

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Harold Caligan [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 6:48 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Bill SB277

I am writing to oppose bill SB277. It destroys parental choice for schooling and threatens the correspondence program that Alaska families depend on.  
Sent from my iPad

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Aaron Schmid-Webster [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 12:13 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 277

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

**Section 7 would redirect all state funding to a student's district of residence, effectively eliminating funding for statewide correspondence programs. This change would severely disrupt — and in many cases dismantle — programs that thousands of Alaska families depend on. For families like mine, these programs are not optional; they are essential. They provide access to curriculum, resources, and support that allow parents to meet their children's unique educational needs. Removing or restricting access to these programs strips families of meaningful school choice and forces many students into environments that may not serve them well.**

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

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

**I strongly urge you to:**

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

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

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

**Sincerely,**

**Aaron Schmid**

[REDACTED]

**Anchorage AK 99508**

~Aaron

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Akara Anglin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 9:31 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Fwd: SB 277 Concerns

Good evening Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Akara Anglin, and I'm a parent at Rilke Schule Charter School. I've been closely reviewing SB 277 and appreciate the effort to take on some of the more complex funding and governance issues in Alaska's education system.

If you didn't know already, Rilke Schule is a high-performing public charter school with a German immersion model. Families choose this school because it offers a distinct educational approach while remaining accountable to public standards. Like other charter schools, we depend on fair access to student-generated funding and a governance structure that allows Rilke to operate effectively.

There are several components of SB 277 that, in my opinion, deserve careful consideration:

### **1. Increase in Administrative Cost Retention (4% to up to 8%)**

This provision raises concern. Increasing the percentage a district may retain for administrative costs risks reducing the funding that reaches students. For Rilke Schule, this could directly impact classroom instruction, staffing, and program quality.

While transparency in how districts calculate administrative costs is important, increasing the allowable retention without stronger guardrails may unintentionally weaken the very public schools that families are choosing.

### **2. Administrative Cost Reporting Requirements**

The requirement for itemized reporting is a positive step. Clear and consistent transparency helps build trust. However, transparency should be paired with protections to ensure that charter schools retain the resources necessary to fulfill their mission.

### **3. Correspondence and Funding Adjustments**

Changes to correspondence program funding and ADM calculations may shift district-level funding priorities. Even when not directly tied to charter schools, these changes can influence how resources are distributed, potentially creating unintended pressure on neighborhood and charter school budgets.

### **4. Base Student Allocation Increase**

The increase to the Base Student Allocation is appreciated but modest. Schools across Alaska continue to face rising costs that outpace incremental funding adjustments.

Additionally, as you consider SB 277, I encourage you to also think about a broader structural issue. Alaska's current model—where districts both oversee and compete with charter schools—can create challenges around funding, facilities, and transparency.

Other states have addressed this by establishing independent or statewide charter authorizers to provide more consistent oversight and reduce conflicts of interest. Therefore, SB 277 might also be a natural opportunity to start a conversation about whether Alaska's current charter governance model is working as intended.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about what a statewide charter authorizer could look like in Alaska and how it could better support students, families, and schools.

I encourage you to keep having hard conversations and stay curious.

- Akara Anglin



Fellow Senator,

I am writing with deep concern over the recent Senate Bill 277.

I am a homeschool Mom and have been enrolled in Idea for the past 4 years. I have 2 boys graduating this year. I also will have 2 more boys in high school next year:

I chose Idea as my school choice due to the easily accessible council and help they provide. Our contact teacher and also Special Educational teacher have worked so hard to allow my children the perfect blend of homeschool teachings with the benefit of individual educational guidance specially fitted to each child. I chose Idea with that in mind.

Section 7 of the bill is very concerning to me. It clearly endangers my parental rights and my school choice. Without those choices, I would most likely just homeschool privately and no funding would be going to any local school. Many of my homeschool friends families will also most likely independently homeschool. Which sadly will take business away from local vendors which my children use for education and recreational resources.

I feel that overall funding should not go to the local districts. Those districts are not the ones I choose to use to enhance my children's education. There is nothing in the bill to restrict action of the local districts on how funds would be used or withheld.

There are a few points that effect and help children. Special Educational funding, which is important to me as a mom of children with Special Educational funding needs.

Thank you for taking the time to review my thoughts and concerns. I will continue to pray that this bill is diligently worked over until it is not just a benefit to local districts and harms individual homeschool choices; but benefits the homeschool students whose educational rights and freedoms are of utmost importance for their future. Homeschooling freedom and choice is an Alaskan blessing and honor.

Sincerely, Amy Woods

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Angela Sumrall [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 6:07 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please, No, Senate bill 277

Dear Commitee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 277 and to ask that you please reconsider or oppose this legislation.

This bill directly affects my daughter's education and our family's ability to choose the best learning environment for her. She is currently thriving in our homeschool program and is much happier learning at home than she would be in the public school system.

I urge you to protect our right to continue with a curriculum we chose and setting that allows my daughter to succeed. Thank you for your time and for considering my concerns on this important matter.

Best regards,  
Angela Sumrall

\*\*Please Spay n Neuter your animals!

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Ashley Soares <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 4:47 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 277

I oppose SB 277 because it destroys parental choice and threatens the correspondence programs Alaska families depend on. This is a blatant power grab designed to force parents and students into a failing public school system.

Sincerely,  
Ashley Soares

Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** audri peyton [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2026 9:05 AM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Robert Yundt  
**Subject:** SB 277

Hello, my name is Audri Jirak. I live in the Mat-Su Borough with my family. My children attend a public charter school and I am writing today because I have concerns about SB 277 and the impact it could have on our school.

This bill would increase the amount districts can keep from our funding—from 4% to 8%. That may not sound like much, but it takes real dollars away from classrooms, teachers, and learning resources our kids count on. For my school, that would mean a \$100,000.00 increase we would pay in indirect costs to the district. Most charter schools in Alaska are responsible for paying their own facility leases, utilities, and day-to-day operations—costs that traditional neighborhood schools do not bear. As a result, charter schools are not funded comparably, despite serving the same public school students.

Charter Schools are public schools with public employees, overseen by school districts and the Department of Education; the only difference is that parents drive the vision and mission of charter schools. That's something we should be encouraging, not penalizing.

My son was in our neighborhood school for his first two years of schooling and it just wasn't working for our family and him academically. We are so thankful for the public charter school we switched him over to. Now both of our children attend and are thriving in an environment that fits their needs and lines up with our family's values and structure.

Despite the charter schools in Alaska scoring number 1 in the nation, it seems like they are under attack from our representatives.

I also oppose the changes to the funding of state correspondence programs. Most families in Alaska want more school choice and this the opposite of that. This is taking away the rights of the parents to direct the education for their own children. Parents know what is best for their kids not local school districts or superintendents or state reps. There is already a system in place if kids want to be dou enrolled or play sports with the district they live in. This seems like a money grab by superintendents of failing districts. The money should follow the child not the district they live in. Let's make education about the kids and not the establishment.

I do appreciate the financial provisions such as increased transportation funding, an inflation-based increase to the BSA, financial support for Alaska Reads Act requirements, and increased correspondence funding, which I support fully support but the Bill overall as written is harmful to many kids and families across Alaska.

Thank you for your time and please consider the harm this Bill would bring to Charter Schools and many many correspondence families.

Audri Jirak

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Bekah Olson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 5:58 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 277 Concerns

Dear Education Committee,

I am writing due to major concern over the proposed SB 277. I appreciate the need for funding and the critical thinking it takes to generate new and effective solutions. I also appreciate the ability to disagree with SB 277 in its current form.

