriving network of small businesses, tutors, enrichment programs, and community-based educational opportunities. Removing or weakening statewide correspondence programs would not only impact families but also harm this broader educational ecosystem.

It is also important to recognize that the funding being discussed comes from taxpayers—parents included. Families who choose homeschooling should have the ability to direct the education funding associated with their children to the program that actually provides their education. Redirecting those funds to a local district that provides no services to the student is neither equitable nor reflective of how education dollars should be used.

While I acknowledge and appreciate efforts within SB 277 to increase the Base Student Allocation and bring correspondence student funding to 100%, these positive elements do not outweigh the negative consequences of restricting school choice and undermining successful statewide programs.

I respectfully ask that you reconsider Section 7 of this bill and preserve the ability for Alaska families to choose the educational path that best serves their children.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dillin Koeckritz

Wasilla, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Kimberlee Neal <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 2:43 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please do not eliminate correspondence schools

Hello my name is Kimberlee Neal and I am a parent of two kids who are enrolled in homeschooling and I would like to request that you do not eliminate correspondence schools. Before they were in homeschooling my kids were both enrolled in public schools and not only was there diminished teaching from the teachers but there was no proper safety standards in the schools both my kids got beat up in their schools for my daughter it was posted on line and it was affecting their learning and mental health, my son was so scared he would hide in the bathroom and when that didn't work he would leave the school, and he would have nightmares

Since they have been in homeschooling their grades have improved and they want to do their school work and they have great social interactions and my son and daughters mental health has improved. And because I am involved with their education I know and understand what they are learning. As a parent I believe we should have the right to have a say on how or what school that their education is given and you should understand that public school is not for everyone. Please consider my request to not eliminate correspondence schools. Thank you for your time

Michael Mason

From: Rudy & Kimberly Welch [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 8:56 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; 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. Bert Stedman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Cathy Tilton; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: Object to SB 277

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my concern regarding efforts that appear to limit parental choice in education.

Parents know their children's needs better than anyone else, and decisions about where a child attends school should remain in the hands of families whenever possible. It is concerning when policies are proposed that reduce a parent's ability to choose the educational environment they believe is best for their child.

If I work in Anchorage, I should have the freedom to decide whether my children attend school near my workplace, near our home, or in the district where I believe they will receive the strongest educational support and opportunities. Families often make these decisions based on academics, transportation, scheduling, extracurricular opportunities, and the overall well-being of their children.

Forcing students into a district that has already faced challenges does not necessarily serve the best interests of families or students. Too often, it can feel as though funding considerations are being prioritized over what will truly benefit children in the classroom.

My taxes already contribute to a district with which I have limited connection beyond occasional sports participation, and even there, teachers and coaches often remain under-supported and underpaid while carrying significant responsibility.

Parents should continue to have the right to determine which district, school, and educational path best fits their children's individual needs. Public policy should support families, not restrict them.

At the end of the day, no one understands a child's needs better than his or her own parents, and that perspective deserves to remain central in educational decision-making.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Welch

Parent, Life long Alaskan of the Mat-Su Borough

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Leah Zielinski [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 1:27 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Opposed to SB 277 Version A

Good afternoon Committee Members, I am writing to voice some concerns I have about SB 277.

There is wording in section 7 that appears to remove funding from correspondence students not located within the district of the school they are enrolled in.

As a family with three students enrolled in Raven Homeschool with the Anchorage office, this would affect us detrimentally if true. We have been enrolled with Raven for the past seven years and it would severely impact my students to not have the teachers, friends, and programs they know and love. One good example is that the Anchorage Raven office has a Drama Club that my oldest son has been a part of for two years now and he would be devastated to lose that. We have continued with Raven for so long because of the quality of teachers at this office and because of programs they offer that are not offered by any other Homeschool offices here. Alaska has always been strongly supportive of school choice and this appears to undermine that value. If we are forced out of the program we have loved for the past 7 years then we will likely go back to independently homeschooling.

I am deeply troubled by the wording and possible intent of this bill. I ask that you vote no on this version of the bill as it stands. Please continue to support families choosing the program that is best for their students. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Leah Zielinski

Michael Mason

From: Marshall Blankenship [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:35 AM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Cathy Tilton; Sen. Robert Yundt; Rep. DeLena Johnson
Subject: SB 277 Opposition Statement

To the Members of the Senate Education Committee and Minority Members in CC,

I oppose SB 277, specifically the provision that doubles the charter school administrative cost cap from 4 percent to 8 percent under AS 14.03.260. I also oppose provisions in SB 277 that weaken parent choice by shifting control and funding away from students and toward district central offices. In addition to the cap increase, the bill expands district authority over charter school finances and operations in ways that make charters more dependent on district approval, less financially autonomous, and more vulnerable to funding being retained at the district level rather than reaching classrooms. That direction undermines the flexibility and responsiveness that make charter schools effective for many families.

