

Michael Mason

From: Amy Poage [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 6:09 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt
Subject: Additional comments on SB 277

Good day,

I previously sent an email in opposition to SB 277. My opposition to SB 277 remains, but after listening to the Committee meeting yesterday I find the need to share additional comments.

In regards to Section 2, allowing students to retain textbooks, equipment and other curricular materials, the public comments made by Senator Yundt, "...correspondence families, they were being asked to repurchase materials that were already purchased with their allotment..." and " ...they were being charged if they wanted to go from one correspondence program to another correspondence program, they are trying to charge the families to take the curriculum with them, that is criminal to me..." Allotment dollars are state dollars. Items paid for with allotment belong to the district. Per state regulation below, school districts are following the law. Items are to be returned to the school district. If a school does not get back what belongs to them (which includes but are not limited to tablets, laptops, computers, printers) there should be a replacement fee, correct? Schools are not allowed to hold hostage student records, for overdue items. By law, records have to be released within 10 days of an official request (referencing Senator Kiehl's related comment about his diploma). Senator Yundt's feeling that correspondence programs are criminal when they are following the law below is completely unfounded.

Regulation 4 AAC 33.422 (b): *Textbooks, equipment, and other curriculum materials purchased with state money, including money provided to the parent through a fund account, are property of the district. Materials that are not consumables must be returned to the district when the student leaves the program for any reason.*

Giving away millions of dollars' worth of equipment and curriculum that are purchased through allotments is not good stewardship of state dollars. I think more discussion about refining the definition of non-consumables or perhaps capping the value on something required to be returned would be more appropriate. Otherwise, you will be faced with complaints down the road from non-correspondence parents who don't understand why their students don't get the same considerations in being able to keep things from their schools also.

Second, Senator Tobin discussed cooperative agreements between districts. This would be no easy task for schools. During the funding period in October when school districts are supposed to work together and resolve conflicts for funding, there is one school district in our state that refuses to talk to any other school district to resolve these conflicts. Several school districts will not sign cooperative agreements with each other for students receiving special education services in one district and taking other classes in another. With thousands of out of district students that would need a cooperative agreement in place under the language in SB 277, I don't see how schools could maintain these additional records without increased costs to track or manage this process, let alone receive support if school districts do not agree. I don't see anything that explains how that money will flow, who will handle disputes and who gets to sort it all out. I imagine a logistical nightmare. This bill will only create further division between districts and schools and "competition" as Senator Yundt stated. This is not a competition; we are talking about our students and student outcomes.

The focus should be on quality education and school choice that allows students and families a multitude of platforms to find the right fit so they can receive the very best that all of our schools have to offer. Having all funding flow through districts of residence for students they are not serving is neither cost effective nor efficient and has nothing to do with student outcomes.

There is more work to be done. I appreciate the committee for listening to the testimonies and comments as well as the written communications and taking the time to reconsider.

Thank you for your time,

Amy Poage, Fairbanks



Michael Mason

From: Joy Gillespie <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 6:21 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. George Rauscher
Subject: I oppose SB 277

My name is Crystal Gillespie and I oppose SB 277, specifically sections IV and VII.

Without more clarifying, specific language regarding the collaborative relationships between an out-of-district student's chosen school and their local school, this bill could completely upend correspondence programs across the state. If a majority of its students lost portions of their funding, our school, where we have been involved for over a decade, would face serious budgetary and operating issues. It simply doesn't make sense to add another layer of administration to a system that has functioned well for decades in Alaska.

I have homeschooled my 4 children for the last 11 years with Cyberlynx - a statewide correspondence school program out of Nenana. I know most of Cyberlynx's students are out-of-district like us. This would be devastating because we would lose valuable relationships with our contact teachers and school community, and it would also uproot our homeschool life and process. This year my oldest child tested into the Mat Su Middle College and carries a 4.0 in all her classes, including college courses. My 3 homeschooled children are also excelling in their subjects. I say this to bolster the value and success of these program.

If the bill passes, the additional funding is diverted, and Cyberlynx manages to remain operational, the likelihood is that our individual student allotment will decrease by an unknown amount because it is subject to the local school district's discretion. No language or accountability is in place to prevent the local district from retaining all of the student's funding! And again, why add a middleman to the process? The current system is running well and is very successful.

If we lose some of our personal allotment per child it will directly impact my child negatively. We use our allotments to support Sonja's Studio and Valley Performing Arts, as well as many other local vendors in the Valley. These vendors would be seriously impacted if all out-of-district homeschoolers suddenly had to decrease spending because the funds would now go to a school completely unrelated to the student.

My family has never participated in classes, sports or services within our local district. I would be unlikely to use them even if we moved to an in-district correspondence school. This bill redirects funds to other districts away from families that would not even benefit from those funds.

I deeply value the right to choose how and where my children are educated. By diverting funds from our chosen district you are taking away school choice. I know I speak for more than just myself here. Many families would become completely independent before enrolling in their local district.

This is especially true in the Mat-Su Borough where the current graduation requirements have reached a ridiculous level for any student not bound for college. The statewide correspondence schools have enabled my nephews, who are also enrolled in Cyberlynx to graduate early to pursue their careers at the

very reasonable requirement of 22 credits rather than Mat-Su's 25 credits plus AP/honors class not to mention the requirements on those credits that severely limit extracurriculars and CTE classes. For non-college-bound students looking to enter highly valued trade and tech careers, the Mat-Su Borough School District is a very rigid and ill-suited model.

Statewide correspondence programs like IDEA and Cyberlynx have provided the flexibility and educational support that not only my family, but many Alaskan families have benefited from. Limiting these wonderful programs due to shared funding would severely handicap them. At the very least this bill needs to specify exactly how much the local school district can garnish from the student's chosen correspondence school. And I think it should be on a case-by-case basis for the students who actually use those in-district resources.

Furthermore, in closing, this bill doesn't even recognize the logistical impracticality of moving thousands of statewide correspondence students—for instance, in the Mat-Su Borough—to the two in-district correspondence schools, one of which already has a waitlist. We lack the staff and resources to enforce this bill. In one broad, uncalculated swoop, it will displace and throw into chaos supportive, individualistic, successful and enriching academic homeschool families, teachers, and staff across the state

Please say no to SB 277

At the least it is unclear and too broad, at its worst, it is a money grab directed at students who choose out-of-district correspondence schools.

We can solve the budget problems. This is not it. Let's do better.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns, and thank you for your service to our families and schools.

Crystal Gillespie

Michael Mason

From: Mariah Dyer [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 12:56 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please Oppose Sections 4 and 7 of SB 277

Dear Representatives,

I am a constituent from Palmer, Alaska, and I am writing to express my strong opposition to Sections 4 and 7 of SB 277.