To better understand my concerns, here is some background. I was homeschooled in many states growing up, a product of moving often as a child of a service member. When my father retired, he ended up teaching for several years in Fairbanks and even then, we continued to be homeschooled. The ability to follow child lead interests and tailor learning to the individual results in a rich experience that traditional public schools cannot easily replicate. We did not utilize charter schools in my own education, however now as a mom I really appreciate the option to connect my children with the vast resources these charter schools represent. The removal of charter homeschool programs such as IDEA, CyberLynx, Raven etc., would represent a loss of resources for my kids but it would not change my choice to homeschool. We would still homeschool, completely self funded without extra curricular activities. If the goal of the education committee is to enhance educational opportunities for children, then pouring all the funding into traditional schools, when it is obvious by enrollment numbers that families are opting to go another way, seems to be a conflicting decision. Additional evidence to my statement can be found in Section 7 of SB 277 stated intent "to open opportunities for students and to provide a financial means for statewide programs to compensate local districts." It is 2026, if brick and mortar school buildings are suffering from lack of funding, then maybe it is a sign of the times and the innovative approach would be to stop trying to fund what worked before and continue to fund what is actually working now. We have many rights in this country, please do not try to inhibit my right as a parent to choose how to educate my child.

I know that ultimately this committee is attempting to improve and generate student education funding. I appreciate certain aspects of SB 277 (see below) and request that these positive goals be pursued.

- Special Education funding for correspondence school students
  - Brick-and-mortar special education students receive State funding while correspondence school special education students do not receive such funding.
- Increased Career & Technical Education (CTE) funding for all students
- Increased Base Student Allocation (BSA) funding for all students
- Increased Student Transportation funding

The attempt to bring about positive change is nullified if by doing so the preexisting good is wiped out.

Thank you for your time,  
Bekah Olson

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Billy Lincoln <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 11:30 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 277(A)

Senator Tobin, Senator Yundt

I am urging you to vote NO on this bill because it will be detrimental to rural communities when the fundings are diverted to centralized education locations. This bill will be devastating to rural communities if this bill passes; it will create displacement among rural residents when they would have to have children relocated to communities they have not grown up in and will ultimately cause problems for students unfamiliar with locations other than their own communities. This can disrupt families when children are sent away for schooling and the unfamiliarity of other locations the young people have not grown up at. This unfamiliarity can cause young people to be exposed to elements that are unhealthy and would also be exposed racial inequities. Thank you for reading this.

Billy M Lincoln

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Brandi & Oliver Fleshman <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2026 2:41 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 277

To the members of the AK State Education Committee:

I'm writing to urge you to oppose SB 277. This bill in its current form would drastically reduce or eliminate funding for homeschool programs throughout Alaska. Many people like me that choose to educate their children at home have strong convictions about doing so. Removing funding from the homeschool programs we utilize, funding we contribute to via our hard-earned tax dollars, would not "change our minds" about the public school system or the right to educate our own children. It would, however, greatly reduce our financial capacity to meet our children's educational needs and extracurricular activities - thus reducing the quality of their education and opportunities for social interaction outside the home. If you truly care about the education of children in Alaska, then you should oppose SB 277 in its current form. Specifically, Section 7 of this bill is detrimental to all correspondence programs in the state and should be removed before even considering anything else in this bill. Thank you for your careful consideration of this important matter.

Respectfully,

Brandi Fleshman  
Homeschool mother of 5, and graduate of the IDEA homeschool program

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Carmen Durham <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 9:55 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** 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 used the statewide correspondence program for the past several years for my children. 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,

Mrs. Carmen Durham

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Carol Dunfee [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 10:43 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB277A

As a homeschooling mother and a vendor providing valuable services for the homeschool community, I strongly oppose SB277 as written. By stripping funding, it would destroy programs like IDEA which provide excellent services to the entire state. This bill also has the potential to have terrible economic impacts on myself and my colleagues who serve homeschool students. Gyms, dance studios, music studios, private tutors, and independent teachers would suffer extreme loss of income as there would be less funding to pay for our services. Students would suffer due to lack of educational vendors and a lack of funds to pay for their services.

Do you really want to gut an industry that serves the community and provides excellent instruction to 24,000 students enrolled in homeschool correspondence programs? Is the destruction of small businesses good for the tax base? Does it encourage people to stay in Alaska with an already high cost of living? Does it make people want to move to Alaska?

This is the time of year when we plan and advertise for next school year. How do we plan our business activities if we don't know what changes the state might impose for next school year? How can any local businesses operate successfully if legislators try to change the rules every year?

Don't rob an entire industry of its livelihood. And please, stop short-changing the 24,000 students enrolled in Alaska's homeschool correspondence programs.

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Carol Dunfee  
Anchorage, AK

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Christina & Matthew Banning [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 4:00 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Robert Myers  
**Subject:** SB277 Version A

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee, Senator Kawasaki & Senator Meyers,

My name is Christina Banning and I live in Fairbanks. We currently homeschool 4 of our 5 children with IDEA, and our oldest child graduated through IDEA. We have homeschooled independently, attended local charter schools, attended local public schools, and homeschooled with our local district. The time our children spent in the Fairbanks North Star School District was a learning experience to say the least. It taught us that our kids do much better when we focus on ways to educate our children how each one learns best. IDEA enables us to do that. Two are currently taking classes at UAF. Our children have taken a variety of classes from local providers including science classes, sports, and music lessons. While we love the opportunities the extra funding through IDEA enables us to give our children, our priority is their education. We will return to homeschooling independently if we cannot continue with IDEA.

As it stands, SB277 Version A has many problems. However well-meaning the author of the bill was, it will not fix our education system. It will not provide local districts with more funding. It will not encourage districts to work together for the good of the families who choose to use an out-of-district correspondence program. Keeping materials purchased with school funds would be nice, but really, do I need more curriculum laying around? Including funding for special ed would be wonderful as there are very limited options if you are not part of the local district. Having all funds go through the district where the student resides before going to the district which actually provides the services will make a nightmare of red tape and cause all funding to be delayed. We already have enough administration expenses, why would we add more? IDEA, Raven & Cyberlynx have been operating for years with systems that work well for the families involved. That is one reason families choose to homeschool with these correspondence programs. They provide support and opportunities for families that the districts do not provide or are not set up to provide.

Please oppose SB277 version A and seriously consider any amendments before approving it. There will be ripple effects to the entire Fairbanks community, not just those who homeschool.

Thank you,  
Christina Banning

## Michael Mason

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**From:** cindy causa <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 3:14 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Regarding: SB 277 A

To all the Senate Education Committee members,

This email is to let all of you know that we DO NOT support this bill.

We homeschool our child for a few reasons. Brick and mortar school systems in the MatSu district just doesn't meet the needs of our grandson. He needed the learning experience of a homeschool situation to adequately learn. He wasn't successful in the MatSu arena. He started to flourish with homeschool and has surpassed all expectations. We are in our third year with homeschooling with fabulous success. It's not fair to us homeschool parents to loose that option. All students should be able to learn in the fashion that best suits them. Making life altering decisions for families could be detrimental to the all learning options Alaska has embraced for so so many years.

Let's be honest here, the only reason we're the target for elimination is because homeschool works, and children are learning at much better rate. The school district has grossly misused the funds they have, now they want to get the money homeschool students need. Fix what's broken instead of just going after homeschool funding. Parents are loosing faith in the district and have flocked to the correspondence and homeschool options for a reason.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Cindy Causa

Sent from [Proton Mail](#) for iOS.

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Donald Witzel <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 22, 2026 1:36 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB277

We support the passage of SB277. It provides much needed support for education although it probably isn't enough. It seems to us that this bill is about accountability and also communities. Attention has been called to the abuse of correspondents money being used for private schools drawing funds away from the public school districts. We are glad to see the money directed through the districts and that a percentage of the funds will go to administrate the programs. It's our opinion that many home school parents only want to be accountable to themselves which is one reason they homeschool their children. They need to be accountable to the communities they live and work in which in most cases provide good to excellent schools their children could attend. This is a much needed bill and we support its passage.

Don and Phyllis Witzel

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Dave Isaak <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 21, 2026 6:43 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; LokiTobin@akleg.gov; GaryStevens@akleg.gov;  
Jessie.Bjorkman@akleg.gov; Kiehl@akleg.gov; Robert.Yundt@akleg.gov  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 277 (version A)

I, David Isaak, am responding to Senate Bill 277 (version A). My three grandchildren have been homeschooled through IDEA Homeschool. I am completely against Senate Bill 277 (version A) and would ask you to support me by voting no, on this Bill. Each student and their parents should have the right to choose their educations future.