The bill assumes Alaska's education problem is a funding shortage. The evidence points instead to an allocation and priority failure, where administrative and opex growth crowd out classroom outcomes.

My perspective is both personal and grounded in firsthand experience. My wife is a public school teacher (and has wanted to be so her whole life,) and my family spans four generations of educators and administrators, I am a product of public schooling. I wanted to believe in the Horace Mann public schools model, and that my daughters would be well served at the public school level. My daughter's first grade year broke that belief in both of us as parents. In a 26 student traditional classroom, she was quiet and non disruptive, which resulted in her being sidelined to i Ready software for up to six hours per day.

Her MAP scores regressed to kindergarten levels. The teacher and administration, took no corrective action. We moved her to a charter school, and her progress immediately returned to above grade level in all metrics. The traditional system cost her one full year of learning, a year I cannot give her back.

Money is finite, but so is my children's time. Education is now a marketplace, not a utility.

This bill sustains a self reinforcing system. Many committee members receive support from NEA Alaska, whose PACE arm has spent significantly in recent election cycles according to public records. After the post COVID enrollment decline, legacy staffing levels are no longer sustainable regardless of what interest groups want.

The data reflects this shift. Statewide enrollment continues to decline. The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development projects roughly 1,500 fewer students by FY27 according to its February 2026 presentation. SB 277 allows districts to retain a larger share of funding centrally while they are already responding to enrollment loss by increasing class sizes.

The predictable result is accelerated exit to charter schools, homeschooling, and private or religious

options. The demographic backdrop makes this structural, not temporary.

Fertility is approximately 1.9 children per woman as of 2024, below replacement. Annual births are roughly 9,000, far below 1980s levels. The population is aging and net outmigration continues. School age cohorts are uneven, with more 17 year olds than 4 year olds statewide. Districts are not planning for drastic contraction, or a much higher of parents opting for an alternative schooling method.

At the same time, staffing and spending patterns show a system misaligned with this reality. Teachers comprise roughly 42 to 52 percent of total staff statewide.

-Anchorage School District sits near 49 percent teachers and faces a 90 million dollar FY27 deficit. It has cut more than 300 teaching positions and closed schools while preserving administrative layers.

-Fairbanks North Star Borough School District is approximately 43 percent teachers, with about 131 non teaching staff per 100 teachers, and only about 55 percent of expenditures reaching instruction.

-Matanuska Susitna Borough School District places teachers at roughly 47 to 50 percent of total full time equivalent staff. Certificated staff account for about 60 percent of personnel, with roughly 1,200 to 1,260 certificated FTE out of about 2,000 total in proposed FY26 and FY27 budgets.

-Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is stronger at roughly 52 percent teachers, yet administrative and operational costs still consume a significant share.

These dollars are not reaching classrooms; that is the core issue. Districts have opted for self preservation and, in turn, created a positive feedback cycle of student loss, amid statewide demographic contraction.

SB 277 would divert approximately \$100,000 from my daughter's charter school into the Mat Su district general fund. That money would support the same administrative structure that failed to address closure risks at schools such as Meadow Lakes Elementary or Larson. At the same time, local voters approved a mill rate increase to fund construction of new schools, even though existing facilities like these could have been repurposed to support charter expansion or relieve capacity pressures. This gaff, among others represents a massive capital allocation failure layered on top of an administrative competency issue, and it underscores the need for reform, not reinforcement of the status quo.

As written, SB277's cut will impact my daughter's school at the classroom level. I would ask every member to consider whether you believe each dollar will be spent as effectively at the district level as it would have been at her school. The example above would indicate there isn't a snowball's chance in hell it would be.

SB 277 attempts to preserve them rather than adapt. The model will ultimately be forced to adjust to demographic contraction. The question is how much worse outcomes will be for students when that correction comes.

Funding should follow the student into the classroom, not be absorbed at the district level. Tying dollars directly to students imposes discipline and creates a real accountability mechanism. District central offices have not demonstrated an ability to adjust to declining enrollment or shifting demand.

I urge you to reassess the administrative cap increase in SB 277 and reject provisions that centralize control at the district level at the expense of parent choice. Require transparency in district level

spending. Tie any future funding changes to measurable reductions in overhead and to demonstrated student outcomes.

Thank you,

Marshall Blankenship
Wasilla/District N

Michael Mason

From: Hattenburg, Mattie [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:21 AM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens
Subject: Education Funding and Parental Choice – SB277

Importance: High

Dear Members of the Alaska Senate Education Committee,

My name is Mattie Hattenburg, and I am an Alaska parent writing to share my concerns regarding Senate Bill 277, Version A, released on March 13.

I understand that this version of the bill would redirect state education funding away from homeschool programs. I have chosen to educate my child through homeschooling, and I do not wish to enroll my child in public school. This educational model has been a positive and effective choice for our family.

As a parent and taxpayer, I believe families should have the ability to decide where and how their children are educated, and I feel strongly that education funding should follow the child, including those educated at home.