I have been homeschooling my five children for the past five years, and programs like IDEA Homeschool have been invaluable to our family. The allotment we receive has enriched my children's education by allowing them to explore subjects that truly interest them and to learn in ways that fit their individual learning styles.

I am deeply concerned that changes to funding outlined in Sections 4 and 7 could put this at risk. Section 7 appears to shift all funding to local districts without guaranteeing funding levels for statewide programs, creating uncertainty for families like mine who depend on these programs.

Additionally, Section 4 does not appear to meaningfully limit certain fees, which could result in increased costs for families and reduced access to educational opportunities. The lack of a requirement for cooperative agreements between districts and statewide programs is also troubling, as it could lead to districts withholding funds or choosing not to participate.

For my family, this is not abstract policy—it directly affects my ability to continue homeschooling my children. Any disruption or reduction in funding could take away important learning opportunities that my kids rely on.

I respectfully urge you to oppose Sections 4 and 7 as currently written, or to amend the bill to ensure:

- Guaranteed and protected funding for statewide programs
- Reasonable limits on fees
- Required cooperation between local districts and statewide programs

Educational choice and flexibility are essential for many Alaska families. Please help protect these opportunities.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our community.

Sincerely,
Mariah Dyer
Palmer, Alaska

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Marissa Coman [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 1:14 PM

Dear Senators and those who admin,

I am writing as a concerned Alaskan parent regarding Senate Bill 277 (Version A) and the serious impact it would have on families like mine.

As a participant in a statewide correspondence program, I rely on this educational model to provide my child with a personalized, high-quality education that meets their individual needs. Programs like IDEA empower parents to be actively involved in their children's learning while still maintaining accountability and academic standards.

The proposed language in SB 277 that would eliminate or significantly restrict these programs is deeply concerning. It threatens not only educational choice, but also parental rights—the ability for families to decide what educational environment best supports their children.

For many of us, correspondence programs are not a convenience—they are essential. They allow flexibility for unique family situations, support different learning styles, and provide opportunities that may not be available in traditional school settings. Eliminating these programs would place an unnecessary burden on families and remove a critical educational option for thousands of Alaskan students.

I respectfully urge you to oppose SB 277 in its current form and to consider the voices of the families who will be directly affected. Please protect educational freedom and parental choice in Alaska.

Thank you for your time and your service to our state.

Respectfully,

Marissa Coman

Big Lake, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Melanie Pitka <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 12:52 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing as a homeschool mom to oppose SB 277, specifically Sections 7 and 4. Families choose correspondence programs for a reason. We choose based on the support, flexibility, and resources that best meet our children's needs—not based on where we happen to live. In Alaska, that choice is essential.

A major concern with this bill is how it impacts student funding and allotments.

Right now, funding follows the student to the program the family chooses. That is what allows that program to provide an allotment and meaningful support. If funding is instead directed to a student's residential district, then the program actually serving the student would no longer have the resources to support that child.

Put simply: If the program does not receive the funding, families will not receive the allotment from that program. That breaks the current system entirely.

This bill creates a situation where:

- Families choose one program
- Another district receives the funding
- And the chosen program is expected to serve the student without the resources to do so

That is not workable. And realistically, it would end up closing or severely limiting statewide programs serving students outside their home district and pushing families back into their geographic district whether it's the right fit or not.

Section 7 is at the center of this issue, tying students back to their district of residence instead of the program they are actually enrolled in. Section 4 raises additional concerns, as it relies on cooperative agreements without clear structure or accountability to ensure those agreements would work in a consistent or fair way for families.

I understand that some districts are facing budget pressures due to enrollment shifts. However, redirecting funding away from the program actually serving the student is not a sustainable or effective solution.

In reality, many families will not respond by enrolling in their local district program. They will simply choose to homeschool independently. If that happens, no district receives funding at all. There is already a significant and growing population of independent homeschool families across Alaska. This bill risks accelerating that shift rather than stabilizing enrollment.

Additionally, this change would impact more than just school districts. It would affect vendors, small businesses, and service providers across the state who rely on correspondence allotments. That broader impact should not be overlooked.

While some of the funding increases included in SB 277 are positive, combining those with changes to student counts creates a difficult tradeoff. Families should not have to give up meaningful choice and support in order to receive basic funding increases.

Alaska's correspondence programs work because they allow real choice, and because funding follows the student to the program providing the education. SB 277 undermines both.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose Sections 7 and 4 of SB 277.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Melanie A. Pitka
Wasilla, Alaska

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Melanie Pitka

"...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15

Michael Mason

From: Melissa Grim [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 11:16 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277 - Family Opposition

Dear Senators,

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

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

For families like mine, these programs are not optional; they are essential. We are a military family who has fallen in love with Alaska and plan to retire here. However, the homeschool community, support and organizations are a huge reason why Alaska has become home. This makes life more affordable for our family.

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

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

I strongly urge you to:

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Melissa Grim

North Pole, Alaska

Melissa Grim
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Miriam & Dana Polch [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 1:40 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Concern Regarding SB 277 and Impact on Homeschool Families

Dear Senator/Representative,

I am a parent with 4 children enrolled in the IDEA Homeschool program, and I'm writing to express my serious concerns regarding Senate Bill 277.

IDEA has been an essential part of my children's education. It provides the flexibility to meet their individual needs while still offering access to resources, classes, and support that would otherwise be unavailable to our family.

As I understand it, SB 277 would shift all funding to local school districts without guaranteeing that statewide homeschool programs like IDEA will receive equitable funding or cooperation. This raises several concerns for my family:

- The possibility of reduced or eliminated funding for IDEA programs
- A lack of requirement for districts to partner with or support homeschool programs
- The risk of increased fees or reduced services for families
- No clear protections or recourse if funding is withheld

For families like mine, this creates uncertainty and anxiety about our ability to continue homeschooling with the support we currently rely on.

I respectfully ask that you carefully reconsider the language in SB 277—especially Section 7—and ensure that any legislation protects school choice and does not unintentionally harm homeschool families and statewide programs.

Please work to guarantee:

- Fair and protected funding for statewide homeschool programs
- Required cooperation between districts and these programs
- Safeguards for families so we are not left without support

Thank you for your time, your service, and your consideration of families like mine.

Sincerely,

Miriam P.

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Michael Mason

From: Natalie Martin <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 2:01 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Robert Yundt
Subject: Please Reject SB 277(A) – Support the Alternative Version Submitted by Barbara Haney

Dear Chair Tobin and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am a parent who has homeschooled my children through a statewide correspondence program for the past several years. These programs have given our family the flexibility and personalized education we need. I am writing to urge you to reject Senate Bill 277(A) in its current form. The bill redirects funding away from the correspondence programs families have chosen and sends it to local resident districts instead. This will severely damage or close programs like IDEA, CyberLynx, and Raven. It will cut curriculum allotments, reduce teacher support, and eliminate the flexibility that allows families to travel, work seasonal jobs, and meet special needs. Many parents will switch to independent homeschooling, meaning the bill's promised funding gains for local districts are largely an illusion. The bill also harms charter schools by doubling the administrative fees districts can take from their budgets.