Please consider each student's needs and parental rights for their child's future, by voting NO on SB277.

Thank you for a response,

David Isaak  
*David Isaak*

Sent from [Outlook](#)

## Michael Mason

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**From:** dschofieldm [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2026 9:38 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Concerns about SB 277

I am writing to express my strong support for homeschooling and to request your consideration for my daughter's educational needs. As a parent deeply invested in my daughter's education, I believe that homeschooling provides an unparalleled opportunity for her to receive a tailored, personalized learning experience that aligns with her unique interests, learning style, and future goals.

Recent developments in educational policy, particularly Senate Bill 277, have highlighted the critical importance of protecting parental rights and school choice. The ongoing concerns related to this bill underscore the need for a flexible and inclusive educational system that respects the diverse needs and preferences of families across Alaska.

### Key Concerns with Senate Bill 277:

#### 1. Funding Shifts and Administrative Fees:

- Section 7 of SB 277 proposes shifting all funding to local districts without guaranteeing any specific amount for statewide programs. This could severely impact homeschooling programs and other educational choices that rely on consistent funding.
- The bill's language does not cap or restrict "educational service" fees, allowing local districts to assign any amount to existing fees or create new ones. This lack of protection could lead to unreasonable financial burdens on homeschooling families and programs.

#### 2. Lack of Cooperative Agreements:

- Neither Section 4 nor Section 7 requires cooperative agreements between local districts and statewide programs. This omission means that local districts could potentially pocket all funding without any obligation to collaborate with or support statewide programs.
- While the committee has indicated that future versions of the bill will require cooperative agreements, the current language of Version A does not offer this basic safeguard.

#### 3. Unnecessary and Destructive Policy:

- Section 7, as written, is destructive and could close IDEA and other homeschooling programs despite the stated intent to open opportunities for students. The complexity and potential harm introduced by this section are unnecessary and pose a clear danger to parental rights and school choice.

### Why Homeschooling is the Right Choice for My Daughter:

Homeschooling allows my daughter to benefit from a personalized curriculum that caters to her strengths and addresses her areas of improvement. It provides the flexibility to explore her passions deeply, whether in science, arts, or any other field, without the constraints of a traditional classroom setting. Moreover, homeschooling fosters a strong sense of family involvement in her education, ensuring that her learning is supported and reinforced at home.

I am committed to providing my daughter with a high-quality education that prepares her for success in college and beyond. Homeschooling offers the opportunity to tailor her educational experience to her unique needs, ensuring that she develops the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to achieve her goals.

### Request for Support:

I kindly request your support in recognizing homeschooling as a viable and valuable educational option. Your understanding and endorsement of my decision to homeschool my daughter would greatly contribute to creating an educational environment that respects and accommodates diverse learning paths.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss this further and to explore how we can work together to ensure that my daughter's educational journey is both enriching and successful.

Sincerely,

David Schofield



Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Deborah Ward <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 21, 2026 3:57 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Cc:** Sen. Cathy Giessel  
**Subject:** SB 77

Dear Education Committee,

I am writing in support of SB77. Correspondence and homeschool families and students would benefit from oversight by local school districts, just as charter schools benefit. Local districts have been impacted financially by the patchwork of programs, schools and individual families. Additionally, accountability, assessment and curricula vary widely among correspondence/homeschools. I understand that the bill will undergo changes as it advances, but it sounded positive in the recent ADN article (03/21/26). Thank you for working on behalf of our children and state.

Sincerely,  
Deb Ward  
Anchorage

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Debbie D Palmer [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 5:47 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Opposition to SB 277

I am writing in reference to SB 277 which if I understand correctly, will take funding away from several correspondence schools (Cyberlynx, IDEA, Raven, etc.) and give the funds to the district that a homeschool student resides in. I am a former homeschool mom (my boys graduated through IDEA), and I run a small business in Fairbanks teaching Spanish to many of the students that will be affected by this bill. I have been an educator for over thirty years (I started my career teaching Spanish at Lathrop High school). One of the beauties of the homeschool programs is the choice it allows parents. Statewide Correspondence programs like Cyberlynx or IDEA provide tons of educational opportunities and support to the parents. I suspect that this bill is intended to help bolster the local districts that are struggling, but I do not think that many of the families that I work with will enroll their children into the local public schools. A plethora of educational activities and opportunities will become unavailable as the local districts are not set up to work with these families.

This bill will also affect local business owners like myself who provide educational opportunities to students. Without students, I will need to shut down my business. There are loads of businesses that this will affect. It will directly hurt the local economies.

I respectfully ask that this bill not be passed.

Thank you,  
Debbie Palmer

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Denise Templeton [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 11:22 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Oppose SB277

**Importance:** High

Dear Sirs and Madame Legislators:

I strongly oppose SB 277,

In the words

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

SB 277 also doubles the administrative fee districts can skim from charter school budgets, raising the cap from 4% to 8%. Many charter schools operate with homeschool-like flexibility and serve families seeking true alternatives to standardized education. Less money reaching the classroom means fewer resources, larger classes, or program cuts for these choice options as well.

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

A centralized education threatens the ability of parents to direct their children's education without interference. Correspondence programs have thrived precisely because they respect parental authority and deliver results without excessive oversight. SB 277 threatens to end all that has been successfully achieved.

I formerly request the Senate Education Committee to reject SB 277 in its current form.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Denise Templeton  
North Pole, AK

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## Michael Mason

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**From:** Domenique & Michael Gore <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 3:23 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB277 section 7

Good afternoon,

I am writing again to the Senate Education Committee, I wrote in this week, listened in on the hearing and still realize flaws in this bill.

Section 7 is written in a way that puts Homeschool Correspondence funds in the hands of local districts - this would potentially decimate schools such as Idea, Cyberlynx, and such. When you already have schools mismanaging their budgets as is, homeschooling funds should not be at their mercy. A LOT of parents have already said if their homeschool program closes, they'll seek schools outside of Alaska for homeschool - this causes the state to lose all the money.

Section 7 should be eliminated entirely. Leave the funding to the homeschool wherever their main hub lies, as correspo dence receives far less than a public school student in terms of funding.

If a student takes a course at a school in a district near their residence, there could simply be a fee for that course/student. Just as if a student whose homeschooled participates in a public school sport there is still an athletic fee to be paid to the district.

The Senate Education Committee cannot be ok with just letting these great programs close. Subsequently so many small businesses would close if they lost the direct bill funding they receive for students who utilize their services.

Thank you for your time,  
Domenique Gore, a proud IDEA homeschool Mom of 3

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Emily Graham [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 4:43 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Mike Cronk  
**Subject:** Please Reject SB 277 (A)- Support the Alternative Version Submitted by Barbara Haney

March 20, 2026

Dear Chair Tobin and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am a parent who has taught in the FNSBSD for several years. My kids will be enrolled into homeschool this year through a statewide correspondence program. Myself and the many other parents I know in the interior deeply value these programs for their flexibility and incredible support to families in various stages of life. The school district cannot meet the needs of every child and every family situation the way our correspondence programs do. They provide the opportunity to give our children the best tailored and personalized learning experience that protects parent choice and a healthy foundation for lifelong learning.

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 277(A) in its current form. This reallocation of funds will severely damage or close programs like IDEA, CyberLynx, and Raven. A cut to the curriculum allotments and program support would strain families who have chosen homeschooling as the best route for their family. The additional fees for charter schools is also an unfair and significant burden.

A better alternative to the SB277(A) as it currently stands is the revised version 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 choose the parent-aligned version submitted by Alaskans Against Common Core. Alaska families deserve educational freedom and we must protect our right to choose. Thank you very much for your time and service for our community!

Sincerely,

Emily Graham

From: Salcha, Alaska

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Erik Palin <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 11:03 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Cc:** Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt  
**Subject:** SB 277 - An Attack on Homeschoolers across Alaska

Dear Esteemed Members of the Senate Education Committee,

Again Alaskan homeschoolers find themselves thrust upon by Alaskan State bureaucracy and faced with destruction of perhaps the best functioning homeschool system in the nation... this cycle appears nearly every year now dosent it? How sad.