Redirecting funds away from homeschool programs limits parental choice and reduces support for students who thrive outside of traditional public school settings.

I respectfully ask that the committee consider the impact this legislation may have on homeschool families across the state. Thank you for your time and for the work you do on behalf of Alaska's students and families.

Sincerely,

Mattie Hattenburg
Eagle River, AK

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Michael Mason

From: Mehgan Brooke Mendoza <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:23 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

To Whom It May Concern;

My family is a military family and we homeschool our five children. For the last ten years we have homeschooled independently in various states. Upon moving to Alaska, after much deliberation, we chose to enroll our children into IDEA's homeschooling program. Overall it has been a very positive experience, and the allotment funds have allowed my children to do and experience many things we have been unable to afford in the past. The allotment funds have also allowed me to support numerous local and small Alaskan businesses.

That being said, I do not support the portion of SB 277 that proposes that the charter and correspondence funds should stay with the school district the students reside in. I am okay with a small percentage of the funds staying with the school district my children reside in, such as 10%, or the amount proposed to be added to the Base Student amount. The funds should follow the student, and families should continue to be allowed to have full choice over where their student's are enrolled and how they are educated. I chose IDEA for a reason, and sending all of the funding for my children and children like them to the Anchorage School District instead would cripple wonderful programs like IDEA. It is one of the largest, longest running, and most popular programs in the state for a reason. If this bill were passed I would not enroll my children with ASD, I would instead choose to unenroll them and homeschool them independently once again.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

-Mehgan Mendoza

Michael Mason

From: Molly Clingingsmith [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 12:19 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Urgent! SB 277 - Major Problems for Homeschoolers

Hi Senators,

It is with great determination that I plea to you today to vote **against** SB 277.

I am a homeschooling mom of 3 boys through Raven Homeschool in Eagle River. We have been with them for 6 years. I also am fortunate enough to work for Raven as their Family Liaison, planning our special events, field trips, outreach activities, fundraisers, and more. My 3 boys, Jameson (8th grade), Sawyer (7th grade) and Mikey (3rd grade) are flourishing with Raven. My boys consistently score at or above average on their state testing done through AK Star with Raven.

Jameson has special needs and traditional schooling was not working for him. I am proud to say he has already garnered credit for high school as an 8th grader, all thanks to the opportunities that homeschooling through Raven have brought. He was able to work through a 9th grade level class at a pace that worked for him, and earned an A +.

Traditional brick and mortar schools simply do not work for every student or family. That is why it is essential that our Alaska families have options. It makes no sense that my boys' funds would go to Eagle River schools and not the school they actually attend: **Raven in Eagle River**. Our school desperately needs these funds to stay open. Raven in Eagle River alone assists **over 400 students**. Not to mention Raven in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Wasilla, and Juneau. **Thousands of students will be negatively impacted** if you don't adjust this bill or vote against it all together.

The majority of Raven's students are not actually in the Yukon district. The local offices in each city provide the support that each family needs. For example, the Eagle River office barely has a day of the week when there is not a workshop, club, or class taking place for our 400 plus students. To take this away would be catastrophic for our community. Our staff and building cannot run without the funds for each of our enrolled students, which we rightly deserve. We, Raven, are the ones working for them - not their local district. The local district does not have any right to Raven's students' money. Raven's local offices need it so they can continue to provide excellent service to their families and the greater community.

It may seem simple on paper, but this bill would **ruin and upend** HUGE homeschools like Raven and IDEA, which have been staples of Alaska. These thousands of homeschool families will simply not allow this to happen. Please work with us instead of against us, and take this out of SB 277. We will not stop until our students get what is rightfully theirs.

Respectfully,
Molly Clingingsmith
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Pedro Galeano [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 6:42 AM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Subject: Reject SB277

Good day .

I reject the Bill SB277
Please reconsider not passing this bill .
Thank you.

Michael Mason

From: Quincey Causa <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:46 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: NO TO SB277

Hello,

I am a homeschooling parent from Wasilla, Alaska. SB 277 is concerning for me as a homeschooling parent because it severely limits my ability to make decisions about how my children are educated. I already pay for most of my curriculum out of pocket, but I spend a good amount of our allotment with LOCAL vendors here in Wasilla. While it might not be benefiting MSBSD directly, it does directly benefit my community. I also am concerned how MSBSD is going to regulate the use of the allotment and how much they are going to allow us to have access to. My family depends on that allotment to ensure that a well rounded education is provided to my children. They are involved in many different activities (science classes, art classes, archery, horse back riding, ballet, etc) all of which allow them the opportunity to interact with people of all different ages and backgrounds, something that they do not get when sitting behind a desk for 6 hours per day. We also get to spend quality time together as a family, which I believe is the cornerstone of raising well rounded and productive members of society.

IDEA is a great program and we are so thankful we have the opportunity to be a part of it. They work tirelessly to ensure our children have access to whatever they may need regarding their education. They are consistently offering classes of all different types, putting on field trips, and other activities that allow for our children to meet and interact with other homeschoolers and people in the community.