I respectfully ask that you support the alternative version of SB 277 submitted by Barbara Haney on behalf of Alaskans Against Common Core. Her proposed amendments remove the harmful funding redirection, protect charter schools, ensure local contributions follow the student, prioritize core subjects, and affirm that parental rights are superior to those of school district officials. Please reject SB 277(A) as written and support the stronger, parent-centered version submitted by Alaskans Against Common Core. Alaska families deserve real educational choice and freedom. Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,
Natalie Martin
Wasilla, Alaska
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Jessica Zubach <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 8:29 AM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Cc: Nick Zubach
Subject: SB277: Concerns from a non-homeschool family

Members of the Committee and Anchorage Representatives:

We are writing to you today in regard to SB 277. We do not homeschool our children, but are big proponents of educational freedom and choice - and are very concerned by the language in the bill.

Educational independence and choice are critical in a state like ours, and we are concerned that this bill, as written, will limit families' abilities to choose how best to educate their children. We're concerned that the current language does not explicitly require the districts to share the funding with homeschool families, and that needs to change.

Thank you for your consideration.
Nicholas and Jessica Zubach
Anchorage

Michael Mason

From: Nina Delain <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 1:47 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Mike Cronk; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. George Rauscher; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Cathy Tilton; Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: SB277

Hello Alaskan Representatives,

When does it end? The continued theme is constant elimination of our choices and options in our state of Alaska. The taking of our PFD's, the price gouging in energy (our electricity bill for one single family home was over 1500 for one month), the yearly increase in property taxes, increases in fuel and heating wood, constant inflation with no relief. Wage increases never meeting demands. And we have skilled careers. Alaska is already a harsh place to live. Especially in the North. Now one of our shining opportunities here, homeschooling, up next for the chopping block.

We know so many people who have left or are preparing to leave this state due to the declining freedoms and affordability. Multi generational Alaskans. And now we begin to share in this view as living here is less and less realistic. For us, for many. Born and raised life long Alaskans. It's just not worth it anymore. This is no longer a land of opportunity. This is certainly no longer a decent place to raise a family or grow old. Alaska through years of bad policy has been reduced to the great land of insecurities.

You wont keep energy sources in check and keep them affordable for Alaskans or pave the way for options but you will definitely visit the idea of keeping homeschool options in check.

I am a mother of six children. In the past I worked in the mental health field then as a state licensed daycare owner for years. I have also worked in tours management and as an equipment operator. My husband is a career industrial journeyman electrician and electical instrumentation tech. Has spent years on the pipeline and now military bases. We own a couple businesses and we are also farmers. We have supplied locals with goats, birds and eggs for years. After all this we can hardly keep up with it here anymore.

I recently gave birth to our sixth child who has an extremely rare genetic condition. She is special needs. Despite all the years of difficulties I have always found comfort in having options to school our children in the manner that suits them best. Three of our children have already graduated and a fourth is soon to graduate. We have used a mix of schooling options. We have utilized homsechool programs, private schools, charter schools, public schools and combinations of these. Whatever school or program best fit our child's needs is what we utilized in order for them to succeed.

Now being the mother of a highly special needs kiddo and seeing these options under threat really makes me insecure as a parent and what I will be able to provide to her for her future. With all our freedoms and options becoming more and more limited. Alaska is continuing to evolve into a state where a family does not thrive... it just survives.

SB 277 is horrible. It's straight-up attacking our homeschool freedom by messing with how the money follows our kids. Right now it goes to the correspondence programs we actually choose, like IDEA or Raven, where we get to direct what's best for our children. This bill wants to count our kids as if they're stuck in the local district school with the lowest enrollment instead, so the funding gets yanked away from us and dumped back into the brick-and-mortar system a lot of us walked away from, and for darn

good reasons. And then it doubles the admin fees districts can take from charters. It rises from 4% to 8% which just means less money actually gets to the kids and more gets skimmed off the top. I wouldn't be shocked if the NEA pushed for this. This isn't helping education; it's punishing families like mine who need flexibility, especially with a special-needs little one who deserves every option to succeed. This attack on educational freedom does not go unnoticed. Please oppose SB 277.

Nina Delain

Michael Mason

From: Pamela Samash [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 2:40 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please support the new version of SB 277

I respectfully ask that you support the alternative version of SB 277 submitted by Barbara Haney on behalf of Alaskans Against Common Core. Her proposed amendments remove the harmful funding redirection, protect charter schools, ensure local contributions follow the student, prioritize core subjects, and affirm that parental rights are superior to those of school district officials. Please reject SB 277(A) as written and support the stronger, parent-centered version submitted by Alaskans Against Common Core. Alaska families deserve real educational choice and freedom. Thank you for your time and service.

Pamela Samash
Nenana AK
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Patty Bouton [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 5:00 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Subject: opposed SB 277

Committee Members:

I oppose SB 277.
Senators can't fix the broken brick and mortar schools by dis-mantling the excellent programs our homeschooling families have available.

Patricia Bouton,
Soldotna, AK

Michael Mason

From: Peter Bengtson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 2:32 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Robert Yundt
Subject: School choice and statewide correspondence programs SB 277

Dear Senators,

I am a resident of the Mat-Su Valley, specifically Palmer and the father of three students who have been pulled from the public school. My children are no longer in the Mat-Su District due to my family's experience and our lack of confidence in the district administration. As someone who has made the choice to look elsewhere for my children's education SB 277 and the ploy to restrict my choice as a homeschool parent is extremely disturbing.

My wife and I chose to enroll our children in IDEA because of the flexibility, support and the long standing success of the program. I am aware that there are programs through our district of residence but our experience with the district has not been positive. Additionally, the obvious attempt by the MSBSD superintendent to discredit and undermine statewide programs to procure more funding for his failing programs further undermines my confidence in the district specifically and public education as a whole.

Our decision to pull our children from the district was not made lightly. One of our children has struggled with a learning disability and the district's lack of resources and support required us to seek private diagnosis and intervention fully at our own expense. We were told, in our parent district meetings, that there were no resources or curriculum available in the entire MSBSD that could be used to serve our dyslexic child. Homeschooling has offered us the opportunity to provide resources and curriculum that play to her strengths and support her challenges. We struggled and fought with school and district administration for three years and spent thousands of dollars just to get the administration to acknowledge her diagnosis and the district's legal responsibility to provide resources.