My children truly enjoy schooling with IDEA which as you know is based in Galena, far from my home in Big Lake in the MatSu. They love their IDEA contact teacher who works diligently to support both our children and parents as we educate them.

I pay my taxes to the Matsu Borough, and do not receive anything from the money spent toward education from these taxes as none of my four children use any of the education facilities in the MatSu valley, however the allotment provided via IDEA supports a wide range of curriculum and educational events annually for my children at home and spent in my local community (Karate, Piano, Archery) for the very small cost of \$2700 per student / yr.

How dare any of you support a bill that changes a system which has been running smoothly for decades... this is an absolute disgrace.

Why do hard working residents and families constantly have to live with attacks on our homes and children from the very group which should support us in our efforts of educating the next generation of Alaskans and Americans, shame on you all.

I strongly oppose SB 277, especially sections 4 & 7 as written as they reflect a real attack on homeschooled children and families and threaten their freedom to learn with the homeschool of their choice, this is a simple money grab which will hurt countless tens of thousands of children, families and small businesses all across our amazing state, please stop this bill now and stop the chaos.

Thank you for your time and attention,

CDR Erik Palin USN (Ret.)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Ernie & Christy Crabb [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 9:08 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB277

I ask you to please reject SB277, as it is not in Alaska's best interests. I homeschooled my ten children through IDEA. And now 36 of my grandchildren are, or have been, homeschooled through Cyberlynx. Those who have graduated are thriving and doing well with jobs or higher education. They are self-motivated and know how to think for themselves. We did not need more than a fraction of the money that goes to public brick-and-mortar schools for each student. We did not waste money or time. We were flexible, with our children learning not only from curriculum, but also in job settings. This taught them about real life (managing time, money...). When I started homeschooling I did not know exactly what the outcome would be. But now, looking back, I am so thankful for the choice we made. All the hard work paid off and was well worthwhile.

Thank you,  
Christina Crabb  
Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Gaye Wright [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 22, 2026 2:24 PM  
**To:** Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Mike Shower; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Senate Education  
**Subject:** Homeschooling bill

I agree 100% with Barbara Haney's letter and draft. The AK Board of Education has been trying to kill Homeschooling for decades. Jealous because it works? Control issues? Money grabbers? Take your pick!!! Homeschooling can and does work! One expensive size does not always work!!!

We must absolutely defeat SB 277(A)

Copied from: Barbara Haney. (Sample Parent Letter to the Senate Education Committee )

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 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,  
Gaye Wright

[REDACTED]

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S22+ 5G, an AT&T 5G smartphone  
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Hannah Eison <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 8:31 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; 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:** SB277

Dear Senate and Education Committee Members,

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the language in SB 277 and its potential impacts on homeschoolers and distant learners throughout the state. Section 7 reallocates all funding to local districts without guaranteeing any specific funding for statewide programs, which will disadvantage the thousands of students participating in these programs. Raising the BSA to 100% does not ensure a net benefit, as local district allocations may diminish the overall available resources with no agreement in place to ensure all children have access to services.

Additionally, Section 4 does not impose limits or caps on “educational service” fees. This could permit local districts to assign arbitrary amounts to existing fees or introduce new charges for correspondence students, with no recourse or appeal process provided for statewide programs. In situations where local districts withhold a significant portion of the funding, statewide programs may have no viable option but to close. The bill currently offers no protections against such actions by local districts, nor does it require collaboration with statewide programs.

We question the necessity and intent of Section 7, as it appears inconsistent with the committee's stated goal of expanding opportunities for students and providing means for statewide programs to work alongside local districts. The policy as written risks undermining IDEA and other homeschooling initiatives. If the intention is to support educational choice and provide equitable opportunities, we urge reconsideration of this section as it is not needed to accomplish the stated goals.

The bill does include several positive elements, such as:

- Providing Special Education funding for correspondence school students, aligning their support with that received by brick-and-mortar special education students, increasing Career & Technical Education (CTE) funding for all students, enhancing Base Student Allocation (BSA) funding, and improving student transportation funding.

While these provisions are commendable, the overall structure of SB 277 could adversely affect many Alaskan children and families if implemented as written.

Thank you for your attention and dedication to Alaska’s students and families.

Sincerely,

Jared and Brandi Eison

IDEA Homeschool Parents

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Isabel Carpenter <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 22, 2026 7:45 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Opposition to SB 277 – Protect Parental Freedom in Alaska

I am writing as a concerned Alaskan to strongly oppose SB 277.

As I understand it, this bill makes significant changes to correspondence programs, charter school funding, and how educational resources are allocated. While it may be presented as an administrative or funding adjustment, the real impact appears to be a reduction in flexibility and choice for families—especially those who rely on correspondence or homeschool-style education.

For many of us, these programs are not optional—they are essential. They allow parents to take an active role in their children’s education and tailor learning to meet individual needs. SB 277 threatens to undermine that by shifting more control away from families and toward centralized systems.

Alaska has long stood for independence and personal responsibility. Parents, not the government, should have the primary authority to make decisions about their children’s education. Policies that limit that freedom go against the values many of us hold deeply.

I urge you to oppose SB 277 and instead support policies that expand educational freedom, strengthen parental rights, and preserve the flexibility that has made Alaska’s education system work for so many families.

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

Sincerely,

Isabel Carpenter  
-Kenai

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jadeen Blythe <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 6:36 PM  
**To:** Sen. Löki Tobin; Senate Education; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Mike Cronk; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Cathy Tilton; Sen. Bill Wielechowski  
**Subject:** Regarding SB 277

Best regards Senator.

I am writing to you because I am concerned about SB 277. It poses a real threat to my parental rights and my child's education.

Please oppose sections #4 and #7 of the bill, which would close most state wide programs.

If this goes thru it would be devastating to my child's educational needs. Public school was failing him. My child was getting F's due to lack of attention he needed. The classroom was too crowded. The teacher was stretched thin. He was left behind and his needs weren't being met. He is part of the IEP program. He has learning disabilities and needs daily one on one attention. Public school couldn't help him. I enrolled him in Idea Homeschool and we got all the attention he needed. I can be there to help him with any questions he has. He's Non Verbal so asking a public school teacher or staff for help was scary for him and shut him down. I am one of the few adults he speaks to. Idea Homeschool was very helpful with compassionate staff who understood his needs and helped apply curriculum geared towards his special needs. Now he's getting A's and B's and thriving with his education.

My child was also picked on and bullied in public school because of him being non verbal, shy and insecure and special needs. I believe being in public school added to those insecurities and made him shut down more. Sensory anxiety overload.

Taking away Idea Homeschool funding would be taking away the best educational choice we've had. My child's grades would reflect that choice if sent to a public school and he would fail again.

There are many families like mine who depend on Homeschools to meet their child and children's needs. We live in a rural community with the nearest school 20 miles away. That's one hour to school and another hour back home. Homeschool is important to have as a choice for a child's education. My child is an excellent example of how a public school failed his needs. I am forever thankful for Idea Homeschool and all the wonderful staff who have been absolutely wonderful helping my child succeed educationally.

Please keep my child and hundreds of children like him in your thoughts when it comes time to vote on SB277. You'll be helping my child succeed in life by not taking away funding for Homeschool.

Thank you for your time

Jadeen Blythe  
[REDACTED]

## Michael Mason

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**From:** James Lee [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 10:49 AM  
**To:** Senate Education; dunbar@akleg.gov; Sen. Forrest Dunbar  
**Subject:** Please Reject SB277(A) Support the Alternative Version Submitted by Barbara Haney

Dear Chair Tobin and the members of the Senate Education Committee, I am a parent who has homeschooled my children through statewide correspondence programs for years. These programs have given our family the flexibility and personalized education that 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 Raven, IDEA, and Cyberlynx. It will cut curriculum allotments, reduce teacher support, and eliminate the flexibility to allow families to travel for work seasonal jobs and meet special needs. Many parents will switch to independent homeschooling, meaning the bills promised funding for local districts are largely an illusion. The bill also harms character schools by doubling the administrative fees districts can take from their budgets. My son went through homeschool and is almost finished with college, I don't think this progress would have happened with public schools. Currently my daughter is enrolled in homeschool and is flourishing, where both of them had a hard time in public school due to autism they have. Home school was amazing for both of them for healthy development both educationally and behaviorally. If this bill were to pass it would be detrimental to her and or family. 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. Alaskan families deserve real educational choice and freedom. Thank you for your time and service

Sincerely James Lee  
Chugiak, Alaska

[REDACTED]

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Janice Krenzke <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 6:46 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 277

To the Senate Education Committee :

After reading the proposed SB 277 I urge you to vote NO on this attack of homeschool programs across the state. I am a concerned Grandparent of 7 children being brilliantly homeschooled by their parents. School choice should be supported and encouraged not threatened.