I sincerely wish that this bill be reconsidered as it will be in great detriment to a large population of homeschoolers and in turn our community.

Thank you,

Quincey Causa
Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Rebecca Cech <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 4:25 PM
To: Senate Education; Glenda S. Richard
Subject: Against SB 277

Dear Senate Education committee members,

I wish to make my voice heard in opposition to the changes presented in SB 277.

Funding for students should go to the group with which they are enrolled, not a brick and mortar school where the student was purposely NOT enrolled, and certainly not to be counted, willy-nilly, to whichever school has lowest attendance.

There are fundamental reasons for families to choose where their students receive education, and if a homeschool correspondence program is better suited than the local brick and mortar, then the FULL education dollars should be received by the homeschool correspondence program, without any "administrative" fees being stolen!

SB 277 is jeopardizing education for thousands of families and their students. Ask yourself what will happen if you put these correspondence programs out of business by stripping funding.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Cech

Michael Mason

From: Renee & Brad Scott <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 6:52 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB- 277 please protect homeschool families

Hello,

My name is Renee Scott, and I live in Eagle River. I am writing as a homeschooling parent deeply concerned about the way SB 277 is currently written.

I homeschool my children, and this legislation, as it stands, could effectively eliminate IDEA Homeschool and other statewide correspondence programs. Losing access to these programs would have a profound impact on my family. It would quite literally be the tipping point in our decision to leave Alaska, a place where my husband, our four children, and I have deep roots, having all been born and raised in Anchorage.

It is disheartening to feel that the educational choices that have worked so well for our family are at risk. Homeschool students consistently demonstrate strong academic performance and positive outcomes, and programs like IDEA provide essential support that makes this possible for families like mine.

SB 277, in its current form, removes parent choice by shutting down statewide correspondence programs that many families depend on. I respectfully ask that you speak on behalf of homeschooling families, your constituents and work to preserve these programs so we can continue educating our children in the way that best meets their needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Renee' Scott



Michael Mason

From: Rhoda Myers [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 2:39 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Public Record Testimony for SB 277 - Please Do NOT Pass This Bill

I am utterly disappointed and angry about SB277. You should be too.

Funding should follow the student. We are not a socialist country. Public school districts don't get to stomp, pout, and demand that they are given any percentage of the funding allotted for a homeschooling student, and/or it's corresponding homeschooling agency/district that is serving them.

Homeschoolers left the MSB, ASD, and other public-school systems for very good reasons. The least of which is absolutely not, the mismanagement of funds and wasteful spending. Other reasons are the bullying, socialistic, liberal, woke ideologies that their staff and school boards shove down student's and parent's throats continually. Alaskan parents are DONE with that. They have chosen to leave for these, and a variety of other reasons.

The public-school districts wanted nothing to do with homeschoolers for many, many years. The Galena School District stepped up, was creative, and said "let's put our heads together" with homeschooling families. They created something amazing. Families love it. Students love it. They are flourishing. All of their hard work is paying off in leaps and bounds. And because of that, they have found their community, because of freedom of choice. NOW, the public-school systems are sitting up straight and paying attention, because they are absolutely threatened by the success of homeschooling in Alaska. They see their numbers falling. Their mismanagement and failures are more glaring than ever. So, instead of trying to bring together the remaining families who choose to keep their children in their public schools, and instead of choosing to get creative to think of ways they can trim the fat, correct the mistakes, and sort out their messes, they think they can simply shove their hands into the pockets of homeschooling students and agencies/districts and make radical, outlandish claims that they somehow deserve a "piece of the pie". This is absolutely disgusting. *It violates school choice, American values, and freedom. It is socialistic in nature, with the underlying belief being that the public-school districts don't have to offer anything to a student, or do anything to improve their disastrous failings, but somehow, they get to benefit from the funding of homeschoolers.* This bill is where we draw the line in the sand. We are tired of doing this every year or two. Please, just stop it. Because in forging ahead full steam, you are attempting to mow down the rights and funding of the thousands of homeschooling families across this great state, and we will NOT forget it. We will not forget this the next election cycle. Alaskans are already justifiably outraged.

Please do the right thing and do not vote to pass this bill.

With all due respect,

Rhoda Myers

Alaska Faith & Family Services
Executive Director & Care Coordinator



Michael Mason

From: Robin Bond <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 10:45 AM
To: 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; Senate Education
Subject: Bill 277 and

Please stop spending too much on [schools](#). It is already way too much. The government is costing way too much. Our government is spending way too much on this and sooooo much more. Please do not change the amount per student in any schools. There are many other things that can be changed. Charter Schools and Homeschool is way better for kids than public schools and statistics prove it. The government is overreaching way too much and you all are ramping it up with going against what the majority wants and Alaskan's didn't hire / vote you in for that. Please all step down if you can not be an honest human and stop trying to ruin everything in Alaska. We want our government to listen to us, follow the laws that work and stop making new bills / laws that screw us like this one! The government needs shrink big time and you all need major oversight.