Additionally, our second child was placed in a classroom where the teacher used foul language, refused to accept children's apologies and rejected any attempts on our part, to communicate and work together to support her classroom and our child's education and safety. Our child spent the first month of school afraid of the outbursts of her classmates and her teachers' condemnation. We decided, as parents, our only recourse was to remove all of our children from this unsupportive and toxic environment.

Our children are currently thriving through the IDEA homeschool program. The support we have received via the allotment, resource teacher and additional programs have been instrumental in providing our children with an educational environment that has seen them grow exponentially. In just a few months, they have caught up and, in most cases, surpassed grade level expectations. My children can accomplish more in three hours each morning, than in an entire day at the public school. As a family, especially the children, we are more community minded and involved through time at the library, vendor classes, special enrichment opportunities and IDEA specific courses and clubs.

Alaska has always had a vibrant and supportive homeschool program. The legislation choosing to limit the success of residents and our children by taking away my choice as a parent would be devastating to

the next generation of Alaskans. Voters will remember who chose to throw money at a failing system instead of encouraging parents and educators to use state resources wisely.

Thank you for your time in this matter, for not supporting SB 277 and the restriction of parents rights and choices.

Sincerely,
Peter Bengtson

Michael Mason

From: Rachel Piszczek [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 2:58 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Concern for Senate Bill 277, Version A

Hello my name is Rachel Piszczek,

>
> I am writing from Fairbanks where I was raised and have called home over 25 years.
> My husband was also born and raised here.

>
> Growing up, we were both homeschooled and utilized state funded correspondence programs (IDEA and Raven), and now we homeschool our children here, who are enrolled in IDEA. I am writing to express my concern over Senate Bill 277 Version A.

>
> As a local Fairbanksan, who was raised in the homeschool system, I can attest to the high value of programs such as Idea and Raven (and others). While being homeschooled, I held a part-time job from the age of 16 years old, purchased my own vehicle out of my pocket, as well as attended college classes at UAF. I graduated from highschool with 35 college credits towards my degree in nursing and was able to fast track into the nursing satellite program here in Fairbanks at the CTC campus. Without the help of Raven Correspondence, none of this would have been possible for me.

>
> Now, as a homeschool parent, I value the time I have with my children and know how much a homeschool education helped me, and I want to provide the same resources and benefits of a well-rounded education to my kids. As you are well aware, living in Alaska is not for the faint of heart. The cold and darkness are very taxing and it is imperative to stay active through the winter. Without a well funded homeschool program that provides activities, resources, clubs and events for our children through the difficult seasons, I can foresee a significant increase in the already high levels of depression, anxiety, SAD and other conditions rampant in our city. Residents are moving from Alaska at an alarming rate, and with the failing public school systems, inflation on the rise, and our PFDs dwindling, I fear the passing of this bill could be the last straw for many families already considering leaving.

>
> The public school system is NOT an option for my family, as I believe education that is individualized to the student is the most beneficial, and that is just not possible in an overcrowded public school system. Not to mention, Alaska being one of the worst in the nation for public school. By supporting this measure, you would be significantly limiting access to resources that make a well rounded, and individualized education possible for my children and other Alaskans throughout the state.

>
> I respectfully urge you to consider the impact this bill has on families across the state, and oppose SB 277 Version A.

>
> Thank you for your time,

>
> Rachel Piszczek

> [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Rebecca Lawson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 1:51 PM
To: Sen. Löki Tobin; Senate Education; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt
Subject: School Choice for Alaska Families

Dear Senator(s),

I am writing as an Alaska parent to share my strong support for maintaining **school choice for families across our state**.

I believe that decisions about a child's education should remain in the hands of **individual families**, not restricted by policy that limits where a student can enroll. Every child learns differently, and families should have the freedom to choose the educational environment that best meets their child's needs.

I am particularly concerned about the implications of **Senate Bill 277**, which could redirect education funding away from the school a student actually attends and instead send it to the district where the student resides. As currently written, this change could effectively eliminate statewide correspondence programs by removing their funding streams, leaving families with far fewer options for educating their children.

In my view, **education funding should follow the student**. If my child is enrolled in a particular school or program, then the funding allocated for their education should go to that school—the institution that is actually providing their education and support.

School choice programs, including correspondence and homeschool support programs, serve many Alaska families well. They allow parents to tailor education to their children's needs while still participating in Alaska's public education system. Limiting these options would harm families who rely on them.

I respectfully urge you to consider policies that:

- Protect **parental choice in education**
- Ensure **education funding follows the student**
- Preserve **statewide correspondence and homeschool support programs** that serve families across Alaska

Thank you for your time, your service to our state, and your consideration of the perspectives of families like mine. I appreciate the difficult decisions you face and hope you will continue to support policies that empower parents to make the best educational choices for their children.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Goucher
Wasilla, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Rebecca Myers [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:13 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277 further comment

Madam Chairwoman Tobin and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Below my signature, I have included the text of the public testimony given via phone earlier today regarding SB 277. However, due to time constraints I was unable to share three additional concerns with you.

First: A critical piece of why I oppose this bill. My middle child had significant learning disabilities requiring occupational therapy and speech therapy. He was delayed in speech, reading, and writing. Because my property taxes support my local elementary school, I first asked the public school for assistance. I was told there was no room for my son as they were unable to provide speech therapy for the children who attended school there on a regular basis. However, Raven correspondence assembled a team of educators and professionals and provided the needed speech pathologist and occupational therapist to set my child on a trajectory to success. Had I have lived under SB 277, I would have been forced to enroll my child in FNSB school district, Raven would have received a reduced dollar amount for my child, a cooperative agreement between the FNSB and Raven would have been created (and hopefully KEPT), the overburdened special education services at the brick and mortar school would have been further taxed (remember they weren't able to provide for their own!), I would have been told there is no room in the speech therapy sessions or occupational therapy services, two extra administrative positions would have been funded, and ultimately I would have been left with a child who received little to no help. Instead, today I shared my child's success story with you! He is in his second year of dental school.

Second: A response to Senator Yundt concerning "the dollar follows the child." On multiple occasions throughout the meeting the senator verbalized the complaints of homeschoolers who did not see an increase in their allotments this year. I would ask the questions "What services are being provided for the students of their program? What educational classes were the homeschoolers unable to fund?" Often people fail to recognize the cost of running the structure of a correspondence school. Perhaps they need to ask their program for their budget in order to educate themselves on the expenses of the program. Correspondence schools exist to support the student and their home teacher through a faithful structure, not to funnel full BSA from the state directly to the student. In a correspondence school, the dollar follows the child much more closely than it does in the brick and mortar school (see First concern above).