Sincerely,  
Janice Krenzke  
Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jen Syzdek [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2026 11:41 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** please vote against SB 277

SB 277 would impose new financial and administrative burdens on families participating in correspondence programs, and remove parents from their present role as primary decision-makers in their children's education.

Jen Syzdek  
Eagle River, AK  
99577

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 11:03 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB277

March 19, 2026

We OPPOSE SB277 bill as proposed in its current form. This is just another maneuver by legislators (beholden to the unions representing failing public education) that "re-adjusts" how money for homeschooling and charter schools is appropriated.

NO to SB277.

Jennifer and Keith Lorensen/Homer, AK

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jennifer Hughes <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 7:05 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Sb 277

Hello

As a mother of three who has been enrolled in the Idea homeschool correspondence program for the last five years, I would like to state some of my concerns about Senate bill 277.

We began homeschooling because of Covid, but we stayed because of the excellent Community and service we received through IDEA. The deplorable conditions of our local school board and schools have solidified our resolve to continue homeschooling .

Routing our funding through the FNSBSD will only lead to them continuing to make poor decisions while depleting the funding of homeschoolers who are currently very happy with the services we are receiving. When my child was in kindergarten, she was enrolled in public school. She was on the verge of reading, but no one else in her class was, so they gave her a tablet and put her in a corner by herself and told her to do “ Research. “ This is not quality schooling. Our borough is spending too much on admin and overhead and things that do not benefit the classroom. With IDEA my children receive unending support through our contact teacher, amazing opportunities through different clubs, groups, and events. I know what is best for my children. I choose not to go through the Fairbanks North Star borough because it is not what is best for my children. Please do not force me to contribute to a school district that is failing. Contributing to a failing system will not make it stronger. It will just make everyone else fail as well.

We need to allow supply and demand to dictate where funding goes. I choose to send my funding to a school system that works for my family, a school system that should be allowed to continue to be excellent.

I should not be forced into a system that has such a bad return on investment.

There are parts of SB 277 that are salvageable.

Lumping homeschool groups in with failing school districts is not one of those parts.

It would behoove the State of Alaska to have separate testing for homeschoolers versus public schoolers so that we can prove how excellent our homeschool systems are. Currently many homeschoolers will not test their children because their results will get linked in with the traditional brick-and-mortar schools.

Thank you for your time,

Jennifer Hughes  
Fernwood Food Safety  
Servsafe certified instructor and proctor  
[REDACTED]

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jessie Irwin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 10:04 AM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt  
**Subject:** SB277 Threat to Homeschooling

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of our family to express the concerns your bill has on my children's education. We have made the switch from traditional brick and mortar walls to the comfort of our home to better support my children's education. We made this choice because we were able to tailor learning to their individual strengths and weaknesses. We are not saying that we don't believe a traditional school setting and staff are incapable of teaching by any means. I say this with confidence because I am a certified teacher for K-8. I have been in the classroom for 5 years and I know how the system works.

What I also know, both as a former teacher and now as a homeschooling parent, is that one approach does not fit every child. The flexibility that correspondence and home-based education programs provide is not a luxury for families like mine—it is essential. Senate Bill 277 threatens to limit that flexibility and, in doing so, removes opportunities that allow parents to be directly involved in and responsible for their children's education in a meaningful way.

As an educator, I understand the importance of accountability and structure. As a parent, I also understand that my children thrive when their education is personalized, adaptable, and responsive to their needs in real time—something that is far more difficult to achieve in a traditional classroom setting. The support we receive through Alaska's current correspondence system allows us to access resources, materials, and enrichment opportunities that we would otherwise not be able to provide on our own.

SB 277, as it is currently proposed, risks undermining these programs and the families who rely on them. It places unnecessary restrictions on how educational funds can be used and limits the ability of parents to make decisions they believe are in the best interest of their children. This shift does not strengthen education—it narrows it.

I urge you to consider the unintended consequences this bill will have on families like mine. We are not asking for less accountability or lower standards. We are asking for the ability to continue choosing an educational path that works—one that we are deeply invested in and actively committed to every single day.

Sincerely,

Jessie Irwin

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jimmy Rice [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 2:06 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 277

Subject - Opposition to SB 277

Dear Legislators,

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

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 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.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Rice  
[REDACTED]

Soldotna, Alaska

## Michael Mason

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**From:** lamar.ethington [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 22, 2026 1:24 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Written Testimony: Oppose SB 277 – Protect Correspondence Programs and Parental Choice

Lamar Eleazar Gideon Ethington  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

March 22, 2026

Senate Education Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Building

Juneau, AK 99801

### **Re: Opposition to Provisions in SB 277 Affecting Correspondence Study Programs**

Dear Chair Löki Tobin and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing as an Alaska parent to respectfully share my concerns about Senate Bill 277, particularly the provisions that would change how correspondence study students are counted for state funding purposes.

The ability of parents to choose the best educational path for their children is a vital freedom—one that should not be limited, especially for families of modest means. Parents know their children’s individual strengths, needs, and learning styles far better than any district can. Nothing matters more than equipping our children with the highest-quality education possible, tailored to help them thrive. Any policy that reduces parental agency in this area carries real costs for students.

My own daughter is a gifted artist. Enrolling her in Raven Homeschool has allowed us to provide ten times the quality art instruction she could receive elsewhere, developing her talent toward world-class potential. The flexibility of the program has also let us design an efficient, individualized curriculum: she has stayed ahead in all core subjects while achieving advanced proficiency in Japanese—now positioning her for the opportunity to study at Tokyo University. This personalized approach has delivered exceptional results while saving the state money by using resources more effectively than a traditional setting would require.

Alaska’s statewide correspondence programs have a proven track record of success precisely because they empower parents to meet unique student needs that standard public school models often cannot. These programs promote innovation, efficiency, and better outcomes for thousands of children.

I am concerned that SB 277’s proposed changes to Average Daily Membership (ADM) counting—assigning students to their residential school district (specifically its lowest-enrollment school) rather than the correspondence program they actually attend—would undermine these effective, parent-driven options. Redirecting funding away from the programs families actively choose risks limiting parental choice and reducing access to the very customization that delivers superior results.

I urge the Committee to amend SB 277 to ensure that funding continues to follow the student to the educational setting that best meets their individual needs. This approach puts children first, rewards programs that achieve the strongest outcomes, and upholds Alaska's longstanding commitment to educational freedom.

Thank you for your time and service to Alaska's families. I pray that this testimony is received with a spirit of thoughtful consideration advancing the best interest of our children.

Sincerely,

Lamar Ethington

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Leon J. [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 2:33 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** In support of SB277

Hello,  
Parent of two, one who is currently homeschooling. 100% support SB277.  
Thanks,  
Leon Jaimes [mobile]

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Lisa Cloran [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 11:54 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 277

I oppose SB 277 because it destroys parental choice and threatens the correspondence programs Alaska families depend on. This will not force parents to put their children back into the public system, they will end up going the independent route and paying on their own. It will only affect small businesses that serve the homeschooling community. Support the homeschooling community and vote no on SB 277.

Lisa Cloran  
Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Marcy Sowers [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 1:32 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 277

Senate Education Committee:

I am writing to oppose SB 277. Senator Yundt as my Senator I ask that you put this bill where it belongs, in the trash can.