The corruption is so bad and you all hide it. Because of this I think every government working should be audited and a body cam required anytime your working to make sure your being honest and doing what the majority wants. And I mean everyone. This is all ridiculous and it has to come to an end. Btw we want our PFD and for you all to stop spending more than you are provided with. Stop touching the cbr, stop raising taxes, the IRS already takes 40.23% of my earnings and that is too much already! I need my state to stop sucking the rest from me. My family needs it to eat since subsistence fishing and hunting is very, very limited and mostly inaccessible to the average person and thanks to trawlers raping the waters and government letting fish and not us ...at every chance they get. Also please stop pushing dirty or BS renewable power also. Alaska needs geo-thermal power, or what Sweden does. Something smart not Solar. wind, hydro, coal or nuclear power. All the stuff that is wasteful or full of pollutants to the land and water. Also please stop thinking about data centers. We have enough. They are bad for the environment too. I am writing this to beg for a change of heart and stop making bills and laws that screw us. Thank You for reading my email. I hope you all consider helping us more as your job interests. Also shrinking government employees without us asking would be great too. TIA!

Michael Mason

From: Rudy & Kimberly Welch <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 8:54 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; 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. Bert Stedman; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Cathy Tilton; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: Object to SB 277

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my concern regarding efforts that appear to limit parental choice in education.

Parents know their children's needs better than anyone else, and decisions about where a child attends school should remain in the hands of families whenever possible. It is concerning when policies are proposed that reduce a parent's ability to choose the educational environment they believe is best for their child.

If I work in Anchorage, I should have the freedom to decide whether my children attend school near my workplace, near our home, or in the district where I believe they will receive the strongest educational support and opportunities. Families often make these decisions based on academics, transportation, scheduling, extracurricular opportunities, and the overall well-being of their children.

Forcing students into a district that has already faced challenges does not necessarily serve the best interests of families or students. Too often, it can feel as though funding considerations are being prioritized over what will truly benefit children in the classroom.

My taxes already contribute to a district with which I have limited connection beyond occasional sports participation, and even there, teachers and coaches often remain under-supported and underpaid while carrying significant responsibility.

Parents should continue to have the right to determine which district, school, and educational path best fits their children's individual needs. Public policy should support families, not restrict them.

At the end of the day, no one understands a child's needs better than his or her own parents, and that perspective deserves to remain central in educational decision-making.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Sara Schauf [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 11:07 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. 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: Please Oppose SB 277 – Impact on Coast Guard & Foster Families

We strongly urge you not to pass Senate Bill 277 (Version A). As currently written, the language appears likely to restrict or eliminate many homeschool programs, including IDEA, which families like ours depend on.

We are a Coast Guard family, which requires flexibility and relocation throughout the state of Alaska. Programs like IDEA—along with the current laws that protect homeschooling—ensure that our children can receive a consistent, high-quality education regardless of where in Alaska we are required to live and serve, but especially here in Juneau, a designated USCG city as of 2013.

In addition, we are a foster family. We care for vulnerable children in our community, many of whom have unique educational and emotional needs. Homeschooling provides the flexibility necessary for our family and many other foster families to support these children. Allowing us to adapt schedules, pacing, and learning environments to help our family succeed while caring for at risk children. Removing or weakening these options would significantly limit our ability to provide the stability and support these children deserve.

Our children are currently thriving academically through homeschooling. If this bill passes and restricts programs like IDEA, families like ours would be left at the mercy of our local school district.

-In Juneau, our district faces serious challenges: overcrowded, underfunding, limited support for special educational needs, and a well-documented history of financial mismanagement that has negatively impacted our community's schools. As a small and geographically isolated community, we do not have many educational alternatives. Homeschooling must remain a fully viable option for families here. The Juneau School District is facing a severe financial crisis, with a projected \$5.37 million deficit for the 2026 fiscal year following a major \$9.5 million shortfall in early 2024. The crisis was caused by significant accounting errors that undercounted staffing costs.

Accounting Failures: The 2024 shortfall arose because the district overestimated revenues and underestimated expenses, leaving out costs such as superintendent benefits in their calculations.

- **Accumulated Debt:** The district's audit showed it ended a previous fiscal year with nearly a \$2 million deficit in its operating fund, which continued to grow.
- **Emergency Measures:** The city government (City and Borough of Juneau) had to provide a loan of over \$4 million to help the district manage its debt in 2024.

- Ongoing Deficit: For the 2025-2026 school year, the district is projecting a \$5.37 million deficit, with potential solutions including using up to \$7.8 million in savings or making severe cuts to services.
- Continued Issues: The district has faced, and continues to manage, staffing shortages and budget volatility due to declining student enrollment, which is projected to fall further over the coming years.