Third: The real question I have. Why is the committee set on shifting more money to brick and mortar schools when they have been unfaithful with the funds of the past? From the mismanagement of curriculum funds to the mismanagement of time in the classroom, the public schools are simply failing to teach the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic to the children entrusted to them. Instead, tax dollars, state dollars, and even dollars from outside of the state are being poured into social engineering beginning at the elementary school level which develop into an immoral cesspool of the latest revolution in our high schools. Senators, money does NOT fix everything! A solid structure committed to a solid education in the good, the true, and the beautiful for our students—for their welfare and the future of our society—WILL fix our current mess. Our correspondence schools currently provide that solid structure. The National Educators Association have a grip on our state and they are not serving our students or our society! Please, stand for our students. Do not restructure the routing of BSA through forced enrollment of all students into local public school districts. I would rather keep our 0.9 of ADM than give a nickel more to the brick and mortar schools who are squandering Alaska's future!

Sincerely,

Rebecca Myers

Fairbanks, Alaska

"Madam Chairwoman Tobin and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Rebecca Myers and I am opposed to Senate Bill 277.

Senators, I've taught three beautiful children in my home: One who completed a degree in economics, worked for our senator in DC and is now beginning the joy of teaching her own children. One who completed his undergraduate in biomedical science and is currently finishing his second year in dental school. And one who is preparing to take his LSATs and graduate early with undergraduate degree in Government. They graduated from Raven, one of the highly functioning correspondence programs in our state.

The bill before you touts a support for homeschool students but effectively decreases their funding. I intentionally did not enroll my children in the local public school district in Fairbanks. Why? Because it was ineffective, inefficient and pushing an agenda detrimental to the wellness and success of my children. The beauty of the Alaska constitution and current policy is that it allows parents the right to school their children at home while receiving the benefits of a structure that allows our families to receive professional support and create a personalized education. This is why my children succeeded. This bill does not support homeschooled students. Rather, it is a craftily disguised effort to take away funding from the successful correspondence schools to fund the failing brick and mortar school districts.

Senators, stop this bill. Don't insult your constituents. Correspondence schools should not be forced to be bound to a broken system.

Thank you for granting me the opportunity to share my testimony."

Michael Mason

From: Rebecca & Raul Najera <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 6:04 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Opposition to SB 277

Dear Senators of Alaska,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 277 and to urge you to carefully consider its far-reaching consequences for families across Alaska.

While the bill contains a few provisions that may appear positive—such as an increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) and raising correspondence funding to 100%—these are overshadowed by deeply concerning elements that would significantly harm educational choice in our state.

Most notably, Section 7 of SB 277 would have devastating effects. By restricting funding for the Galena City School District to only students physically located in Galena, the bill would effectively eliminate funding for statewide correspondence programs. This would directly impact programs such as IDEA and other homeschooling options that thousands of Alaskan families rely on.

The consequences of this change would be profound:

- The end of statewide homeschooling programs
- A significant loss of parent rights in directing their children's education
- The elimination of school choice for many families
- Economic harm to communities and small businesses that support homeschooling families such as music instructors, extra curricular classes that offer art and physical education, just to name a few.

Alaska has long been a leader in providing flexible, innovative education options that meet the unique needs of its families. SB 277 would reverse that progress and remove critical opportunities for students who thrive and learn outside the traditional classroom setting.

I respectfully ask you to oppose SB 277 in its current form and to protect the rights of families to choose the educational path that best meets their children's needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Most of all for your support and care for our community, it's families and the freedom of home education we are blessed to have in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Najera
Home Educator
Sterling, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Reid Tulloch [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 5:54 PM
To: Reid Tulloch
Subject: SB 277: Monopolies and Choice

Afternoon,

I am a teacher in Anchorage for the CyberLynx High School Completion Program, which is a correspondence program with Nenana City School District. We are a unique program specifically designed to fit the needs of students that the traditional “brick and mortar” schools and even homeschool programs are not able to meet. For instance, our courses don’t require the internet and are paper-based. We only give students 2 classes at a time, and we have a facility open all year round, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for students to walk in with no appointments needed. The majority of our students are actually referred to us by ASD Counselors because they are struggling with the traditional brick-and-mortar school and homeschool setup. We offer extra support. Every year, we process around 400 students and graduate about 100. Our program is not easy, but it allows the flexibility and in-person support many students need. **This bill would close down our program, failing our students because there is no where else for them to go.**

What this bill does is take away the competitive nature that is needed to drive programs to meet the needs of students. It allows local school districts to fail to meet student needs with little repercussion and essentially act like any business does who has a monopoly on a product by lowering the quality of service and raising prices and inefficiency. Please don’t take away student choice! Monopolies don’t work!

There is no reason local school districts can’t take a hint and simply be more competitive by figuring out why families don’t like their homeschool programs and adapting.

What I shared in this email is my personal opinion and in no way should reflect the opinion of CyberLynx or Nenana City School District or any other employees of Nenana City School District.

Reid Tulloch
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Renee Hudnall [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 1:11 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Opposition to SB 277

I am writing as an Alaska homeschool parent that uses a correspondence program 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. I am aware that there is verbiage stating otherwise, but respectfully that is NOT how the bill reads.

Section 7 dealing with funding and how it is allocated, is written to be confusing and misleading. I spoke with a senator earlier that tried to convince me that my property taxes are being sent to Gelena since we use IDEA, which is factually false. Property taxes are tied to where the property is located, not where your child is schooled. The correspondence enrollment only shifts the state portion of funding to the enrolling district. This structure is consistent across official DEED guidance and the Legislative Finance Division's Citizen's Guide to K-12 Funding. If your borough has additional voluntary local contributions beyond the required amount, those also stay local. This information is per the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) School Finance section and borough's tax assessors.

If all funding is directed to the geographic district, then dispensed to correspondence programs, that would require districts to hire more administration, further bloating the number 1 complaint of most families that schools spend too much on administration and not enough of education.

BSA funding should follow the student to the program providing the education. If it does not, correspondence programs will not be able to provide allotments or the support families rely on. Many families will not switch to their local district program. They will choose to homeschool independently, which means no district receives funding at all. Speaking for my family specifically, we would choose to homeschool our three students independently.

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,
Renee Hudnall
Salcha, AK

Michael Mason

From: Renee Muir [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 4:40 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Senate Bill 277 - Concerns!

Greetings, Senate Education Committee members,

My name is Renee Muir and I live in Fairbanks with my husband and four children, all of whom I educate at home through the support and guidance of IDEA Homeschool. It has come to my attention that a new Bill is going through the Senate -- Bill 277 -- that may affect our academic funding through our correspondence program (IDEA).