Are you really going to try stop the opportunity for school choices that more and more families make? Many families choose programs like IDEA because the current system is **failing** their children. Do you want a big fight with parents or do you want to be part of the solution that encourages innovation? Is the goal to improve education for Alaskan children?

This bill interferes with many parent's ability to educate their children as they see fit. Do you really want to find yourselves in a battle that you don't have any leg to stand on. Alaska schools, as you well know, rank 49th in the nation. If you needed clarification, that is at the bottom. Given the abysmal record for Alaska education and nearly as bad return on investment you might want to encourage innovation rather than force a major fight with parents supportive of homeschooling.

We homeschooled our son through IDEA for a time and it was a great choice. It critical for him to stay engaged in education and he did so at home The IDEA program was a tremendous support where the local system failed. He went on to graduate from a district school and was awarded a scholarship for his performance.

If you look at when a newborn arrives into the world the main goal is to care for the child. Some mothers might breastfeed. Others may choose formula. The government doesn't have any say in which method a parent chooses. The government only steps in when the parent isn't feeding the child.

School funding should follow the students NOT to the district you want them educated in.

This bill is adversarial to school choice. If you don't like the fact many parents **happily** leave the system you might want to consider doing something to **fix the system**. Make it a system parents don't want to leave. Your move is the equivalent of Titanic staff chaining people to a railing and saying "this is better for you, now stay!" Parents would say some choice words I won't say here then cut the chain and go the lifeboat route. Parents, grandparents and anyone who cares about education choice will surely fight you about it too.

The job of government is to fund the educational system. It is not your role to create conditions that force parents into a corner they don't want to be in. **The ultimate goal is educate the child**. The parents are the ultimate arbiters of how that happens.

Sincerely,  
Marcy Sowers

Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Melanie Pitka [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 11:43 AM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt  
**Subject:** SB 277 Follow up

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

*Intro: I am writing to express concerns with SB 277, particularly Sections 1, 4, and 7. My primary concern is that the current language does not ensure that BSA funding follows the student and instead routes funding through residential districts regardless of actual services used. I am also concerned about the lack of clarity around the proposed agreements, 8% administrative costs, and how it would impact allotments to families. Finally, issues related to access and participation are being used to justify broader funding changes that may not be necessary.*

I am writing as a homeschool parent of 10 years, with 22 years of background and experience in education, to share concerns regarding SB 277, particularly Section 7. I previously wrote regarding the first version of SB 277, and I am writing again after listening to the hearing on the 18th.

First, it may be helpful to clarify language and use terms consistently. “BSA” is what schools and programs receive. “Allotment” is what the student or family receives in an “account” to spend toward ILP implementation. It is also important to distinguish between a student’s “local or residential district” and a “statewide correspondence program.”

I would also like to start by thanking you for Sections 5 and 6. Sections 8–20 appear to be acceptable and prudent adjustments as well.

**Since Sections 1, 4, and 7 are related, I will address them together.**

Intent, specifics, and examples should be clearly stated regarding how things are applied and who they impact.

### **8%**

Can someone clearly share why 8% was chosen? The “whichever is less” language is appreciated. Is this 8% of the whole BSA, the BSA portion programs keep, or the allotment portion families receive? If this is left to the discretion of local districts and programs, local districts will have the control. The 8% could come off the total BSA (since it is higher), which would result in the residential district retaining more, leaving the chosen program with less, and ultimately reducing allotments to students or limiting services the program can provide.

### **Agreements**

Does Section 4 “require” districts to enter agreements, or is there a “may” intent? Although this could be beneficial in some situations, there is no structure, examples, or accountability. This creates inconsistency and could result in outcomes that do not benefit students and instead take advantage of school choice. Local schools are already able to set charges without much transparency, and these can be a high percentage of the BSA for a single class a correspondence student wishes to take.

### **Costs**

Administrative costs are listed for the 8%, but what about the costs for classes, sports, etc.? Are these separate?

What services correspond to what percentage? Who determines and oversees these costs? Questions like these should be clearly addressed in the bill, not left to verbal clarification.

### **Funding Flow**

Section 7 states the BSA funding is tied first to a correspondence student's residential district through ADM counting. Statements of intent attempted to clarify this, but it is still unclear whether the full BSA or only the allotment would then follow the student to their correspondence program of choice. This is why consistent terms are important.

A student's BSA should follow the student directly, without going through intermediary entities. There is no clear reason for this added step. A student should not be counted at a school they are not attending, multipliers or not. At its base, this creates an inaccurate representation.

If a student is not using services from their residential district, then that district should not receive the funding at all—even as a starting point or with intent to redirect. A more direct approach would be to charge a fee only when a service is actually used (sports, classes, etc.).

With the current wording and discussion in the hearing, it appears that access to sports, activities, classes, and cost is being used to justify restructuring all student funding, and that is an unwarranted leap. If access, fees, or participation are the issues, then those should be addressed directly. There is no need to change where funding goes entirely.

There are already ways for correspondence students to participate in local schools. High school students are not legally supposed to be denied access to sports, so if that is happening, it should be addressed directly through separate legislation. If local schools need additional funding to support participation, that should be clearly stated—and only that needs to be addressed.

Correspondence families already pay for outside activities such as horse riding, gymnastics, art classes, and math classes through private vendors using their allotment. Allotment can also be used for participation in brick-and-mortar schools, as long as fees are reasonable. However, those fees can be high, sometimes around 25% for a single class. Many would support legislation to make these situations more reasonable, but SB 277, as written, does not address this directly.

In partial or dual enrollment situations, schools already share the BSA, often to the benefit of the brick-and-mortar school as defined in statute, and the reduction to the correspondence program is reflected in the allotment available to the family. It may make more sense to limit what schools can charge or have programs share that cost, rather than placing it entirely on the family allotment.

Lastly, the dual or hybrid situations discussed are not the norm. While they may be increasing, it would be important to review actual data. Of all correspondence students, what percentage utilize local residential school services such as sports and classes? In my 10 years in the Valley homeschool community, being actively involved in programs, classes, and events, I have only seen a small number of families in this situation. The majority do not utilize local residential school services.

Overall, as Senator Tobin stated, the language in these sections needs to match the intent. However, regardless of intent, if a student is not using services from their residential district, then that district should not receive any portion of that student's BSA funding at any point.

### **Section 3**

I do not believe Section 3 pertains to correspondence programs, so I will not address it.

## **Section 2**

Senator Yundt raised concerns about allotment buy-back and return policies. Those comments did not reflect how programs actually operate. All correspondence programs already have policies in place, typically focused on larger, non-consumable items. Most programs set thresholds—often around \$200 or more per item—and items under that amount are not considered for return. Additionally, many programs have a three-year depreciation structure for these items.

The intent of these policies is to account for large purchases, mid-year unenrollment, or purchases made late in the year without re-enrollment. Not every policy is perfect, but there is structure and consistency. These policies are often in place to align with statute, not to be punitive.

In larger programs, returned items are often placed into resource rooms where they are made available to families at reduced cost or provided for free to support newly enrolled families, especially those enrolling after the state count date without a full allotment. These items continue to be used for students and are not wasted.

Additionally, as was mentioned in the hearing, local schools have similar expectations regarding returning technology or curriculum materials provided to students.

### **BSA Increase Use**

There was also a statement that no homeschool programs increased allotments following the BSA increase, which is not accurate. AK-TRAILS/Southeast Island School District did increase allotments to families.

At the same time, brick-and-mortar public schools also received that BSA increase. It is not clear how that increase directly benefited students. Class sizes have increased, and a year later, schools are closing. This raises the question of how those funds were used—whether for administrative costs, deficit reduction, or general overhead.

If it is acceptable for brick-and-mortar schools to use BSA increases for those purposes, then correspondence programs should not be treated differently. All schools are experiencing rising costs, and correspondence programs also operate facilities and provide services.

### **In Conclusion**

While some aspects of SB 277 appear positive, such as funding increases, those increases seem tied to changes in how students are counted and funded. This creates a tradeoff that negatively impacts correspondence programs, students, and families.

If funding does not initially follow the student, then those increases do not reach students in the same way. If the goal of the BSA increase is to support students, then funding must follow the student.