Senate Bill 277, if passed in its current form, would harm many Alaska families—particularly those in rural and remote communities who rely on homeschooling for stability, safety, and educational quality. For families like ours, and for the vulnerable children we serve, this bill would be a serious detriment.

Please Protect Our Homeschool Family, we respectfully and strongly ask you to oppose Senate Bill 277.

Please Read Links below for more evidence as to poorly managed money from our local and state schools.

<https://alaskapublic.org/news/2023-03-02/juneau-school-district-loses-269k-to-scammer>

<https://www.propublica.org/article/alaska-public-education-funding-failure-lawsuit>

<https://www.juneauempire.com/2024/01/18/school-districts-former-financial-officer-increasingly-blamed-for-deficit-as-angry-parents-ask-whos-to-blame/>

Michael Mason

From: S Schaal <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 10:10 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277 Testimony – Sarah – Wasilla, AK

Hello Senate Education Committee,

My name is Sarah and my family homeschool through IDEA. We recently moved to Wasilla from Juneau. I am writing to share my concerns about SB 277 and the potential impact it could have on statewide correspondence programs.

Specifically, I disagree with the proposal that would direct student funding to a student's home district rather than the district operating the statewide correspondence program the student is enrolled in. Statewide correspondence programs exist because families are seeking educational options that may not be available through their local district. Redirecting the student allocation away from the program actually serving the student undermines school choice and threatens the sustainability of these programs.

I am also concerned about the unintended consequences of this change. If statewide correspondence programs lose funding tied to their enrolled students and are forced to scale back or close, many families will not simply enroll in their local district's correspondence program. For many families, the statewide programs are the reason they participate in the public system at all. Without those options, many would choose to homeschool independently instead of enrolling in a district program.

This would reduce the number of students participating in Alaska's public education system overall, rather than strengthening it.

Correspondence programs are working well for many families. I encourage the committee to focus on strengthening educational opportunities across the system without destabilizing programs that are already serving students successfully.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sarah Schaal
Wasilla, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Sarah Zatalokin <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 8:12 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. Jesse Kiehl; 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: Opposition to SB 277

I ask urging you to stand up and protect Alaska's largest homeschool program. I, myself, homeschool our four children with Idea out of the Palmer branch. While we love living in the Valley, forcing our hands to choose an in-district school will result in several Valley families withdrawing from the district all together.

I have heard from other parents that legislators are stating the Homeschool families are utilizing MSBD resources while the Borough is not receiving any funding. While I find that unlikely to be a tax on the system as I know NO other families within our community to be using MSBD sports or activities, certainly the solution to this issue is NOT to force approximately 8,000 students statewide in Idea alone out of their school to pay for the extracurricular choices of the few.

We absolutely love Idea, have been schooling with them for 6 years, and have 4 very successful children in the program including a state champion from Battle of the Books 2025. Our kids (and their funding) support many Valley small businesses with Irish Dance, music class, music lesson, and Muay Thai.

A change this dramatic will be devastating to Valley families and to the local economy. The MSBD failings will NOT be solved by taking away families choice on how to educate their children.

So you have any questions or would like to speak to me further please email me here or call (270) 922-8554.

Thank you,

Sarah Zatalokin
Licensed Lawyer MI & AK

Michael Mason

From: ShaLene Jorgensen [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:27 AM

Dear Senator and Education Committee Members,

I am a constituent and a homeschooling parent currently enrolled in IDEA through the Galena City School District. I'm writing to share my perspective on SB 277 and to ask that you carefully consider how it may impact families like mine.

IDEA's structure and resources have been extremely valuable to my child's education. The flexibility, guidance, and support we receive allow us to provide a personalized learning experience that would be difficult to replicate through our local district alone. This program has given our family a level of stability and educational quality that we deeply rely on.

I am concerned that SB 277, as currently written, could unintentionally undermine statewide correspondence programs by redirecting funding away from the programs that actively serve students. If that happens, families like mine may lose access to the support systems that make homeschooling successful and sustainable.

I respectfully ask that you:

- Protect funding mechanisms that allow students to enroll in statewide correspondence programs
- Ensure that school choice remains a viable option for Alaska families
- Consider amendments to SB 277 that preserve programs like IDEA while still addressing broader policy goals

I appreciate the complexity of education policy and the work you do to serve our state. Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective and the real impact this legislation may have on families like mine.