I am writing to plead for the continued support of private educators like me through correspondence programs, and the State financial support needed for the education of my children. As I understand it, this bill lobbies for all State funding to go to local districts. If my children are enrolled with IDEA, all State funding for my children will go to my local district of residence. Although I pay taxes to the local government (which, in turn, go to the local district), my children's educational funding from the State would also go to the local district even though they are not providing education services and support for my family - for I WILL continue to homeschool my children regardless of the outcome of this bill. (It will just be THAT much more difficult and financially taxing)

I also understand that Section 4 of the bill states that a local district of residence can charge an administrative fee of "up to 8%" for administering the simple transfer of funding. Section 4 provides no cap to the amount of additional fees a local district can charge a statewide correspondence program, up to 100% of State funding. **So, who is Section 4 benefiting? The children needing a flexible and robust education, or the administrators?**

For my family, **being able to homeschool my children with the educational and financial support provided by correspondence programs (IDEA) is imperative to them receiving the best education possible.** My oldest son is uncommonly bright and to be in a traditional school setting would cause frustration and behavioral issues --due to boredom! And my second son is on the autism spectrum and needs special resources and individual attention for learning, especially emotion regulation and interpersonal skills. I am the best person to provide these and need resources (i.e. funding) for these tasks.

Lastly, our family -- a household of six -- lives on a tight budget and the state funding we receive through our correspondence program enables us to purchase all of the needed items for a quality education: books, art supplies, music lessons, taekwondo, ballet, trips to the museum, etc. **Most of our educational activities are possible BECAUSE of the State funding we receive through IDEA.** Without it, we will have to make a choice between paying for heating fuel and ballet/taekwondo lessons. Please don't make us have to do that.

Please, can you ensure that Bill 277 protects the Alaskan families that find it necessary to homeschool their children WHILE providing the financial support needed from the State through correspondence programs?

Best,
Renee L. Muir



Michael Mason

From: Robin Bond [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 4:53 PM
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: Please do not close of our schools or change any correspondence, charter or home schools.

Children of Alaska need school choice like everyone else. Not to mention over half of alaska kids do not live close to schools. And look at those choices when they do. Wasilla schools can not even get the bus situation under control for how long now ? The public education system isn't doing great and that is fact and I am asking you do not take away our options for schooling. Over half the kids I know are home schooled and I am sure if the others in my community could they would too if they're circumstances allowed them the ability to stay home with there kids. Public schools allow bullying , over crowded ness , poor Nutrition , class sizes are way way to big , no discipline or not adequate discipline and are not structured as they need to be for healthy growth and education for children or teens these days. It is a sided type situation with everyone playing sides to get what they can ...BS. The public education system is heavily flawed and it shows and I do not want to be forced to use it. Education is needed to grow up however, exposing them at schools that allows whatever should not be period. Thank you for hear my opinion. Bill 277 is all around a bad idea and I think the amount education is costing for sub par turn outs is crazy and there is obviously problems with the way things are and have been working. Thank you for hearing me out.

Michael Mason

From: ShaLene Jorgensen [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 3:53 PM
Subject: Protect School Choice—Fix SB 277

Dear Senator and Education committee,

I am writing to urge you to remove or significantly revise Sections 4 and 7 of SB 277.

These sections threaten statewide correspondence programs by giving local districts broad control over funding without clear limits on “educational service” fees or any requirement to cooperate. This creates real risk for the families who depend on these programs.

School choice is not optional for many of us—it is essential. Statewide correspondence programs provide flexibility, access, and opportunities that local options often cannot. Weakening them directly harms Alaska families.

Please protect fair funding and preserve true educational choice by fixing or removing Sections 4 and 7.

Thank you for your service,
ShaLene Jorgensen

Michael Mason

From: Shyanne Payment [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 1:02 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

Dear Senate Education Committee

I am a parent in Alaska who uses IDEA's homeschooling program for my child, and I am writing to express serious concerns about SB 277 as currently written.

While I appreciate elements of the bill—such as increased funding for special education, Career & Technical Education, Base Student Allocation, and student transportation—I am very concerned that Sections 4 and 7 could unintentionally harm or even eliminate statewide homeschooling programs like IDEA.

Section 7 shifts all funding control to local districts without guaranteeing any funding for statewide programs. As written, this could allow districts to withhold significant portions of funding, leaving programs like IDEA without the resources needed to operate.

Additionally, Section 4 places a cap on administrative fees but does not limit “educational service” fees. This creates a loophole where districts could charge excessive fees without restriction.

I am also concerned that the bill does not currently require cooperative agreements between districts and statewide programs, meaning districts could choose not to work with these programs at all.

For families like mine, homeschooling through IDEA is not optional—it is the best educational path for our children. This bill, as written, puts our educational choice at risk.

I respectfully ask that you:

- Remove or significantly revise Section 7
- Place clear limits on all fees, including educational service fees
- Require cooperative agreements between districts and statewide programs

Please preserve the parts of SB 277 that support students, while ensuring that homeschooling families are protected.

Thank you for your time and for representing Alaska families.

Sincerely,
Shyanne Johnston

Michael Mason

From: Steve Duby [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 5:42 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Testimony on SB 277

Members of the Committee,

I am writing today in opposition to SB 277 in its current form, in both my professional and personal capacity, as I serve the Yukon Koyukuk School District as an advisory teacher for Raven Homeschool in Wasilla, where I am also a parent of two currently enrolled Raven students.

Professionally, this bill directly targets my employment and livelihood as an educator for YKSD, as the language in Sections 4 and 7 would reallocate state funding to a student's district of residence, regardless of what school or out-of-district statewide correspondence program they may be enrolled in, with no clear indication that resident districts would be obligated to share any of those funds with the service-providing district. This jeopardizes all statewide correspondence programs to the point where they would plausibly lack the funding to continue operating.

Let me pose a very likely scenario, should this bill pass:

- A student who lives in Palmer enrolls with IDEA, operated by Galena City School District.
- Mat-Su Borough School District receives all of the funding for this student.
- MSBSD operates its own correspondence program that competes with IDEA and other programs for Mat-Su students.
- MSBSD may enter into a cooperative agreement with GCSD.
- MSBSD is now in a position to potentially degrade a fellow district's ability to provide its advertised services in an effort to draw those students into its own correspondence program.

The conflict of interest is obvious.

Personally, this bill would alter my family's pursuit of educational freedom. Numerous small businesses and private education providers who currently serve Raven students as vendors in Anchorage, Mat-Su, Fairbanks, Delta Junction, and Juneau would be negatively impacted if all of a sudden those annual allotments are no longer available to pay for activities because the student's district of residence summarily decided they didn't want to enter into any agreements with other districts. My own children attend a wide variety of allotment funded activities. Will these opportunities no longer be available if MSBSD won't enter into an agreement with YKSD? It may not be the intent of this committee to set this precedent, but the language in this bill appears to indicate otherwise.

Unless clear and unambiguous language is added to address these concerns, myself and the families of thousands of homeschool students across Alaska will relentlessly oppose SB 277 and any other efforts to set back our educational freedom.