During the hearing, examples were given suggesting that correspondence students would benefit from these changes, while also acknowledging that residential districts are losing enrollment and funding as students choose statewide programs. This raises concern that the proposed changes are addressing residential district funding loss rather than correspondence student need. It is not appropriate to take the BSA of one group of students to benefit another group.

There needs to be clear, simple, and explicit language in this bill. If intent has to be repeatedly explained or clarified, then the language is not clear enough.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Melanie Pitka  


907-444-1542

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*Melanie Pitka*

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

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Michelle Dempsey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 7:26 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 277

Please oppose this bill. This bill goes against parents in the Matsu who are for School choice. This is a money grab and punishes programs that are successful, it undermines choice if parents choose programs that are not in their school district. School choice means competition, this will undermine that if parents are limited to programs offered on in their own district.

Stop punishing successful programs because public schools are failing some. Charter schools are public schools and homeschooling students are already getting less funding as it is.

Closing schools and combining resources is needed, there are less kids and declining birthrates. Hard and responsible choices have to be made. The answer is not taking away the many options that families can choose that best suit their needs.

Say no and oppose SB 277.

Michelle Dempsey

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Pedro Galeano [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 8:46 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Robert Yundt; Senator.Matt.Cronk@akleg.gov; Mayor@northpolealaska.org  
**Subject:** SB277

Good Evening, To ALL .

Please leave the Homeschool district funding alone, I OPPOSE SB277 . I Reject SB277 .

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Pedro Galeano [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 4:48 AM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Robert Yundt; Senator.Matt.Cronk@akleg.gov; Mayor@northpolealaska.org  
**Subject:** Re: SB277

Good morning.

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,  
Pedro Galeano  
North Pole, Alaska  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Pedro Galeano <cpl\_173@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 8:46:07 PM  
**To:** Senate.Education@akleg.gov <senate.education@akleg.gov>; Senator.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov <senator.loki.tobin@akleg.gov>; Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov <senator.gary.stevens@akleg.gov>; Senator.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov <senator.jesse.bjorkman@akleg.gov>; Senator.Robert.Yundt@akleg.gov <Senator.Robert.Yundt@akleg.gov>; Senator.Matt.Cronk@akleg.gov <Senator.Matt.Cronk@akleg.gov>; Mayor@northpolealaska.org <Mayor@northpolealaska.org>  
**Subject:** SB277

Good Evening, To ALL .

Please leave the Homeschool district funding alone, I OPPOSE SB277 . I Reject SB277 .

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Rachael mcvittie [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 12:14 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 277

Good Afternoon,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,  
Rachael Schmid

[REDACTED]  
Anchorage AK 99508

## Michael Mason

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**From:** S Schaal <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2026 2:14 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; House Education  
**Cc:** Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Maxine Dibert; Rep. Ted Eischeid; Rep. Jubilee Underwood; Rep. Rebecca Schwanke; Rep. Bill Elam; Sen. Robert Yundt; senator.mike.shower@akleg.gov; representative.steve.stclair@akleg.gov; Rep. Jubilee Underwood; Rep. Elexie Moore; Rep. Kevin McCabe  
**Subject:** Please Oppose SB 277 – Protect statewide correspondence school choice

Hello,

I am a parent who has homeschooled my children through Alaska's statewide correspondence programs for the past 20 years; **17 years through Raven while living in Juneau, and the past 3 years through IDEA here in Wasilla**. Both programs are top-notch and have been incredibly beneficial to my children's education, providing the flexibility, individualized attention, and high-quality instruction that my family values. I am writing today to share my concerns and **oppose SB 277**, which I believe would negatively impact statewide correspondence students and the programs that serve them.

One of the stated purposes of SB 277 is to help statewide correspondence students gain access to local district classes and activities. However, this premise is fundamentally flawed. **These opportunities already exist** for students who choose to use them.

The reality is that **most statewide correspondence families do not utilize local district resources and that is intentional**. Families have made a deliberate choice to enroll in statewide programs, often to avoid the structure or limitations of their local district. That choice should be respected, not reshaped through policy.

This raises an important question: **Why create sweeping policy changes for a small minority of students, while disrupting the majority who are already well-served?**

Additionally, the proposal to allow multiple layers of administrative withholding effectively **double administrative fees between districts does not benefit students**. Every dollar diverted into bureaucracy is a dollar taken away from a child's education. Students are not funding mechanisms; they are individuals with real needs, goals, and futures.

This bill appears to prioritize strengthening the traditional brick-and-mortar educational model by redirecting resources and control. But many families have intentionally moved away from that model because it did not meet their children's needs. **Rather than trying to revive a system that is no longer serving all students effectively, policymakers should be open to expanding and supporting the models that are working.**

There is a practical reality that must be considered: **the anticipated shift of funding to local districts is likely overstated**. Respectfully, legislators are not part of the day-to-day statewide correspondence homeschool community, and what I am sharing is insight from within that community. How families will actually respond to policies like this? If statewide correspondence programs are weakened or restricted, many families will not transition into district programs; **they will exit the system entirely in favor of independent homeschooling**. If correspondence programs lose the flexibility, support, and individualized care they currently provide, as this

bill puts at risk, families will leave rather than compromise what they believe is best for their children. This means the funding districts expect to gain from this bill may never materialize.

Time and energy are limited. They would be far better spent **empowering successful, flexible education models** than attempting to dismantle them in hopes of steering families back toward more traditional systems.

At best, SB 277 reflects good intentions paired with a misunderstanding of statewide correspondence education. At worst, it risks becoming a policy that appears "helpful" on the surface, but ultimately undermines the very programs that so many Alaska families rely on.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to oppose SB 277 and protect statewide correspondence school choice.

Respectfully,

Sarah Schaal

Wasilla, AK

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Samantha Keck <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2026 11:00 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt  
**Subject:** B277 opposition

I write this as a very busy parent who has been fighting the school district since my youngest started preschool. My son is nonverbal level 3 autism, some of the highest needs children on the spectrum. He started school at 3 years old because of recommendations from the state and the matsu school district. I would sit outside his classroom door listening to my toddler sobb being left at the school for months. We kept doing it because everyone told me this is what's best for him. I was told by other special needs parents that as an autism parent that I wouldn't make it. The treatment of these kids is so abusive you will leave. He started kindergarten with an amazing teacher and team, It was hard everyday but she made sure we made it through. She really did teach me what it was to be a good parent to my son on how he is capable of anything. What I didn't know then was that she was protecting us parents from the district's unfair treatment. She was fighting her own battle for these IEPs to be met for ratios to be right. Misuse of funding for disabled children's school funding, Dr Trani has openly said he sends that money to the General education kids. In Kindergarten he attended Pioneer peak elementary. The following year, first grade. One week before school was to start I was told my child was to attend Butte elementary. I said no, I was happy with his team and progress. After lots of back and forth and an email sent by a district staff member telling other staff that me and another parent were "pains in his ass" I was able to keep him in that school with his class and teachers. My first win with the Matsu district. 2nd grade came along and again I was told one week before school again that my son was switching schools. I let it go since he would be with his classmates and teachers. I did have to move my daughter because of this move but we made it work. Fast forward to 3rd grade the worst happened and his teacher and para were done by October, they could not take the abuse from the district. I ended up being hired as a para to help with all the chances those poor boys were going through. By December the speech pathologist was gone. They would go through 3 more teachers before they got one in April. Mind you no speech or teacher minutes of the IEPs being ment. Violating every student's education in that room. Just so you know no speech which is a weekly therapy for 4 months. No teacher for 6 months. I was told at the end of that school year my son was to go to Sherrod elementary. If you missed it, my child was supposed to move schools almost every year. These are kids that need consistency to learn and grow. When I said no I was told it was too bad. That my son was going where they said whether i like it or not, coming from a district that loves to claim school choice. Guess not if you're a vulnerable disabled child. When I asked about my other child and employment and how they thought I could have my child in Palmer and me at finger lake I was told I was a parent and it was my job to make "allowances" thank you Tabatha Hill I got right on it. So I pulled all 3 of my kids out of the district. We homeschool with IDEA because I wanted no part of supporting that environment anymore. When I pulled my son I was told by many that it was hard to stay because what they did to these boys was downright abusive. I did not sue because I can't afford a \$20,000 retainer. All my children are thriving. My oldest is set to graduate early. My daughter is catching up on things she was behind in and my special needs son, he is no longer throwing tantrums, he is talking, he knows his colors, he at 9 years old is finally potty trained. This was the right choice for him and his future.