Sincerely,
ShaLene Jorgensen
Palmer, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Sheylyn Cato [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; 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: SB277

Good Morning,

I am writing to voice my concerns with SB277. I am a lifelong Alaskan living in Eagle River. I have two children, ages 9 and 11, who've homeschooled from the start and we are with Idea. I'm going to keep this as short as possible, I know you are getting lots of comments that you have to read through. I do appreciate the positives you are attempting with this bill...public and homeschooled being counted at the same rate, special needs getting the funding they need and transportation costs. I can tell you though, if you pass this and try to give the Anchorage School District any more of our money, I will completely pull my kids from any programs and we'll continue our learning without any assistance. We don't make a lot of money, the allotment for school books and gym classes truly helps our family to be able to do things we otherwise might not be able to. But we will go without before we give any more funding to ASD. We already pay a hefty sum for property taxes, then you approve higher base funds for each student and continue to dwindle our PFD and then because certain school districts can't work within their means (and blatantly blow money) our homeschooling community is now punished? We shouldn't get the short end of the stick due to mismanagement by other districts. You will absolutely devastate the homeschooling community if you pass this bill and you will shut down state correspondence programs that have been so beneficial to so many families for years. There may be some who are willing to let their funds fall elsewhere, I can tell you though I've spoken with many parents who feel the same as we do: If you redirect our funding to our zoned district rather than the correspondence school that best fits our children's needs, we will go independent and that funding will disappear from any Alaskan district. I hope you all seriously reconsider pushing this through, it'll be such a disservice to so many students and families if it passes.

Respectfully,
Sheylyn Cato

Michael Mason

From: Sonia Padgett [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:23 AM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Cathy Tilton
Subject: Regarding Senate Bill 277

Good morning,

I am writing to urge you to vote no on SB 277, since it would redirect state funding to a student's district of residence rather than the school district in which the child is enrolled.

I have utilized local public schools as well as statewide homeschool programs while raising my three children in Alaska. Both have their benefits, and I enjoyed the freedom of choice that every parent should have when considering their child's education. Gutting funding for homeschool programs in favor of the school district where a child happens to live seems counterproductive to both parental rights and to well-educated Alaskans; not every student learns best in a traditional public school setting. It doesn't make any sense to give a student's funding to a district where the child is not enrolled.

I hope there are changes that can be made to this bill, or that a new bill can be created, that still include the provisions that benefit students, such as Special Education funding for correspondence students, increased CTE funding, and an increased BSA, without removing funding for students in statewide homeschool programs.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sonia Padgett

Wasilla, AK

Michael Mason

From: Starla Page <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:16 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

To whom it may concern,

I oppose SB 277 and the increase to base student funding from tax payer dollars. Correspondence schools provide meaningful and effective education for 1 in 5 students, with careful guidance and significant resources and support.

In line with the spirit of Alaska is independence. Please uphold the independence and freedom of choice for families in regard to home schooling. Failure to encourage home schooling will only hurt our families and our state. In a time where many are leaving the state, don't give families one more reason to consider doing the same.

Respectfully,
Starla Halbrook, Fairbanks

Michael Mason

From: Taryn Lackey [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:40 AM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt
Cc: 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: Oppose SB 277

Hello,

My name is Taryn Lackey, and I reside in Fairbanks, Alaska. Although I am employed by IDEA/Galena City School District, I am writing as a private citizen and not as a representative of my employer. I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 277.

As both a parent and an education employee, I have experience across Alaska's educational landscape. I have homeschooled using three different statewide homeschool programs, enrolled my children in a local brick-and-mortar public charter school, and utilized traditional public schools. Professionally, I have worked for two homeschool programs, including my current role with IDEA.

The passage of SB 277 would result in significant personal and economic consequences for myself and many others across the state. Families like mine would face loss of income and medical insurance, creating immediate financial strain. In some cases, families may be forced to sell their homes, leave Alaska, reduce support currently given to other community members, and even seek public assistance. These impacts would ripple outward, affecting entire communities.

Alaska's unique homeschool programs have allowed vibrant local economies to develop around them. Vendors who offer lessons, small businesses providing educational materials, and even large retailers whose customer base includes a substantial number of homeschool families all rely on the current system. SB 277 would abruptly destabilize this ecosystem. Larger businesses may scale back operations and lay people off, while many small businesses would likely close. Families who already sacrifice to homeschool their children would suddenly lose the support structure they have depended on for years.

In addition to the economic harm, SB 277 eliminates educational choice and undermines parental rights. Alaska has long recognized that parents are best positioned to make decisions about their children's education. By removing resources and restricting access to homeschool and charter options, this bill destroys families' ability to choose the educational environment that best meets their children's needs.

SB 277 also fails to address a fundamental reality: increasing education funding without accountability has not led to improved educational outcomes. In fact, Alaska has witnessed the opposite. Despite

some of the highest per-student spending in the nation, our academic results remain among the lowest. Stripping resources from effective and innovative educational models—while pouring additional funds into systems that have not demonstrated meaningful improvement—moves Alaska further away from the goal of better education for all students.

This bill removes opportunity and vital resources from homeschool families and from those who wish to attend in-person charter schools. **Most homeschoolers I know view SB 277 as forcing them into independent homeschooling. Preserve choice, opportunity, and resources for ALL of Alaska’s current and future children.**

Rather than stripping funds from students and the communities that serve them, struggling districts should focus on improving their offerings, ensuring transparency, and evaluating management of existing resources. Redirecting funds away from students is not a solution to district-level challenges. Sustainable improvement comes from accountability and innovation, not from limiting choice.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to oppose SB 277 and protect educational choice, parental rights, and the families and businesses that form the backbone of Alaska’s homeschool community.