Thank you,

Steven Duby
Wasilla, AK

Michael Mason

From: Susanna Serino <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 2:11 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to let you know that I oppose this bill in the strongest possible way. In a time when parents seem to have less and less choice or input in their children's education, homeschooling is one way that I can ensure my children are able to learn and excel without becoming lost in the crowd or feeling left out because they do not learn in the same way as others.

This law is harmful to parents, children, and the freedoms we have cherished for so long here in Alaska. I urge you to reconsider.

Sincerely,
Susanna Mathieu

Michael Mason

From: susanne stewart <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 5:26 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

Dear Sir,

I am concerned about Section 7, as you say that you would be directing all State Funding to the local district of residence (where the student's live), leaving no funding for State wide correspondence programs.

I home schooled four of my children, for a time, because I was not happy with situations in the school where they would been going to. My sons went to Idea and they were given good lessons , in the various subjects, and they were encouraged to excel.

Sincerely Susanne Stewart

Michael Mason

From: Christine Perez [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 1:32 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB277

To whom it may concern,

Ceasing funding for home schooling families in Alaska is dangerous. With current public school enrollment there are not enough teachers for the students attending as it stands.

Additionally, there isn't enough space or resources to adequately educate each of them effectively. Now add in the nearly 20,000 students all over Alaska who could potentially be forced into public school if their parents can't afford the curriculum they've previously been following.

Teacher burn out, plummeting test scores, and behavioral issues would escalate beyond what the school system could handle. I'm sacrificing my life to raise decent children and this would be throwing them into the lions den.

On that note, bullying.

Integrating thousands of home schooled children coming from secure—controlled environments into the chaos of public school would be devastating for them.

These children would be bullied beyond belief, exposed to things they've never encountered before, and this would be on a daily basis. How can they be expected to learn under those conditions? Their mental health would suffer. Not to mention the deplorable effects it would have on their education.

I have two children with learning difficulties. ADHD and a speech impediment.

My story and my children are not unique. There are thousands of children in Alaska who need more attention than the public school system can provide them. Their migration into this system would lead to nothing but frustration and a higher rate of failure long-term.

Home schooling is the answer for many of these children, including my own. This needs to remain a viable option for all families across Alaska. Not just the families that can afford to continue if the state elects to forgo funding.

This would create more obstacles for an abundance of children who are already living at a disadvantage.

Every child deserves access to an education that will serve them and their future.

Not all children will thrive in a public school. Not all families can afford to homeschool the children who desperately need it.

I strongly urge you to continue the funding allotted for home schooling as is.

Tiffany Hobbs

Michael Mason

From: Tirsia Myler [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 7:32 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 277

>

> I am writing to strongly oppose SB 277. As a longtime homeschooler I have enjoyed the freedom to choose which correspondence program within the state to use with my family. Section 7 of SB 277 would effectively restrict that to only the correspondence school(s) in my school district, which is no choice at all. It would dramatically reduce funding to correspondence programs that have students around the state, and funnel it to the local districts. By counting students in their home district instead of where they enroll most correspondence programs would lose significant funding and possibly close. This seems to be the true intent of the bill.

>

> Sincerely,
> Tirsia Myler
> Anchorage, AK

>

Michael Mason

From: Tony Roof [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 3:22 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: home schooling

Dear Chair Tobin and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am a parent who has homeschooled my children through a statewide correspondence program for the past several years. These programs have given our family the flexibility and personalized education we need. I am writing to urge you to reject Senate Bill 277(A) in its current form. The bill redirects funding away from the correspondence programs families have chosen and sends it to local resident districts instead. This will severely damage or close programs like IDEA, CyberLynx, and Raven. It will cut curriculum allotments, reduce teacher support, and eliminate the flexibility that allows families to travel, work seasonal jobs, and meet special needs. Many parents will switch to independent homeschooling, meaning the bill's promised funding gains for local districts are largely an illusion. The bill also harms charter schools by doubling the administrative fees districts can take from their budgets.

I respectfully ask that you support the alternative version of SB 277 submitted by Barbara Haney on behalf of Alaskans Against Common Core. Her proposed amendments remove the harmful funding redirection, protect charter schools, ensure local contributions follow the student, prioritize core subjects, and affirm that parental rights are superior to those of school district officials. Please reject SB 277(A) as written and support the stronger, parent-centered version submitted by Alaskans Against Common Core. Alaska families deserve real educational choice and freedom. Thank you for your time and service.

Tony Roof
Fairbanks, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Traci Gatewood <T [REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 4:08 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Scott Kawasaki
Subject: Please Protect Homeschool Options – A Grandmother's Plea for Her Granddaughter with Autism

Dear Senate Education Committee,

My name is Traci Gatewood, and I am writing to you as a grandmother, a legal guardian, and a devoted advocate for my six-year-old granddaughter, Violet. Violet has Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, obstructive sleep apnea, and upper airway resistance syndrome. She is also one of the brightest, most curious, most deeply loving children I have ever known. IDEA Homeschool has made it possible for her to be both of those things at once.

Violet has never attended public school, and based on everything we have experienced, she never could. She attended two private learning centers before we decided to homeschool through IDEA. At the first, she was there for 11 months before being removed after biting another child during pretend play. At the second, we reduced her attendance to just 1.5 hours a day, held multiple meetings with staff, and ultimately withdrew her because the environment was unsafe for Violet and for others. She napped a total of five times across both programs because the rooms were too loud, too bright, and too stimulating. Frequent staff turnover left her feeling abandoned and caused behavioral regression. If Violet cannot function in a small, private learning center setting, a public school classroom of twenty or more children is simply not a realistic option.

Through IDEA, Violet receives an education built entirely around her needs. We rely on visual schedules, repetition, and game-based learning. We work around her profound sensory sensitivities. A clothing tag, socks that feel "wrong," or lighting that is too bright can completely halt her ability to function. We pace lessons around her CPAP-supported sleep schedule, occupational therapy visits, physical therapy intensives, vision therapy, and other appointments. On any given day, we stop and restart lessons multiple times because she becomes too dysregulated to continue. In any other setting, none of this would be possible. Through IDEA, it is working. Violet is excelling in reading, math, science, and art. She is progressing. She is safe.

Safety is never something we take for granted. In April 2025, Violet eloped during an outing with her grandfather. She disappeared and was found hiding under shelving in a records room. When he reached for her, she bolted again, and he fell, shattering his patella and rupturing his patellar tendon. He required surgery and is still in recovery. Violet requires continuous, hands-on supervision at all times. The individualized, structured environment that IDEA makes possible is not a preference for our family. It is a necessity.