I tell you all of this because I want you to know our story and know that the district's funding issues are their own doing. I'm not the only special needs parent to say this is enough and left. For my oldest I won't be backed into a corner by Dr Tranis crazy graduation requirements that are so far beyond state standard. If you approve B277 you will be shutting another window for my special needs son's education that we frankly ran from. Alaska is supposed to be a place of choice and let these districts deal with the consequences of their own doing. My children will never return to that district. I'll just turn to funding my own schooling for my children through independent homeschooling. I'll do everything in my power to keep the Matsu school district from getting any funding from my students.

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Sharon Isaak [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 21, 2026 6:11 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; LokiTobin@akleg.gov; GaryStevens@akleg.gov;  
Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov; Kiehl@akleg.gov; Robert.Yundt@akleg.gov  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 277(version A)

I am a Grammie to three teenage IDEA Homeschooled students, who have had incredible opportunities to have their parents, tailor their children's individual learning styles to EACH of their education needs and styles. Having taught 2nd grade in Sterling, Alaska years ago, my passion was to teach and encourage the individual learning style of the students I taught. This style strengthens their best interest and abilities for them to achieve excellence for their future. We as a family are going to be celebrating our oldest grandson's graduation in June. He has also attended college classes to enhance his education possibilities for his future.

Please consider EACH students needs and parental rights for their child's future, by voting NO on SB277.

Thank you for a response,

Sharon Isaak

Sharon Isaak

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Shelly Shupe [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 5:55 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Oppose SB277

Good morning Senate Education Committee members.

I am emailing this morning to strongly oppose SB277 in its current form. I understand that it is being amended. Can someone please confirm?

I have many, many homeschool parent friends and they are very concerned about the impacts of this bill to their chosen education paths and the districts they operate out of.

I am confident that you have taken the testimony that you have received so far from these concerned parents seriously and are amending this bill.

Thank you for your time and your service.

Shelly Shupe  
Moose Creek, AK 99705

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Sydney DeWinter <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 9:45 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Reject Senate Bill 277(A) in its current form

Dear Chair Tobin and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am a parent who is currently homeschooling my children through a statewide correspondence program (IDEA). This program has been incredible and provided our family the personalized education and flexibility we need. I hope to continue homeschooling my young kids for many years through IDEA. With that in mind I am writing to respectfully 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 eliminate the flexibility that many families desperately need. It will hinder parental choice and the options a parent has to choose their child's best. The bill also harms charter schools by doubling the administrative fees districts can take from their budgets.

I respectfully ask that you consider supporting an amended or alternative version of SB 277. I would urge amendments to remove the harmful funding redirection, protect charter schools, ensure local contributions follow the student, and affirm that parental rights are superior to those of school district officials.

Please reject SB 277(A) as written and support a stronger, more parent-centered option. Alaska families deserve educational choice and freedom.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,

Sydney DeWinter  
Palmer, Alaska  
[REDACTED]

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Tera Norvelle [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 1:07 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Tera bowers

Reading this article, it makes me think that my small business is going to suffer tremendously! I get about 11,000 a month from homeschool for RIVER CITY CHEER AND GYMNASTICS. And if the past, I would definitely have a hard time paying my bills.

Tera Bowers  
Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Teresa & Robert Alvey <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 5:18 PM  
**To:** 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; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Robert Yundt; Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 277 Oppose

To Whom It May Concern,

SB 277 (Version A)

I oppose the district of residence obtaining all funding for the student; statewide correspondence programs like ours (IDEA Homeschool) would receive zero funding, thereby bankrupt these programs with them unable to support homeschooling students and families, including mine. While supporters of this bill could technically advocate that we would still have choice, our choice will be limited to the homeschool program in our district of residence or will force us to join a homeschool support program outside of Alaska, as statewide correspondence programs in Alaska will no doubt shutter overnight.

You may claim that Section 4 mitigates concerns about Section 7 by “requiring” a cooperative agreement between a local district of residence and a statewide correspondence program. This is untrue. The language of the bill is clear; there is no requirement.

- All the funding and control will be in the hands of the local district of residence. Our rights will be at your mercy. Our school choice will be at your mercy. IDEA’s continued existence will be at your mercy.
- Section 4 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.

The language of Sections 4 and 7 remains a danger.

1. SB 277 Section 7 continues to shift all funding to the local districts and does not guarantee any funding amount for statewide programs. The committee members seemed convinced that the bill will result in a net positive for statewide programs, following an increase in correspondence funding going from 90% of the BSA to 100% of the BSA, and after local districts take some portion of the funding for themselves.

a. Committee members speak as though the only monies that will be taken are the administrative service fees, which are capped at 8%. This is factually incorrect based on the language within the bill.

b. Section 4 of the bill carefully defines the administrative services as distinctly separate from educational services, and that the capped fees are in fact only for paperwork, processing, and other administrative fees.

c. Section 4 does not cap, restrict, or limit “educational service” fees in any way. Local districts could assign any amount to existing fees, or make up new fees to charge correspondence students.

d. Statewide programs would have no recourse, no means of appeal, and no option but to close when a local district withholds a more significant percentage of the funding. Nothing in the bill restricts such actions of the local district, nor does it offer any protections to statewide programs.

2. Neither Section 4, nor Section 7 require a cooperative agreement at all. Meaning that the local districts could simply pocket all funding and not work with statewide programs in any way.

a. The committee became aware of this fact thanks to your outreach. They have stated that future versions of the bill will require cooperative agreements.

b. However, please be aware that Version A does not offer this basic requirement.

3. Why is Section 7 necessary? As written, the policy is destructive and would close IDEA and other homeschooling programs despite the stated intent. If the intent is, as the committee members have stated, to open opportunities for students and to provide a financial means for statewide programs to compensate local districts, why would all of the funding need to shift to the local districts?

a. Why are legislators choosing the path of most complication, most administrative cost, most uncertainty, and most potential harm?

b. Something is not right with this picture. Section 7 is completely unnecessary, a clear danger to parent rights, school choice and statewide programs, and should be removed from the bill. There is no reason for Section 7 to exist.

Some positive elements appear in SB 277, and we support them even if they do not directly benefit our district because they are genuinely positive for all children across the State:

- Special Education funding for correspondence school students o Brick-and-mortar special education students receive State funding while correspondence school special education students do not receive such funding.
- Increased Career & Technical Education (CTE) funding for all students
- Increased Base Student Allocation (BSA) funding for all students
- Increased Student Transportation funding

Our children will not be re-enrolled into public school districts regardless of the outcome of SB 277, my children's public education grades were in decline, and the indoctrinations were/are running rampant. Please consider making changes to SB 277 to protect school choice and statewide programs so that families like ours may continue our preferred and chosen IDEA Homeschool journey.

Sincerely,

Teresa and Robert Alvey

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Terrie Zehring [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2026 8:27 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Vote against SB 277 !!!

Dear Public Servants,

Please vote against SB 277 !!!

Please take into consideration that education needs to be in the hands of parents and guardians who know their children's needs best!! Competitive choice is a cornerstone of America's success!!!

Look at Alaska's standings in the nation for heavens sake!!

Along with the above mentioned reasons there are so many people out there that need these important alternatives. We were in charge of our grandson and needed a flexible option to allow our necessary travel requirements. Raven was the perfect fit for our needs.

Please consider the consequences of denying and destroying parental choice with SB 277!!!

Thank you,  
Terrie Zehring

Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Trevor Rollman <rollmat@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 8:58 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 277, NO

I am writing to voice my opposition to sb277. BSA money should follow students to the school their parents choose for them, not necessarily the school closest to where they live.

Thank you,  
Trevor Rollman

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)