Sincerely,
Taryn Lackey
Fairbanks, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Thea Anthony [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 12:39 PM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

While I can see some positive aspects of SB 277, such as the increase to the BSA and the increase of BSA for correspondence schools students, I believe the unintended consequences will ultimately harm students and our state. Therefore, I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB277, which undermines school choice, rewards under-performing school programs/districts, and ultimately hurts Alaskans.

The ability for parents to choose their children's school is fundamental in encouraging school and school programs to continue striving to meet the needs of students. It encourages competition between schools and programs to adapt to the needs of students, support student growth, and in turn increase student performance and success. If SB277 passes, this competition and encouragement to improve won't be necessary.

If local school districts receive funding for all students in their local area, regardless of enrollment, then there is no incentive for those school or programs to improve. Their budget will increase without increasing enrollment, unless this bill effectively eliminates statewide correspondence programs (which will likely happen if it passes). The bill becomes a bailout for school districts that are unable to follow their budget and rewards them rather than forcing them to make changes and fix the problems. Instead of bailing them out and effectively forcing parents into programs they would not otherwise choose, schools and local homeschool programs should adapt and make their programs better. Better schools and programs will encourage parents to enroll there, eliminating the need for this drastic change to funding.

School districts would receive funding for students not enrolled in their schools or programs and therefore decrease funding for statewide programs. With enough funding decrease, those statewide programs run in rural offices will effectively shut down. This would affect not only the students enrolled in those programs, but have a ripple effect across the state as jobs are cut, vendors are unable to be utilized, and students are not supported. This bill could cripple local economies. Many small businesses rely upon the income of homeschool families through services and materials they provide as vendors. By shutting down correspondence programs, which is what SB 277 will do, you will negatively impact many communities and Alaskans.

I understand that some of the intent of this bill is to offset the costs for families that wish to have students attend some classes at their local school. This is something that homeschool families factor in when choosing a program, and many local school districts offer homeschooling programs with that option. Therefore, if families want to utilize this option at little or no cost to themselves, they can choose those homeschool programs. However, I think the consequences of this bill, intentional or not, will be negative and far reaching, outweighing the positive intent. If the hope really is to help with this cost, then allocate the additional 10% of the BSA that this bill would introduce to the local schools and keep the 90% with the chosen school of enrollment. This additional funding for local school districts would help offset the costs incurred by local school districts for the handful of homeschool students that wish to take classes at the local schools.

For the reasons I've outlined, I am respectfully requesting that you oppose SB 277 as it is currently written. Perhaps will appropriate changes, as I've suggested above, it could be beneficial to all Alaskans. However, as it is currently written it is unacceptable.

Sincerely,

Thea Anthony

Soldotna, Alaska

District 6-C

Michael Mason

From: Tricia Burton [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 8:25 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Homeschool mom

Hello,

I'm writing to say that SB277 attacks everything that my family loves about Alaska, freedoms and endless choices.

My family started homeschooling our 3 kids when they were going into 6th grade and twins headed into 4th grade. We left the public school because we wanted freedom. Freedoms to travel without feeling pressure for missing classes. Freedoms to teach and educate how our family sees fit. Freedoms to step away from standardized testing that made my kids feel less than they really were. Freedoms to see more and do more. And let me tell you, those freedoms blessed our family.

We are a family of 6 who are very close knit. My 3 kids were thriving with homeschool. We had many adjustments to make after the first year. My 6th grader actually decided to go back to public school into a charter option as she felt homeschooling wasn't working for her style of learning and personality. Now that we are 3/4 of the way through her 7th grade year (that she has hated since day 1) she now sees that homeschool was amazing.

My twin boys who are finishing up their 2nd year of homeschool (5th grade) are testing at a 6th grade level of math and reading. (Yes we have opted to stay with standardized testing to compare growth from their previous years, but we test in settings that are comfortable for them, at a time of day that is natural to their learning) My boys want to continue on to 6th grade homeschooling. My kids are thriving under our roof, our style of teaching, our books and our love! And I credit the homeschool options and system here in Alaska to blessing our family.

Homeschool has also given us freedom to teach and see what we want, when we want. My kids are educated in states like Florida, Hawaii, Utah, California, Texas, D/C. It has allowed us to do weekly field trips within our own town of Anchorage. The budget for homeschool has made it so my kids haven't missed out on all these opportunities and more, including sports (that are being threatened in the public system.) The budget has allowed us to order the curriculum we want, a curriculum that is fun, engaging and not forced by educators. The budget has allowed us to keep our kids engaged and thriving without my husband and I having to work more just so our kids opportunities for growth.

SB277 will cripple our home and thousands of others homes. The budget allotted allows families to give our kids the freedom, education and life that is so many thrive off of!

Tricia Harris

Sent from my iPhone