Senate Bill 277, as currently written, threatens to take all of this away. The concerns about this bill are serious, and the bill's language does not match the committee's stated intentions:

- Section 7 shifts all correspondence funding to local districts with no guaranteed amount flowing back to statewide programs like IDEA. The 8% administrative cap applies only to paperwork and processing fees. Educational service fees are entirely uncapped under the current language. Local districts could charge whatever they chose, and statewide programs would have no recourse or means of appeal. Closure would be the only outcome.
- Neither Section 4 nor Section 7 requires a cooperative agreement at all. A local district could legally accept all of the funding and provide nothing to statewide programs in return.

If IDEA closes, Violet will not go to public school. That path isn't available to her. We will not place her in an environment that would compromise her educational or safety needs. IDEA is the right solution, and it is working for Violet right now.

I fully support the positive provisions in SB 277, including long-overdue equitable special education funding for correspondence students, increased CTE funding, increased Base Student Allocation funding, and improved student transportation. These deserve to pass. Section 7 does not. It should be removed from the bill entirely.

Violet is proof that when you build an education around a child rather than forcing a child to fit an environment, remarkable things happen. Please do not take that away from families like ours.

Respectfully and urgently,

Traci Gatewood



Grandparent and Legal Guardian of Violet Nero, IDEA Homeschool Family



Traci Gatewood, M.S., SHRM-SCP
Owner, G2 Diversified Services

Phone: 907-378-8456
Email: traci@g2diverse.com
www.g2diverse.com



*"Do the best you can until you know better.
Then, when you know better, do better."* Maya
Angelou

Michael Mason

From: Alaskalinuxuser [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] 18, 2026 1:54 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: 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: SB 277 Version A

To: the Senate Education Committee and the Alaska State Legislature:

My Fellow Alaskans,

The legislation addressing SB 277 is of paramount interest to me because I am not only a home school graduate, but also a home school parent. As a third generation Alaskan, born and raised in this great state, I can speak from first hand experience as to the usefulness, and quite frankly, the necessity of home school programs in our state. SB 277 will ultimately cut funding from the state run home school programs and will not be met by a viable replacement, leading to a lack of education benefits for our students and a lack of educational choices amongst parents across the state.

Having grown up in Alaska, attending both a public school setting and then continuing my education with a state run home school program (Alyeska Central School), I can honestly say that having the option to utilize a home school program greatly enhanced my education, and provides, in many situations, a better school education. While a youth, attending a public school, my grades were poor, often getting by with a "C" average. However, once I started home school for middle school and above, my grade average increased dramatically. I also learned from home schooling how to study, how to be motivated, and how to succeed. With this unique but structured learning opportunity, I was able to score a 92 on the ASVAB (at that time, the highest possible score was 99), and go on to serve our country in the United States Navy Submarine program. After my time in service, I have been blessed to spend the past 16 years here in Alaska as a contractor for the United States Army, fixing highly technical equipment, from circuit board repair to cloud computer management. I attribute a large part of this to my home school roots. This is not a knock or slander of public school programs, for they do well in many ways, but even in ideal public school settings, there are more than 8 students per teacher, meaning that I received divided attention and had to conform to a group learning pace. While at home, I was able to have a one on one teaching opportunity with my parents, at a pace tailored for my individual needs, and still had the backing of our state's certified teachers being just a phone call away when needed.

Not only do I believe that home school provides a great learning opportunity tailored to the individual student, it is often called distance learning, because it also makes learning possible when you do not live near a brick and mortar school building. In my own situation, while growing up, we lived greater than 20 miles from the nearest high and middle school. At the time, there were bus routes available, but it would have added several hours of bus riding to my day as the bus would have had to pick up more and more students along the way. Here in Fairbanks, there is a problem with the bus routes, and they currently have days where parents have to be responsible for getting their own children to school. This would be an

extra expense for parents, at best, an insurmountable hardship for others at worst. For many Alaskan's, having to be near or take their children to a physical school building is impractical or nearly impossible. One does not have to look far to find a place in Alaska where school age children live more than 20 miles (or farther), from the nearest physical school building. Not to mention the many parents who must travel within the state for their work who can also continue to tend to their children's education while traveling, thanks to state funded home school programs.

While my wife and I do live within a few miles of town, we have decided to home school our children because the personalized learning pace and our interest in being involved in training up the next generation of Alaskans. My wife, Suzy, was also home schooled, and traveled with her family because her father was serving in the United States Air Force. Distance learning allowed her and her siblings to get a solid education while they traveled, and finish school when she moved to Fairbanks, also living greater than 20 miles from the nearest high school. Four of our five children are all excelling under the CyberLynx home school program, and we can't wait to add our youngest when she is old enough to participate. If SB 277, Version A, were to pass, the funding for our children would be allotted to the public schools of Fairbanks, and wouldn't have to be shared with the CyberLynx home school program Fairbanks office.

Further, if we are looking to save money for our state's education system, it has been shown that public school students cost the state roughly \$21,000 per student [1]. However, home school students actually save the state money, because one teacher can have 100 students by comparison to a traditional public school classroom setting, and most home school student allotments are under \$2500. Thus we should be considering ways to get more children to school at home, saving the state more money by passing incidentals and utility bills on to parents, by not having to heat as many large school buildings.

Thank you for your consideration in this important matter. I hope that you will vote against SB 277 Version A, and consider other options.

Sincerely,

Weston Howard,

[REDACTED]

[1] <https://usafacts.org/answers/how-are-public-schools-in-the-us-funded/state/alaska/>

Michael Mason

From: Windy Miller [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2026 4:45 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Robert Myers
Cc: Sen. Mike Cronk; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Robert Myers
Subject: Please Reject SB 277(A) – Support the Alternative Version Submitted by Barbara Haney

March 19, 2026

Re: Please Reject SB 277(A) – Support the Alternative Version Submitted by Barbara Haney

Dear Chair Tobin and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am a parent who has homeschooled my children through a statewide correspondence school for the past several years. These programs have given our family the flexibility and personalized education we need. I am writing to urge you to reject Senate Bill 277(A) in its current form. The bill redirects funding away from the correspondence programs families have chosen and sends it to local resident districts instead. This will severely damage or close programs like IDEA, CyberLynx, and Raven. It will cut curriculum allotments, reduce teacher support, and eliminate the flexibility that allows families to travel, work seasonal jobs, and meet special needs. Many parents will switch to independent homeschooling, meaning the bill's promised funding gains for local districts are largely an illusion. The bill also harms charter schools by doubling the administrative fees districts can take from their budgets.

I respectfully ask that you support the alternative version of SB 277 submitted by Barbara Haney on behalf of Alaskans Against Common Core. Her proposed amendments remove the harmful funding redirection, protect charter schools, ensure local contributions follow the student, prioritize core subjects, and affirm that parental rights are superior to those of school district officials. Please reject SB 277(A) as written and support the stronger, parent-centered version submitted by Alaskans Against Common Core. Alaska families deserve real educational choice and freedom. Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,

Windy Miller

North Pole, Alaska
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad