



City of Aleknagik
P.O Box 33
Aleknagik, Alaska 99555
mayor@aleknagikak.gov
907 842 5953

March 23, 2026

Dear Alaska Legislature Senate Finance Committee:

The City of Aleknagik is the gateway to Wood-Tikchik State Park, the largest state park in the nation. Visitors, guides, and commercial users benefit from the park, but our community bears full responsibility for roads, public safety, and emergency response—without receiving any direct revenue from that activity.

Historically, the State distributed over \$141 million to local governments in 1985. In 2016, funding was cut in half, and today, Community Assistance totals only about \$30 million statewide, a level that has never been restored.

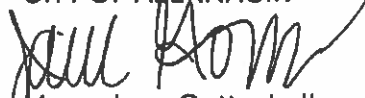
For Aleknagik, the shortfall is immediate: our city insurance for FY26 is \$96,537.29, yet our Community Assistance funding is only \$75,855.90, leaving us short before we can address any other essential services.

To ensure the full \$30 million distribution in July 2026, we respectfully request an additional \$10 million be included in the FY27 budget to fully fund the distribution, allowing small but critical communities like ours to meet essential needs and continue supporting statewide assets without forcing residents to shoulder the burden alone.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

CITY OF ALEKNAGIK


Mayor Jane Gottschalk

Doniece Gott

From: Claire Reed <claire_reed@lksd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 8:29 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: C. Reed email testimony, Re: FY 27 Budget Public Testimony

Hello, My name is Claire Reed.

I am a special education teacher with LKSD in Bethel, AK. I have lived and worked here for 8 years now. Bethel is my home. My daughter has started 3 year old preschool in our district. I believe in public education and will always advocate for the best services to be available for our students.

Please take this emailed testimony in support of **HB 246 - Increase the Special Education Services Agency's (SESA) funding.**

As a special ed teacher in a rural district, we rely heavily on SESA's amazing specialists to provide resources, in-person trainings, Zoom trainings, consults, brainstorming, in-person student support, and many many other things.

Having SESA on my side, as a teacher in a rural setting, has greatly improved my confidence and efficacy as a teacher. I learn something each year from these specialists.

They care about and support our students in real, concrete, and extremely helpful ways.

Please increase their funding, so they may continue to service our students in rural Alaska.

Thank you!

Claire Reed
Special Education Teacher
907-543-2845 ext. 3633
Lower Kuskokwim School District
MIKELNGUUT ELITNAURIVIAT SCHOOL
PO Box 900, Bethel, AK 99559

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Doniece Gott

From: Henk Kruithof <hkruithof@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 4:50 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee

As a grandparent of three students in the Cordova school district, and as an elected member of our School Board, I would strongly support legislators to create a proposed specific fund to support education to be voted on by the public.

Henk Kruithof

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Doniece Gott

From: Debra Buchanan-Adams <debraadams421@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 9:23 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SJR 29: Constitutional Amendment – Education Fund

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for your service to Alaska and future students in this state.

As a career educator (40 years), I know firsthand what it means for schools to manage tight budgets, to make cuts and consider difficult decisions for our students. We have school buildings all over the state in dire need of maintenance and worse -- replacement. We cannot attract teachers, nor can we retain them because we have no defined benefit program. Teachers and paras are the most underpaid workers of any profession, yet we expect them to cure all the ills of society with less. The list goes on ...

Please consider Senator Stevens' Constitutional Amendment to create an Educational Fund separate from the state treasury. This will be protected monies to help meet *some* of the critical educational needs of Alaskan students. Senator Stevens is an educator first. His legacy will make a difference for future Alaskans. Please pass SJR 29. Our children and grandchildren deserve better!

Thank you
Debra Adams

103 Fisherman Ave
Cordova, Alaska 99574

Doniece Gott

From: Austin Ahmasuk <austin_ahmasuk@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 05, 2026 9:23 AM
To: House Tribal Affairs; Senate Finance Committee; House Finance
Subject: HB 263 needs substantial improvement

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

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

HB 263 - Operating Budget by Agency (

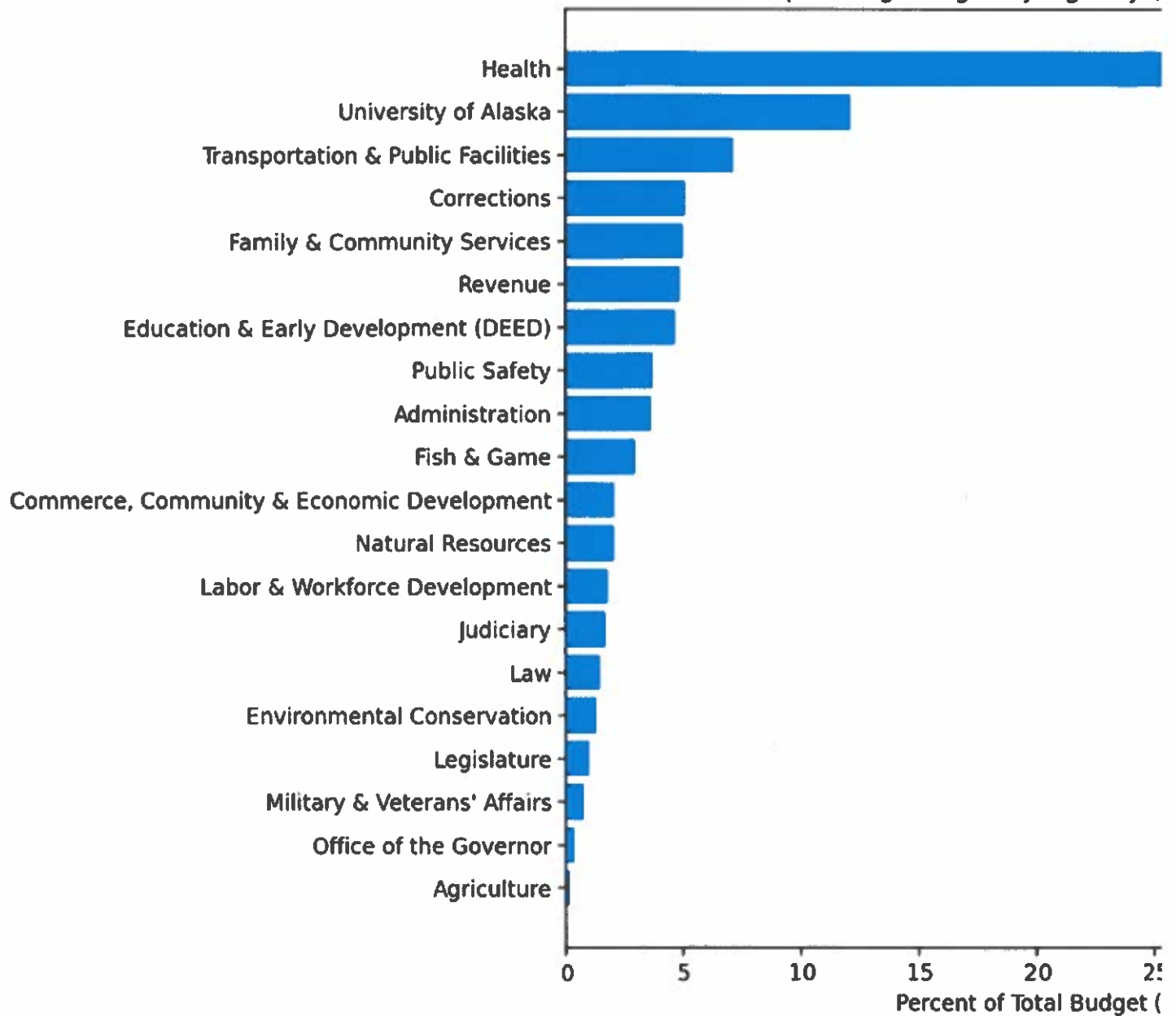


Figure above shows approximate percentage breakdown in the present form of HB263

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

Strengthen Education and Workforce Development

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reinforce Public Safety Where It's Needed Most

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

Protect Clean Air, Clean Water, and Community Health

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

A budget that reflects our values would strengthen:

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

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

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

Across Alaska, villages continue to face:

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

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

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

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

Reduce Spending on State Entities With Limited Public Benefit

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

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

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

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

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

Reinvent Government to Work With Communities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Austin Ahmasuk

Nome, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Layne Larson <laynelarsoncollins@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2026 12:47 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Early Intervention Services

Dear Legislators, Honorables, etc: Please expand the Early Intervention Program. Please fund all programs associated with it. Like Head Start, Infant Learning, Child Find & many others I'm sure. My child has been out of it for many years (she is now 39). But Head Start did wonders for her. Getting to children who experience disabilities at the youngest age possible, will lessen the severity of their disabilities (by learning & the socialization, etc. I wish I'd known more, earlier- but she was my 1st & thought all was good. Anyway, I volunteered at Head Start often, my other 2 little ones were involved in many things for families. It really was a Godsend for hole family, programs for parents, etc. We were going thru trauma, and the confidence & self esteem I got helped me thru. VERY IMPORTANT PROGRAMS. You save \$ in long run - lessen disabilities by learning early, become more independent & less of financial "drain" on system later in life. Many blessings to all of you, thanks

Can you please fwd this to the other side of the aisle? 1 senate, 1 house I think. Thanks. Hard for me to type, etc. Rheumatoid arthritis & chemo have damaged my hands. THANKS AGAIN

Doniece Gott

From: Kenneth Westrope <kenneth.westrope@g.kpbsd.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 10:21 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SILC experience

I have a very good experience working with and attending youth leadership forums I joined a little while ago, around 2022 i believe, tho i could be wrong, bad memory. However, I first joined as a participant, and I learned a lot about resources that I can use in my life, whether that be work or play it also helped me realize my own disabilities. All in all i have had a good experience with the soldotna independent living council

Doniece Gott

From: Mikki Brown <Mikki.Brown@comconnections.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 10:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: ILP Support

My Grandson received ILP services when he was 2. It helped him greatly and he went on to be successful in preschool, kindergarten and now 1st grade.

I'm hoping ILP will be supported in the state budget. Our kids only benefit from it!

Thank you,

Mikki Brown
Community Connections
Developmental Associate II
(907) 225-7825 x351
Fax: (907) 225-1541

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Doniece Gott

From: Jaris Michaels <jaris_michaels@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 1:03 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for SILC

My name is Jaris Michaels, from Bethel, AK. The parent of a 15-year-old daughter with Down syndrome, the youth programs offered by the Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska have made a meaningful difference for our family. What I value most is that these programs focus on each young person's abilities rather than their limitations. They give youth the chance to build confidence, develop independence, and see real possibilities for their future.

Living in a remote Alaska community, it has not always been easy to find programs that truly meet my daughter's needs. Opportunities are limited, and travel costs alone can make participation impossible. SILC removes those barriers by offering programs that are completely free and by covering travel and related expenses for participants. Just as important, there is no red tape, complicated paperwork, or special requirements to qualify. The process is simple, welcoming, and focused on getting youth the support they need rather than creating obstacles.

One experience stands out in particular. Before participating, my daughter was often shy and hesitant to speak up for herself, especially around new people. After attending the program, I saw a noticeable change. She came home more confident, more willing to try new things, and proud of what she had accomplished on her own. She began introducing herself to others, sharing her opinions, and talking about her goals in ways she never had before. Seeing that growth was incredibly powerful as a parent.

These programs do more than provide activities—they help young people with disabilities feel included, capable, and empowered. They also give families like mine hope and reassurance that our children have opportunities to grow and succeed. The work of the Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska is essential, especially for families in rural communities, and I strongly support the continuation of these youth programs.

Thank you,

Jaris Michaels

Doniece Gott

From: Kenneth <mkw11@proton.me>
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2026 10:55 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Request for Targeted Education Stabilization Funding – Campbell STEM Elementary

Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing regarding the recent decision by the Anchorage School District to close Campbell STEM Elementary School due to budget constraints. I respectfully ask the Committee to consider targeted education stabilization or program-preservation funding mechanisms that would allow nationally certified, high-performing programs such as Campbell STEM to remain operational while longer-term fiscal solutions are evaluated.

Campbell STEM is currently the only elementary school in Alaska holding a nationally recognized STEM certification. That designation was achieved in 2024 after nearly eight years of structured program development, staff training, curriculum alignment, and measurable academic effort. The program represents a significant educational investment that supports both student outcomes and the State's broader interest in developing STEM literacy and future workforce readiness.

The school was also recently approved for more than \$11 million in voter-authorized capital improvements. Closure of a facility following substantial public investment raises legitimate fiscal and planning concerns regarding return on investment and long-term capital alignment. When voters approve funding tied to specific facilities and those facilities close soon afterward, it can undermine public confidence in future education bonds and statewide funding initiatives.

It is also important that enrollment data be reviewed in proper context. Campbell STEM has operated below full building capacity — under approximately 80% utilization — while maintaining attendance rates exceeding 90%, demonstrating strong student engagement and program stability. Enrollment access at the school is managed through a district-controlled lottery process, meaning capacity levels may not fully reflect underlying program demand. Consideration of enrollment policies is therefore important when evaluating utilization metrics and program viability.

The timeline surrounding the closure decision further highlights the need for careful review. Public notice of the proposed closure was issued approximately eleven days prior to the final vote, limiting the opportunity for meaningful financial analysis, alternative scenario review, and full community understanding of the long-term implications. For a decision involving elimination of Alaska's only nationally certified STEM elementary program, a more deliberate fiscal review process would better support transparency and informed decision-making.

This issue extends beyond a single neighborhood school. It raises a broader statewide policy question: how should Alaska preserve specialized, high-performing programs during periods of district-level budget compression? Without targeted stabilization mechanisms, unique programs that required years of investment and development may be disproportionately vulnerable despite alignment with statewide education priorities.

In a short period, nearly 900 petition signatures were gathered, public testimony filled multiple board meetings, and substantial civic engagement occurred. That level of response reflects community concern not only about one school, but about long-term planning, fiscal consistency, and educational continuity.

I respectfully ask the Committee to consider:

- Targeted stabilization funding tied to preservation of nationally certified or uniquely accredited programs
- Conditional appropriations allowing districts to maintain high-performing specialty programs during temporary deficits
- Oversight measures that encourage alignment between capital investments and operational decisions

Maintaining public trust in education funding is essential. Decisions perceived as inconsistent with recent voter-approved investments may influence future willingness to support bonds and statewide education funding measures. Thoughtful consideration of targeted stabilization support could help preserve both program continuity and long-term public confidence.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully
M. Kenneth Wake

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



ONE SEALASKA PLAZA, SUITE 302 • JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801
TEL (907) 586-1325 • FAX (907) 463-5480

WWW.AKML.ORG

February 27, 2026

Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the State's FY27 budget and associated appropriation bills currently under consideration.

Alaska's municipalities are on the front lines of service delivery. Cities and boroughs are responsible for maintaining roads and ports, operating water and wastewater systems, supporting public safety, coordinating emergency response, and fostering local economic development. The state budget decisions before you directly affect our ability to carry out these responsibilities efficiently and predictably.

As you consider the operating budget, we urge a focus on stability and sustainability. Municipal governments rely on consistent and predictable state funding streams to plan responsibly and meet community needs. Sudden shifts or reductions in shared services, statutory entitlements, or pass-through programs create ripple effects at the local level that often result in service cuts, deferred maintenance, or increased local taxes and fees. While we recognize the revenue volatility the state continues to face, reliance on one-time savings without addressing long-term structural balance creates uncertainty not only for the state, but for every community that depends on state partnership.

We urge recapitalization of Community Assistance to \$90 million, such that the full funding of \$30 million is paid out in FY27. We encourage full funding of School Bond Debt Reimbursement; and note that currently Community Jails funding is only 62% of the requested \$14.5 million needed to operate these facilities.

Capital appropriations are particularly significant for municipalities, and a sufficient capital budget is essential to municipal planning, deferred maintenance, and economic development.. Local infrastructure continues to age under harsh conditions and increasing environmental pressures. School construction and major maintenance funding is critical to improve our educational facilities. Investment in transportation systems, ports, airports, flood mitigation, and water and sewer infrastructure is not simply a matter of convenience; it is foundational to public health, safety, and economic opportunity. Programs like the Harbor Matching Grant program are essential, and currently not included in the budget. Capital appropriations frequently unlock federal matching dollars, allowing communities to leverage outside investment. When state capital funding is delayed or reduced, municipalities risk losing access to those federal resources and falling further behind on critical projects.

Municipalities are often the first point of contact when behavioral health systems are under strain. Local law enforcement, emergency responders, and community partners bear increasing responsibility in responding to mental health and substance use crises. Robust investment in comprehensive, community-based behavioral health services reduces pressure on local emergency systems and improves outcomes for individuals and families. Ensuring that services are accessible in rural and remote communities is especially critical in a state as geographically diverse as Alaska.

Finally, the supplemental appropriations measure reflects the reality that communities frequently respond to unanticipated events, from wildfires and floods to emergency response needs. Municipalities routinely incur costs in disaster response and public safety before reimbursement mechanisms are fully in place. Timely supplemental appropriations that address these costs are essential to maintaining local fiscal stability and ensuring communities are not penalized for acting swiftly to protect residents.

Our overarching message is straightforward: strong state-municipal partnership is indispensable to our joint success. Municipal governments do not operate in isolation; they implement many state priorities at the local level. A budget framework that preserves statutory commitments, reduces administrative burdens, expands shared-service delivery through regional partners, invests in infrastructure, supports behavioral health systems, and reimburses emergency costs strengthens not only municipalities but the state.

We appreciate the Legislature's careful deliberation and the complexity of the fiscal environment. The Alaska Municipal League stands ready to work collaboratively to ensure that the final budget reflects long-term fiscal responsibility while sustaining the essential services that Alaskans depend on every day.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nils Andreassen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nils Andreassen
Executive Director

Doniece Gott

From: Stoneking, Marge <mstoneking@aarp.org>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 5:38 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB215 Operating Budget Written Testimony

Chairs and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the operating and mental health budgets. My name is Marge Stoneking, and I serve as Advocacy Director for AARP Alaska. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the interests of Americans age 50 and older and their families. In Alaska, we represent over 76,000 members in communities across the state.

AARP's mission is to empower people to choose how they live as they age. Central to that mission is ensuring older Alaskans and people with disabilities can remain living independently in their homes and communities, with dignity and security, for as long as possible. The following budget items are critical, cost-effective investments that advance those goals and help prevent more expensive institutional care.

Senior Development Housing Fund (Alaska Housing Finance Corporation)

AARP strongly supports maintaining \$3 million in the Governor's proposed operating budget for the Senior Development Housing Fund administered by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.

This program addresses the growing shortage of affordable, accessible housing for Alaska's rapidly expanding senior population. Funds may be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of senior housing, allowing older Alaskans to remain in their home communities rather than being forced into higher-cost care settings prematurely.

Grants to nonprofit organizations help bridge the gap between total project costs and other funding sources, often making projects feasible that otherwise would not move forward.

Coordinated Community Transportation (Department of Transportation and Public Facilities)

AARP supports maintaining \$700,000 GF/MH in the Governor's proposed Mental Health budget for Coordinated Community Transportation.

Accessible transportation is essential for seniors and people with disabilities to reach medical appointments, jobs, shopping, and social activities. Coordinated transportation services are particularly important for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, cognitive or behavioral health conditions, seniors living with dementia, and their caregivers.

These funds leverage federal resources and provide flexibility to meet the unique transportation needs of Alaska's diverse communities.

Home Modifications and Upgrades (Department of Health, Division of Senior and Disability Services)

AARP strongly supports maintaining \$1.15 million GF/MH in the Governor's proposed Mental Health budget for Home Modifications and Upgrades.

Home accessibility improvements such as ramps, bathroom modifications, and adaptive equipment allow people with disabilities to remain safely in their homes. These relatively modest investments reduce the need for assisted living or skilled nursing care, resulting in significant savings to the state while supporting independence and safety.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

AARP supports an increase of \$403,000 for a total of \$603,000 for the Statewide Independent Living Council.

SILC is federally required and plays a critical role in supporting independent living for Alaskans with disabilities, including seniors. Without adequate funding, Alaska risks losing more than \$1.4 million in federal Independent Living funds that support Centers for Independent Living statewide.

These AARP-supported budget items are smart, preventative investments that help older Alaskans and people with disabilities live independently while reducing long-term public costs.

AARP respectfully urges the committee to maintain the Governor’s proposed funding for these programs and approve the requested increase for SILC.

Further, AARP encourages the Alaska Legislature to seriously consider increasing reimbursement rates for Medicaid Home and Community Based Services providers to make these positions competitive enough to be stable employment for Alaskans and stable in-home support for older Alaskans and those living with disabilities.

Respectfully submitted,

Marge Stoneking
Advocacy Director, AARP Alaska

Marge Stoneking | Associate State Director - Advocacy | AARP Alaska

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Doniece Gott

From: Colleen M Bolling <colleenmbolling@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 28, 2026 1:30 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Senate Education; Sen. Matt Claman; Rep. Mia Costello
Subject: Please make a meaningful increase to the BSA this session and inflation-adjust education funding into the future
Attachments: BSA buying power_Bar and Line with labels.jpg

Good afternoon,

I am writing today to to plead with you to increase the BSA in a meaningful way this session and to set up a long-term fiscal plan to keep sustainable education funding in place through built-in annual inflation-adjustment. I am grateful for the legislators who voted to override the Governor's veto for an increase during the August special session, but we all know that was a compromise bill that still vastly under-funds education after 15 years of flat funding. **See the attached graph that depicts the drop in buying power since 2011.**

If you haven't already, please take the time to read Ben Walker's op-ed because he clearly paints the picture of our current dire situation with education in our state:

[Opinion: We were honored as Alaska Teachers of the Year. Now we can no longer stay.](#)

Revenue

I support new revenue streams to help cover education funding including an income tax, an education head tax (HB 152), a re-working of SB 113 to tax companies doing online business in Alaska, and many of the other ideas the legislature has come up with to bring in new revenue streams. It is not enough to say we don't have the money to increase education funding, we have a constitutional duty to provide adequate education for all Alaskans. **I do not support the governor's proposal of a regressive sales tax.**

Diminish Governor's Veto Power

We have seen the damage that one governor can inflict to undo all of the hard work of the legislature to reach a bipartisan revenue bill, and I also support a resolution to diminish the governor's veto power so the legislature can do their work and have the power to override a veto by an overzealous governor like we currently have. We currently have the highest threshold of any state to override a governor's veto, and this is unnecessary and dangerous for our state. Please balance this power so the legislature can continue to protect the priorities of their constituents.

Thank you for your hard work, and please make education funding the top priority this session.

Sincerely,
Colleen Bolling
10830 Kamishak Bay Cir
Anchorage, AK 99515
907.301.4522

Doniece Gott

From: Emily Johnson <emilyjunerich@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 7:16 AM
To: House Finance; Senate Finance Committee; House Education; Senate Education
Subject: Education Funding

Dear Representatives,

I am writing as both a special education teacher and a mom. I see every day what is happening in our schools, and it worries me deeply.

Class sizes continue to grow and workloads increase. Teachers are being asked to do more with less, and the pace is not sustainable. Burnout is high. Turnover is high. The teachers who stay are stretched thin not only by their own responsibilities, but by the need to constantly support and mentor new staff coming in as experienced teachers burn out. That instability directly affects kids.

Many of our students simply cannot function in classrooms as large as they are right now. Students with disabilities and many typically developing students struggle in overcrowded rooms. The students who can manage end up losing quality instruction because their teacher is putting out fires all day. No one wins in that environment.

My oldest child starts kindergarten next year. I want to raise my kids here and continue working as a special education teacher. This is where our family lives. Having their support and being able to raise our children in a place with such incredible access to the outdoors matters deeply to us. Alaska is home.

But I am constantly questioning whether we will be forced to move out of state to provide our children a quality education. My husband works remotely. I know I can get a special education job almost anywhere. People want to live in Alaska, but we are asking educators and families to sacrifice too much when it comes to the quality and stability of our schools.

Increased and sustained school funding is crucial. It is about class size. It is about retaining experienced teachers. It is about giving students the support they need to actually learn. It is about whether families like mine can confidently build our future here.

I am asking you to prioritize meaningful increases in school funding this session. Our students, our teachers, and our communities deserve it.

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

Sincerely,
Emily Johnson

Doniece Gott

From: LaChapelle <aklachapelle@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 2:22 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: K-12 Education Funding

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

Investing in our kids' education is possibly one of the most important things we can do for Alaska's future. When I think about where our state will be in 10 or 20 years, I want to know we as citizens of Alaska did everything we could to give our children every opportunity for success. This can only come from giving our children the strong foundation a good education can provide.

I am writing in strong support of increasing state funding for K-12 education. Specifically, I support, and urge you to fund:

- A real increase in school funding that keeps up with inflation
- Money for both basics (like heating, supplies, safe buildings) AND programs that help kids thrive
- Salary and retirement support for our teachers so we can keep good educators in Alaska

School funding should always be a top priority, and never an afterthought; our children deserve the very best we can give them. However, funding for our public education system has fallen behind inflation for almost two decades. We used to have some of the best-paid teachers in the country: a point of pride when I talked with outsiders about our education system when our kids were in school. And now our teachers can barely afford housing and can't rely on a pension. This is unacceptable. We need these talented and dedicated people to stay in our communities and educate our kids. I am a product of the Anchorage school district, as are our two children. We three are successful contributors to society (my husband is too, but he was educated outside) and it is because we have the foundation a good education provided us. We are grateful, and want the same for future generations of Alaskans.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I know these decisions aren't easy, but our kids and our communities are counting on you. Please support a significant and sustained increase to the base student allocation so our schools can be great again. Let's aim to be the best in the nation, as it felt like we once were.

Sincerely,
Ravnit LaChapelle
Anchorage, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Holly <hollyhill2020@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 01, 2026 4:49 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Senate Finance Committee; House Finance
Cc: Holly; Rep. Donna Mears; Rep. Calvin Schrage; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Rep. Ted Eischeid; Rep. Dan Saddler
Subject: Support for SB 104 regarding Transfer on Death Deed for common interest community

Dear Honorable Members of the Legislature:

As a member and resident of Chester Park Senior Cooperative I am strongly supportive of SB 104. Chester Park is a 142 unit common interest community in East Anchorage. SB 104 would definitively allow for Transfer on Death Deeds for our member interest in our community, eliminating any grey areas in the statute and avoiding potential lawsuits.

Holly R. Hill
Member/Owner in Chester Park Senior Cooperative
2020 Muldoon RD
Anchorage AK 99504

Please enter into the record my
WRITTEN TESTIMONY

TO: Committee: Senate Finance
Date of Hearing: 2.27.26
RE: Bill #/Subject: Budget

Both my boys went thru public schools in Homer graduating in 2003 and 2006. They had excellent teachers and education opportunities.

Those same opportunities are not available to students today due to lack of funding the last 10 years. Today, schools are underfunded by \$1283 per student.

The solution is for the state to fully fund education as per the state constitution.

We owe it to our students, teachers and our future.

FROM:

Signed:

Sherry Stead

Printed Name:

Sherry Ann Stead

Representing:

Homer

Community of Residence

Homer

Doniece Gott

From: Karin Halpin <karinhalpin@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 6:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 213

Good morning,

This is getting exhausting, advocating for adequate funding for public education. While it was helpful to receive the additional \$700 boost last year, it is not nearly enough to meet the needs!! I don't know of a district in our state who is not facing a major budget crisis. There is no 'fat' left to cut. Districts are cutting staffing, increasing class sizes, reducing support staff along with facing serious maintenance issues. This is not acceptable!

I invite you to visit schools in your district to see what school staff are facing. It isn't pretty.

I am willing to pay an income tax to help fund critical services such as education. There are fixes here to the budget challenges. If we want thriving schools, we must be willing to fund them. Please increase the BSA to address inflation along with rising costs.

Kind regards --

Karin Halpin
25530 E. Phoenicia Cir
Palmer, AK. 99645

Sent from [Outlook](#)

Doniece Gott

From: Diana Johnson <akdianaj@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 10:25 AM
To: Senate Education; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Deep Cuts: why can't we afford school nurses?

Senate finance committee,

In light of our schools' budget crises, I sent the following letter to ADN and am sending it to you now so that you can further understand the need for an increased BSA and a BSA funding calculation system that is linked to inflation. I know you're busy, so **I put my direct message to legislators in bold** in the text below.

Sincerely,

Diana Johnson

2613 Redwood St

Anchorage, AK 99508

Deep Cuts: why can't
we afford school nurses?

Across Alaska, our school districts face impossible budget deficits and some have already been cutting their budgets and gutting programs for years. Locally, our Anchorage School District (ASD) has finally run out of savings and one-time funding boosts with which to bridge the gap between the flat Base Student Allocation (BSA) and the inflation-driven rising costs of running our schools. The gap is enormous and the proposed cuts are devastating: increasing class sizes by 4, tossing the middle school model, cutting gifted education, removing nurses from schools, cutting special education staff, and dropping school sports. Children will suffer with losses in learning, year over year, in overstuffed classrooms with overstretched school staff. Families with means will move out of state in search of better education, young people will choose to start careers elsewhere, and we'll be looking at a future of decline.

Here in Anchorage, school nursing is just one of many of ASD's proposed cuts, but I am a middle school nurse, so I feel deeply unsettled by it. On one hand, I see ASD's need to trim our budget and that it's no one's fault that nursing is on the chopping block; everything is. On the other hand, my nursing office is very busy and I'm providing an essential service to our community every day of the school year. If I'm not in the building, the nursing work won't go away, it'll just be delegated to our front office or teaching staff without medical training, decreasing safety and increasing stress on staff, students, and families. It's confusing to be busy and essential and also deemed extraneous via budget cut. How did we come to a place of no longer being able to afford a public service as basic as school nursing?

What I gather is that our state's revenues have been in decline and our state government hasn't been able to adapt to that reality in any way but by cutting services. When you cut far enough, you hit essential services like classroom teachers and school nurses. If we want to maintain these essential services for our communities, we either need to cut other services, raise revenue through taxation of one variety or another, or both.

This week, the ASD School Board was able to retain most school nurses and school sports through actions such as closing several elementary schools. These savings were, however, one-time savings and that nursing and school sports will be on the chopping block again and again without a significant BSA increase at the state level; ASD's deficit this year is \$90 million and anticipated deficit next year is an additional \$47 million.

Legislators from across the state: band together this session, as you did last, to pass education funding. Push to inflation-proof the BSA. Raise revenue through taxation or cut other services if there are any left to cut. Keep in mind that governor Dunleavy, who has vetoed bipartisan education funding

Doniece Gott

From: LIO Fairbanks
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 10:34 AM
To: Senate Resources; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony/Lynch/SB21

Please forward to Senate Resources and Senate Finance.

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

From: Leon Lynch <leonandkarenak@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Feb 26, 2026 at 1:14 PM
Subject: Oil Tax Reform
To: Letters Editor <letters@newsminer.com>

I appreciate the three legislators who participated in the recent town hall meeting and the NewsMiner's coverage of the event. Rep. Sapp raised concerns about SB 21, emphasizing that any tax adjustments should be stable and fair to both the state and the oil industry. SB 21 has now been in place for 13 years—by any reasonable measure, that is stable. As for fairness, I would ask: was it fair that the bill was introduced by a governor who was a former ConocoPhillips Alaska (CPA) lawyer, and that two state senators still employed by CPA voted to pass it? SB 21 passed the Senate by a single vote and has since resulted in the transfer of billions of dollars from the state to the oil industry. In my opinion, that outcome was neither fair nor ethical. Since SB 21 passed, Alaska's savings have declined from \$16 billion to near zero. We are now using production tax revenue from state lands to help finance projects on federal lands, where the state has no royalty interest and will see no production tax revenue for years. As Tim Bradner of the Alaska Economic Report noted, "The fact that state income from big new projects like Willow and Pikka will actually reduce state oil tax revenue for the near term is sure to attract scrutiny by the Legislature."

Rep. DeLena Johnson, speaking at the start of the session, said she did not see an appetite for oil tax reform because it was "too complex." Indeed, state consultants consider Alaska's system the most complex oil tax structure in the world—precisely how the industry designed it. The proposal now under consideration by Senate Resources would shift from a net to a gross tax system, which is simpler, more transparent, and more equitable for Alaskans. The reality is that Alaska faces serious fiscal challenges. With Willow and Pikka nearing completion, after years of state support, it is reasonable to expect a fair return for the public. Alaska cannot afford to continue policies that undermine its financial stability. It is time for oil tax reform to ensure the state receives its fair share.

Leon Lynch
Ester

Til Beetus
Fairbanks, Alaska
tilbeetus@gmail.com

February 27, 2026

Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature Juneau, AK 99801
Via Email: Senate.Finance@akleg.gov

RE: Support for Increased Funding – CDVSA Grant Line (Department of Public Safety)

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

My name is Til Beetus, and I am a lifelong Alaskan from Fairbanks. I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living (IAC), where we focus on governance and fiscal oversight. I am writing to urge your support for a \$2.5 million increase to the CDVSA grants line, including \$2 million for emergency victim services and \$500,000 for legal services.

I do not approach this request as a typical advocate. I approach it as a person whose life was physically saved by the shelter(s) in Fairbanks.

As a child, I witnessed horrific abuse against my mother and my two-year-old sister. As a young adult, I survived an abusive relationship that lasted nearly two years. Even after that, I endured thirteen years of stalking and property damage that didn't end until my daughter was grown. I know exactly what it feels like to have nowhere else to go, and I know that in the Interior, IAC is the only door that stays open for survivors.

Alaska continues to lead the nation in rates of domestic and sexual violence. This is not just a social issue; it is a public safety crisis that the State has a fundamental duty to address. For IAC, providing that safety has become a mathematical impossibility under current funding:

- **Increased Demand:** In FY25 alone, IAC provided over 17,000 survivor services and nearly 17,000 shelter nights.
- **Stagnant Funding:** Our funding has remained flat since 2017. In that same timeframe, inflation has risen 24%, eroding our ability to pay for utilities, food, and staff.
- **Systemic Collapse:** Due to the reduction in federal VOCA funding and the loss of the Enhanced Services Grant Program, IAC is currently preparing to close its legal program—a service that has provided no-cost protection to survivors for over a decade.

A Common-Sense Investment in Public Safety From a governance perspective, this is not a matter of program inefficiency; it is a matter of capacity. When we are forced to cut legal advocacy or limit shelter beds, the burden does not disappear—it shifts. *It shifts to the Alaska State Troopers, local law enforcement, emergency rooms, and the corrections system.* These are far more expensive ways to manage a crisis than through the preventative and stabilizing work of the CDVSA.

Increased funding for the CDVSA is public safety infrastructure. Without it, the bridge between a victim and safety is being dismantled.

I am alive today because a shelter was there when I had nothing left. As a seven year old I brought my mother and sister there after my late father threw knives at us. As a young adult I received services for over half a year after my ex-fiance was going to my Fairbanks relatives' homes, with a gun in his hand, looking for me. I ask you to ensure that

the same safety exists for the mothers, children, and survivors across the 42 villages and Fairbanks communities we serve. Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to protecting Alaska's families.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Til Beetus', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Til Beetus, Board of Directors
Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living

Doniece Gott

From: Teryn B <terynbi@iacnvl.org>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 10:45 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Written Testimony in Support of CDVSA Funding Increase

Mr. Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,
My name is Teryn Bird. I work in Fairbanks, Alaska, serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. I am testifying in my personal capacity, based on my professional experience serving survivors in Interior Alaska.

I apologize that I am unable to provide live public testimony. Please accept this written testimony in strong support of the \$2.5 million increase to the CDVSA grants line within the Department of Public Safety — including \$2 million for emergency victim services and \$500,000 for legal services for victims and survivors.

In FY24, our legal program served 110 individual survivors. In FY25, that number dropped to 55 — a 50% reduction — directly corresponding with reductions in attorney staffing. We went from 1.75 attorneys to 1 attorney, and we are currently operating at only .25 attorney capacity.

When staffing declines, access declines immediately.

Although total clients decreased, case complexity increased significantly. Family law service instances rose from 161 in FY24 to 317 in FY25. These cases involve high-lethality risk factors such as coercive control, weapon access, ongoing threats, and contested custody disputes. These matters require sustained, trauma-informed litigation support and cannot realistically be absorbed by volunteer attorney programs.

Because of reductions in federal VOCA funding and structural underfunding, our community is now facing the potential closure of a legal program that has provided more than a decade of critical protection for survivors in the Interior.

In a community the size of Fairbanks, the loss of even one attorney dedicated to this work has a disproportionate impact. Survivors may be forced to navigate protection orders and custody proceedings alone, increasing safety risks for themselves and their children. When legal services weaken, the burden shifts to courts, law enforcement, healthcare systems, and local communities.

Reduced staffing leads to reduced access. Reduced access leads to increased risk.

These services are public safety infrastructure. I respectfully urge you to support the \$2.5 million increase to preserve emergency victim services and restore legal capacity for survivors across Alaska.

Thank you for your leadership and for supporting services that protect Alaska's families and strengthen our communities.

Respectfully,
Teryn Bird

Teryn Bird
Legal Program Director
Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living
726 26th Avenue, Suite #1
Fairbanks, AK 99701
907-452-2293

terynbi@iacnvl.org

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Robert Bashleben

777 N. Crusey St Ste A101

Wasilla, AK 99654

02/26/2026

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

My name is Robert Bashleben and I am writing as both an advocate and Alaskan constituent from the Matsu Borough to express my strong support for several critical items in the Governor Dunleavy's proposed Mental Health budget, including funding in SB 215 and SB 213, to serve Alaskans experiencing mental illness, substance use disorders, disabilities, and housing instability. These investments are essential to maintaining a responsive and effective continuum of care across our state.

Crisis Call Center – DOH Division of Behavioral Health

I respectfully urge you to support an additional \$500,000 GF/MH and to maintain \$1 million MHTAAR funds in the Governor's proposed Mental Health budget (SB 215). The Alaska Department of Health Division of Behavioral Health's crisis contact centers provide 24/7 in-state response to phone calls, texts, and chats from individuals experiencing emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, and substance use crises.

These centers deliver immediate intervention, de-escalation, and referrals to treatment and recovery supports—often preventing emergency room visits, hospitalizations, or law enforcement involvement. Notably, the proposed GF/MH funding is \$500,000 less than recommended by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. Restoring this funding will ensure that Alaskans in crisis continue to receive timely, life-saving support regardless of where they live.

Special Needs Housing Grant (SNHG) – AHFC

Please support an additional \$1.75 million GF/MH and maintain the \$200,000 MHTAAR and \$1.75 million AHFC dividend funds included in SB 215 for the Special Needs Housing Grant program administered by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.

SNHG grants address both short- and long-term housing needs of Alaska's most vulnerable residents, including individuals experiencing homelessness who live with mental illness, brain injury, and other disabilities. Stable housing—paired with appropriate supports—prevents unnecessary institutionalization and reduces costly emergency system involvement. The GF/MH amount in the proposed budget is \$1.75 million less than recommended by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, despite clear and growing need across communities statewide. Maintaining and restoring this funding is a practical and humane response to Alaska's housing crisis.

Small Group Home Placements for Stabilized Clients with Complex Care – Department of Family and Community Services

I strongly support maintaining \$750,000 in General Funds in the Governor's proposed Operating Budget (SB 213) for small group home placements through the Alaska Department of Family and Community Services.

These homes provide safe, structured environments for individuals stepping down from psychiatric hospitals or other intensive care settings. With one to three residents per home and trained staff support, these placements promote stabilization, skill-building, improved socialization, and better long-term outcomes—while preventing regression to more restrictive and expensive levels of care.

Coordinated Community Transportation – Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Please maintain \$700,000 GF/MH in SB 215 for coordinated community transportation through the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

Reliable transportation is foundational to independence and community integration. These funds support vehicles and assistive transportation services that help seniors and individuals with intellectual, developmental, cognitive, and behavioral disabilities access employment, medical care, and essential daily activities. Importantly, these funds leverage federal resources and allow communities flexibility to address unique regional transportation challenges.

Home Modifications and Upgrades – DOH Division of Senior and Disability Services

Finally, I urge you to maintain \$1.15 million GF/MH in SB 215 for home accessibility grants administered by the Alaska Division of Senior and Disability Services.

These modest but impactful investments allow individuals with physical and other disabilities to remain safely in their homes through ramps, bathroom adaptations, and other accessibility upgrades. Supporting aging in place reduces reliance on assisted living and skilled nursing facilities—improving quality of life while lowering long-term state costs.

Together, these budget items reflect a comprehensive approach to crisis response, housing stability, community integration, and cost-effective care. They are not only compassionate investments but fiscally responsible strategies that reduce pressure on emergency rooms, correctional systems, and institutional care.

I respectfully ask that you fully support these funding levels and restore the recommended GF/MH amounts to ensure Alaska's behavioral health and disability service systems remain strong and responsive.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to Alaska's most vulnerable residents.

Sincerely,

Robert Bashleben

LINKS Resource Center

Director of Community Advocacy

Doniece Gott

From: Brynn Bolling <castle@aptalaska.net>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 12:49 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: ILP Infant learning program

Hello, my name is Brynn Bolling and I am a parent of 2 children who received services from our local infant learning program. This was back in early 2000s. I learned so much from my ILP provider and that support assisted me in being a better parent with 2 children with moderate to severe language delays. Families need this support in raising independent and wonderful human beings. This support also meant less time in special education in elementary school. Both children are now young men continuing to live and work in Alaska. One is an electrician who graduated from AVTEC and is living in Juneau and the other received a four year degree in technology and now works for SEARHC as a medical technician. The future for these two young men may have been different without the support of our ILP interventionists. We received support in the first 3 years of life when the human brain does 80% of its growth. When neurons are built and strengthened. This support also encouraged me to go back to school and get my Master's Degree in Early Childhood Special Education. I am now the director of the same program my family received support from all those years ago.

ILP funding needs to be in the budget. It is part of a child's education just like kindergarten through 12th grade is a public responsibility.

Sincerely,

Brynn Bolling
Parent
Community Connections
Early Learning Director (ILP)
Serving Metlakatla, Ketchikan and all of Prince of Wales

Doniece Gott

From: Maya C <mayacurtis@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2026 1:10 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for Sustainable Education Funding in Alaska

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am a resident of Anchorage, an Anchorage School District employee, and a mother of two children enrolled in the district—a middle schooler and an elementary schooler (with special needs).

Working full-time while raising my children and supporting their extracurricular activities (sports and tutoring) so they can grow into healthy, well-rounded individuals requires significant time and commitment. I am very appreciative of the hard work our legislators put in last year supporting an increase to the BSA, but as we all know that increase is simply not enough. At the same time, it is beyond frustrating that hard-working parents must again take time from already full schedules to write advocacy letters and attend school board meetings in a show of support to advocate for strong public education—something guaranteed by the Alaska Constitution.

Beyond this constitutional promise, providing our children with an excellent education creates successful adults who will hopefully remain in Alaska, contribute to our communities, and one day help sustain the future of our state. It is difficult to understand how education funding has become an area where we appear willing to fall behind. Yesterday, I read an ADN article that shared that Department of Corrections spending is up 54%, far outpacing inflation and that the department's budget is driven by inflexible staffing formulas. I would like to see those inflexible staffing formulas applied to public schools so they can function efficiently, providing the best education possible to the young bright minds of Alaska.

I respectfully ask the Committee to prioritize education funding that:

- Provides stability and predictability for school districts
- Accounts for inflation and rising operating costs
- Supports recruitment and retention of educators and staff
- Ensures equitable access to resources for all Alaska students

Investing in education is an investment in Alaska's long-term strength, stability, and prosperity. Thank you for your service and for your careful consideration of this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Maya Curtis
Anchorage, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Juneau Montessori School <jms@juneaumontessori.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 3:14 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Fund Child Care for Alaskans!

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to respectfully urge you to:

1. Use the full \$5.9 million FY26 Child Care Benefits appropriation for its intended purpose of delivering direct support through the Child Care Grant Program for families and providers; and
2. Fully fund the ROOTS Awards retention stipend to recruit, retain, and stabilize Alaska's early educator workforce.

We are a program offering childcare and preschool services to fifty families in the Juneau/Douglas area, and over my last six years acting as the program director I have seen how much the child care grant funding adds to the stability of our program. Every year we operate on a tight budget, barely making ends meet, despite the fact that we provide a critical service to families, allowing them to remain in the workforce while nurturing their young children.

Similarly, I have seen the tangible impacts of the ROOTS awards when they receive their checks in the mail. They have used these funds to repair their cars, buy groceries for their children, pay off medical debts, and even, on occasion, do something nice for themselves after spending their day caring for Alaska's children. We cannot afford to offer benefits, so incentives like the ROOTS award play a huge role in the retention of our amazing, caring, hardworking staff.

Investing in child care is investing in Alaska's workforce and future. I respectfully ask you to prioritize these funds in the FY26 budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Talpey
Executive Director
Juneau Montessori School
(907) 364-3535 | www.juneaumontessorischool.org

Doniece Gott

From: Holly Blackstone <hollyblackstone47@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2026 3:19 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please do NOT close Campbell STEM

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Holly Blackstone, and I'm a parent and community member affected by the ASD Board's decision to close Campbell STEM Elementary School due to budgetary constraints. I am writing to seek assistance in obtaining additional financial support to grant separate and distinct funds exclusively to reverse the closure of Campbell STEM Elementary School and return it to operational status.

Closing Campbell STEM reportedly saves ASD \$900,000—a mere one percent of its current deficit. However, additional busing expenses will quickly outpace initial savings. There's currently one bus route supporting Campbell STEM students. Next year, at least two buses would likely be needed to send our K-5 students to Willowcrest, Klatt, and Gladys Wood. We face additional potential busing expenses to divert our developmental pre-k students to Taku and Sand Lake.

Despite supposed "savings," our community cannot afford to lose Campbell STEM. The school offers invaluable opportunities that cannot be found elsewhere. While other schools in the district emphasize STEM subjects, Campbell is the only school in Alaska to hold the national certification. The STEM certification process is a rigorous endeavor; Campbell achieved its national certification in 2024 after 7 years of tireless efforts and it costs a mere \$1,000 every 5 years to maintain. With no plan to relocate the STEM program to another school, it is simply wrong to throw out all that hard work.

Prior to the February 24 vote, parents and neighbors engaged the community in efforts to save Campbell STEM. The overall sentiment was that if Campbell STEM were to close, Anchorage residents would be hesitant to vote for future education bonds. In 2025, voters granted Campbell STEM over \$11M in bonds for remodeling costs. Our community feels betrayed; residents are skeptical that future funding will be used as promised. We are very concerned that Campbell's closure sows distrust in ASD, and will make future funding difficult to obtain.

Our entire community is affected by Campbell's closure. Several families have already experienced multiple relocations from previous ASD rezoning efforts. Many have expressed intent to move due to frustration over poor organization, which results in disruption of their children's education. Our children deserve a sense of stability in their formative years, and such drastic changes negatively impact our youths' educational journeys. Campbell STEM is home to a large portion of low-income families and does in fact qualify as a Title 1 school, despite ASD not awarding the status and subsequent funding. Closing this school and its STEM program would impact the community to its core in a devastating way.

Public notice of the proposed closure was published 11 days prior to the vote (6 working days). During that time, our community supported Campbell by attending the 2/17/26 School Board Meeting to provide testimony, creating a petition that's accumulated 894 signatures and counting, contacting our local representatives, organizing and attending student and community rallies, seeking and obtaining media coverage from local news outlets, and attending the Board's 2/24/26 meeting to witness the vote. We've worked hard in the incredibly short amount of time provided, despite the lack of proper notice to the community, but we need your help as well.

Our community's energy and dedication speak to Campbell STEM's character. Aside from specialized STEM instruction, our school has given us strength through connection and a sense of belonging fostered by its community. Again, we urge you to help secure additional funding to reverse the closure of our school. The loss of Campbell STEM would leave a tangible hole in our youths' education and sense of community. Please help us save this vital school and help preserve our community.

Doniece Gott

From: dave smith <dave1311@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2026 5:54 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Save Campbell Elementry

03-13-26

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Dave Smith and I'm a community member affected by the ASD Board's decision to close Campbell STEM Elementary School due to budgetary constraints. I am writing to strongly urge the Senate Finance Committee to provide additional financial support to Education, particularly to grant separate and distinct funds exclusively to reverse the closure of Campbell STEM Elementary School, thus returning it to operational status.

Closing Campbell STEM reportedly saves ASD \$900,000- a mere one-tenth of its current deficit. However, additional busing expenses will quickly outpace initial savings. There's currently one bus route supporting Campbell STEM students. Next year two buses would be needed to send our K-5 students to Willowcrest and Gladys Wood. We face additional potential busing expenses to divert our developmental pre-k students to Taku and Sand Lake. Ongoing costs for district-funded transportation clearly outweigh the reported one-time savings of \$900,000, causing a further drain on ASD's rapidly failing budget.

Despite supposed "savings," our community cannot afford to lose Campbell STEM. The school offers invaluable opportunities that cannot be found elsewhere. While other schools in the district have an emphasis on STEM, Campbell is the only school in Alaska to hold its national certification. The STEM certification process is a rigorous endeavor; Campbell achieved its national certification in 2024 after 8 years of tireless efforts.

Prior to the February 24 vote, parents and neighbors engaged with the community in efforts to save Campbell STEM. The overall sentiment was that if Campbell STEM were to close, Anchorage residents would be hesitant to vote for future education bonds. In 2025 voters granted Campbell over \$11M in bonds for remodeling costs. Our community feels betrayed; residents are skeptical that future funding will be used in its promised manner. We are very concerned that Campbell's closure sows distrust in ASD, and will make future funding difficult to obtain.

Our entire community is affected by Campbell's closure. Several families have already experienced multiple relocations from previous ASD rezoning efforts. Many have expressed intent to move due to frustration over poor organization, resulting in disruption of their children's education. Our children deserve a sense of stability in their formative years, and such drastic changes negatively impact our youths' educational journeys.

Public notice of the proposed closure was published 11 days prior to the vote. During that time, our community supported Campbell by attending the 2/17 School Board Meeting to provide testimony, created a petition that's accumulated 894 signatures, contacted our local representatives, organized and



March 26, 2026

Members of the Alaska Senate Finance Committee and Senator Tobin

Senate.Finance.Committee@akleg.gov

Senator.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov

Senator.Donald.Olson@akleg.gov

Senator.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov

Senator.Kelly.Merrick@akleg.gov

Senator.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov

Senator.James.Kaufman@akleg.gov

Senator.Mike.Cronk@akleg.gov

Senator.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov

RE: Support for CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 206 (HSS) – An Act relating to parental notification of incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying involving students and threats of suicide by students; and establishing the firearm safe storage grant fund."

Dear Senators,

NAMI Juneau is an affiliate of the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Since 1986, when we were known as Juneau Alliance on the Mentally Ill, we have been helping individuals in Juneau and SE Alaska affected by mental health conditions build better lives through education, support, advocacy and public awareness. The Juneau Suicide Prevention Coalition is a program of NAMI Juneau focusing on maintaining community-wide suicide awareness and prevention in Juneau and Southeast Alaska. In the past year, NAMI Juneau has:

- helped 5,700 people navigate Juneau's mental health system through the website www.juneaumentalhealth.com, which we maintain, as well as through direct calls and emails;
- conducted 48 presentations to over 1,500 participants about mental health and suicide prevention;
- supported 5 families who suffered a suicide death in their family;
- hosted 65 support groups attended by 75 people, many of whom are supporting someone who is suicidal, have lost someone to suicide or are suicidal themselves.

We are dedicated to promoting mental health wellness and safety. In these times when mental health concerns have risen sharply in Alaska and the nation, the board of directors of NAMI Juneau voted to support passage of SB 206 to create a state-administered firearm safe storage grant fund; allow school districts to enact a plan to inform families of incidences of harassment or bullying of their child; to provide families with information about suicide prevention, crisis intervention resources and how to access free firearm safe storage devices from the state grant fund. We truly believe this law, if enacted, could protect many vulnerable youth from gun suicide and injury.

We are alarmed that data from the 2023 Youth Risk Behavior survey showed one third of Juneau high school students reported being suicidal at some point in the past year. We also know from research and experience that putting space and time between suicidal feelings or ideation and the means to act on those feelings means young people have a better chance of staying alive.

We are also alarmed that guns are the leading cause of death among Alaska children and teens with **63.4%** of those deaths being by suicide, according to the CDC data for years 2019-2023. And that among

Alaska high school students who have seriously considered suicide, **58.6%** say they could access a loaded gun. <https://health.alaska.gov/en/division-of-public-health/chronic-disease-prevention/youth-risk-behavior-survey-yrbs/>

We know of many more sad statistics about Alaska youth and gun deaths, but we are encouraged by data from other states showing secure gun storage can prevent unintentional shootings, gun suicides and homicides particularly among youth and people vulnerable to suicide.

At most all of our public events and presentations, NAMI Juneau offers free gun locks to anyone who would like one. Consistently we have found that gun owners are really grateful to get the locks at no cost.

We look forward to a strong workable version of the current SB 206 advancing quickly through the Senate and then through the House to become law, because we know it will save lives.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Giudice
President, NAMI Juneau Board of Directors



Aaron Surma
Executive Director of NAMI Juneau

Doniece Gott

From: Nathan Duval <NDuval@ValdezAK.Gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2026 3:41 PM
To: House Finance; Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Sheri Pierce; Elise Sorum-Birk; Jordan Nelson
Subject: Letter of support for Community Jail Program Funding

Respected members of the Senate & House Finance committees,
I would like to write a brief letter supporting funding for community jails in an amount equal to or, preferably, greater than the past 3 years. The community jail program is a relatively minor expense in comparison to the entire corrections and state budgets. The impacts are significant though.

We run the Valdez community jail in a safe and efficient manner. To minimize expenses our dispatchers double as corrections officers. In addition, until this year, the Valdez Jail managed the full Electronic Monitoring Program for the Valdez area. While we continue to provide electronic monitoring services, the majority of those responsibilities have transitioned to Palmer Pre-Trial, resulting in a reduced role for Valdez. We were and are able to incorporate these State needs into our everyday operations, so long as there is adequate funding to do so.

Last year we proposed an operating budget of \$1.075M and received \$615,350. The funding received accounts for approximately 57% of the operating expenses. We have also periodically received supplemental funds to account for capital investments to make repairs and minor upgrades but the deferred maintenance and replacement is not fully captured in the budget nor has the need been fully met with past supplemental funding. We offset the lack of funding with local tax dollars to ensure a safe & compliant facility; but, there are still additional deferred expenses.

Without appropriate funding we would not be able to house inmates and the burden of transporting and housing individuals would fall squarely to the state at a much greater expense. Our ability to house an individual is significantly less than the cost of airfare, escort, processing, and housing in Anchorage or Palmer. An added benefit is that the people that have been arrested have the ability to remain in their home community where they have support from family and friends and access to legal resources and the local court system.

We understand the importance of a balanced budget and greatly appreciate the funding received in the past. Having said that, we would not be able to continue providing this service with significantly reduced funding and I don't know how the state would make up the difference. In our current inflationary environment it gets more difficult every year with flat and reduced funding.

Thank you for your time on this matter and for your service to our great state.
Please feel free to reach out if you need additional information.



Nathan Duval
City Manager, City of Valdez

📞 907-835-4313 📠 907-202-0683

✉️ NDuval@ValdezAK.Gov 🌐 ValdezAK.gov

3/27/2026

To the Members of the Senate Finance Committee

RE: Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Increment Request

I am Eric Gurley, the Executive Director of Access Alaska, Inc. I live and work in Anchorage, AK. Access Alaska is one of Alaska's four Centers for Independent Living. Our efforts assist individuals and families to improve their independence and help Alaskans with disabilities remain in their own homes and communities. Access Alaska provides Centers for Independent Living support in three of our four main hub areas, including Anchorage, Fairbanks, and the Mat-Su Valley.

I am also a Board member of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). Today, I am representing the SILC's needs. The SILC is federally required for Alaska to receive ANY Independent Living funds. Alaska provides Part B funds (\$1.2m) to support independent living needs, and the federal government provides additional Part C funds (\$1.4m) to supplement ongoing supports and services. Without adequate SILC funding, Alaska risks losing ALL. These Part B and Part C funds allow the Centers for Independent Living to continue to provide essential services in Alaskan communities in partnership with the SILC. In Fiscal Year 2025, Access Alaska and the four collective Centers for Independent Living served over 2,557 consumers and families with over 12,817 services, and helped keep 130 people out of nursing homes, saving Alaska \$18,718,740 in public funds.

My ask: An increase in SILC's annual funding by \$403,000 to maintain federal compliance and fulfill our state and federal obligations.

For some time, the SILC has not been funded at the appropriate level to support the Centers for Independent Living. In 2015, the SILC received \$348,670; in 2020, this was reduced to \$200,000, and it has remained at that level to date. The result is a 43% cut that has occurred and has been sustained. Without an increase, the SILC cannot sustain. If the inability to function occurs, Alaska becomes noncompliant with federal requirements. If compliance is lacking, federal funds cease. For Access Alaska, this would mean a loss of Part C funds currently at \$598,000 per year. Part B funds are \$410,000 per year. The loss of one or both funding sources would significantly end Access's ability to function as an organization. There would be no opportunity to exist, and there are few, if any, funding options to offset this difference or make up for the funding shortfall.

Please support a \$403,000 increase for the operations of the SILC. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of Alaskans with disabilities and seniors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Eric Gurley', is written over a large, stylized blue circular mark.

Eric Gurley, DMgt
SILC Board Member

Doniece Gott

From: Breanna Kaiser <mymothunder@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2026 11:43 AM
To: Finance
Subject: Public testimony on HB263: State operating budget

Breanna Kaiser 2571 W softwind circle Wasilla AK 99623

I strongly OPPOSE any state mandated paid leave. As a small business owner this would only have a negative impact on us. The results would be either closing due to paying someone not to work and generate revenue, increasing prices substantially, or firing all employees to prevent being put out of business.

I am a mother of 4 and understand why people want paid leave but it is their responsibility to budget and plan for leave it is not the employers responsibility to carry the burden of others choices.

Doniece Gott

From: Bellamy_Margo <Bellamy_Margo@asdk12.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2026 9:28 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Sullivan_America; Jacobs_Carl; Garrison, Lon - AK
Subject: In Support of HB 265: Mental Health Budget

3/13/2026

Anchorage – (907) 563-9085

Testimony in Support of HB 265: Mental Health Budget

Good Afternoon House Finance Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Margo Bellamy**. I currently serve as Vice President of the **Anchorage School Board** and member of the Board of Directors for the **Association of Alaska School Boards**, which represents school boards from districts across our state.

I'm writing today in support of **HB 265**, the Mental Health Budget.

In our schools, we see every day how important mental and behavioral health supports are for **students, families, and educators**. Students cannot fully focus on learning if they are struggling with trauma, anxiety, depression, or other mental health challenges.

Schools do their best to support students, but we cannot do this work alone. Families need access to strong community-based mental health services, early intervention programs, and coordinated systems of care.

The services supported through the Mental Health Budget are critical partners to Alaska's schools. When students and families receive the help they need, we see improvements in **attendance, engagement, behavior, and academic success**.

Mental health support also strengthens the work of our educators and school staff, who care deeply about our students and want them to succeed both inside and outside the classroom.

Investing in mental health services helps ensure that Alaska's children and families have the support systems they need to build healthy, stable futures.

On behalf of school board members and educators across Alaska, I encourage your support for **HB 265**.

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

Margo Bellamy
Vice President, Anchorage School Board
Member, AASB, Board of Directors

Dena'inaq e'nen'aq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu. (Dena'ina)
I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina. (English)

Doniece Gott

From: Mekenzie Beaver <mekenzie.beaver@galenanet.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2026 1:32 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Testimony from Galena

Hello,

I wanted to share how much SESA has helped my daughter as she prepares to transition into school-based services and PreK 3 next year with an IEP.

My daughter is only three, and the support she has received through SESA has made such a positive difference in her development during these early years. The therapists and staff have worked with her in such a patient, encouraging, and supportive way, helping her build important communication, social, and developmental skills.

Because of the foundation SESA has helped create, I feel much more confident about her transition into PreK 3 and receiving services through the school system. She has already become comfortable working with therapists, following routines, and participating in structured activities, which I believe will help make the transition to a classroom environment much smoother for her.

SESA has not only supported my daughter but has also helped our family better understand how to support her growth and development at home. We are so grateful for the care, guidance, and dedication the team has shown while working with her during such an important stage.

Thank you for everything you do to support children and families like ours.

Sincerely,
Mekenzie Beaver



Vision

A Native Community that enjoys physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness.

Mission

Working together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services.

Customer-Owners

Over 70,000 Alaska Native and American Indian People

Community Served

Anchorage Service Unit and 55

Tribes to include:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Anchorage | Chickaloon |
| Matanuska | Chitina |
| Susitna | Eklutna |
| Borough | Igiugig |
| Kokhanok | Iliamna |
| McGrath | Kenaitze |
| Newhalen | Knik |
| Ninilchik | |
| Seldovia | |
| St. Paul Island | |
| Tyonek | |

Services Offered

Over 90 Community-Based

Programs Including:

- Medical
- Behavioral
- Dental
- Specialty
- Co-Manage the Alaska Native Medical Center

Board of Directors

- Karen Caindec, Chair
- Lisa Wade, Vice Chair
- Thomas Huhndorf, Secretary
- Terry Simpson, MD, Treasurer
- R. Greg Encelewski
- Roy M. Huhndorf
- Carol Gore
- Sandra Haldane, RN
- Jessie Marrs, MD

President and CEO

April Kyle, MBA

Tribal Authority

Cook Inlet Region, Inc.

March 31, 2026

Members of the Alaska Legislature

Alaska State Capitol

Juneau, Alaska

Re: Support for \$158 Million OneTime K-12 Education Funding in the FY 2026 Operating Budget

Dear Legislators,

Southcentral Foundation supports inclusion of the proposed \$158 million onetime increase for K-12 education in this year's state operating budget. This funding responds to immediate needs in Alaska's education system and reflects the priority the state places on its people and future workforce.

As one of Alaska's largest private employers, operating a comprehensive health care system, Southcentral Foundation competes nationally to recruit and retain highly-skilled employees and providers, including specialty physicians. Increasingly, instability in Alaska's education system has become a deciding factor for candidates considering whether to relocate here. School quality and funding predictability weighs heavily when families decide where they choose to live and work.

Over the past decade, insufficient education funding has made it harder to attract highly qualified candidates in the health care field. For employers, this has meant losing health care professionals to other states where education systems are perceived as more stable and reliable. In health care, those losses directly affect patient access and the availability of specialized services across Alaska.

Without additional funding, districts will continue to reduce employees, increase class sizes, and eliminate programs that support student success. These impacts compound over time, undermining community confidence and shrinking the talent pool on which Alaska's employers depend.

While onetime funding does not resolve every structural challenge, it provides some degree of stabilization and signals that education remains a priority. This investment helps prevent further erosion while longerterm

solutions are considered. Additionally, school maintenance and infrastructure repairs across Alaska including in rural locations need to be part of the discussion on adequately funding schools across the state.

Strong, stable schools help families remain in Alaska and help employers recruit professionals willing to put down roots here. Inclusion of this funding in the operating budget is an important step toward sustaining Alaska's communities, workforce, and health care systems.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. If you have any questions, please contact SCF's Vice President of Workforce, Karen McIntire, at kmmcintire@southcentralfoundation.com.

Sincerely,
SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kyle".

April Kyle, MBA
President and CEO

Doniece Gott

From: Nicki McTrusty <nmctrusty@leeshoreak.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 08, 2026 12:56 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HAP Funding-The LeeShore Center

The LeeShore Center

Services for Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual

Assault

Support for the Central Peninsula's Families

The Housing Assistance Program (HAP) funding is instrumental in facilitating a range of essential operational functions at The LeeShore Center. This funding is not merely a financial resource; it represents a vital component in ensuring the well-being and safety of individuals who rely on the Center's services. One of the most critical aspects of HAP funding is its contribution to the maintenance of a comprehensive security system. This system is paramount for safeguarding both the survivors who access the Center's services and the employees who dedicate their efforts to support these vulnerable populations. The presence of a robust security infrastructure is essential in fostering an environment of safety and trust.

In addition to enhancing safety protocols, HAP funding is allocated to support the position of a Direct Service Advocate. This role is crucial as it provides personalized assistance and advocacy for individuals navigating the often complex social, legal, and emotional challenges associated with their circumstances.

Furthermore, HAP funding plays a significant role in covering operating utilities, which are fundamental to the day-to-day functioning of the Center. Without adequate utility resources, the Center would face substantial challenges in providing a safe and welcoming environment for its clients.

The implications of a decrease in HAP funding are severe and far-reaching. A 50% reduction would not only jeopardize the security measures in place but would also threaten the availability of critical support personnel and compromise the overall operational capacity of The LeeShore Center. Ultimately, diminished funding could result in catastrophic consequences for the populations served, undermining the Center's capacity to deliver essential services and fulfill its mission of providing safety, advocacy, and support for survivors. Therefore, maintaining and not decreasing HAP funding is imperative for the ongoing success and effectiveness of The LeeShore Center's operations.

Thank you for the consideration,

The LeeShore Center



P.O. Box 100620
Anchorage, AK 99510 0620

Hello Anchorage Legislators,

I am writing to address the proposed cuts to the Homelessness Assistance Program (HAP) as outlined in SB 215, the FY27 Mental Health Budget. Last year, HAP received \$10.15 million in funding, while the current proposal seeks to reduce this amount to \$5 million. This significant reduction would substantially impact the homelessness and housing services in our state.

HAP funding plays a critical role in supporting programs that assist vulnerable populations. At our Youth Engagement Center, for instance, young people facing homelessness rely on HAP supported services for shelter, essential resources, and guidance toward stability. Similarly, at Passage House, young mothers who are experiencing homelessness receive housing and assistance in rebuilding their lives for themselves and their children.

If HAP funding is cut, we anticipate that the Youth Engagement Center may need to reduce its services or operating hours, which would hinder our ability to intervene effectively and support those in need. Programs like Passage House could be forced to close, leaving many families without safe housing options.

The funding from HAP is essential not only for individual programs but also for the overall stability of our community's response to homelessness. A reduction of this magnitude could have severe long-term consequences, increasing the number of individuals facing homelessness and straining existing support systems.

We urge you to consider the implications of these proposed cuts and support maintaining HAP funding at its previous level.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions or need further information on the impact of these cuts on our community, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Kear".

Alison Kear
Covenant House Alaska

Stories of the Impact of Reduced HAP Funds

Marcus is 18. He started coming to the Youth Engagement Center after things at home fell apart. The first time he walked in, he hadn't eaten all day and was carrying a backpack with everything he owned.

At the Youth Engagement Center, he found small but critical things: a place to sit without being told to leave, a meal, someone who remembered his name the second time he came back. Staff helped him replace his ID, enroll back in school, and start working toward something stable. He wasn't "fixed," but he was no longer alone, and that type of support changes everything.

If services at the Youth Engagement Center are reduced, Marcus's path looks different. Fewer hours mean locked doors when he needs services the most. Fewer staff means fewer chances for someone to notice when he's struggling. Instead of a safe place to land, his days stretch longer on the street, and nights become about finding anywhere he can sleep.

For young people like Marcus, the difference isn't abstract, it's the difference between having support needed to work toward a stable life or heading down survival path that could lead a life of chronic trauma and homelessness.

Alina was 19 when her son, Noah, was born. She came to Passage House scared, exhausted, and unsure how she was going to take care of a newborn without a stable place to live.

At Passage House, she found more than housing. She learned how to care for her baby, built routines, and started thinking about her future again, finishing school, finding a job, creating something steady for her son. For the first time in a long time, she could focus on being a mom, not just surviving.

If Passage House were to close, young mothers like Alina would have far fewer options. Some would end up in unstable or unsafe living situations. Others might move between couches, shelters, or back into environments that put both them and their children at risk.

Without a place like Passage House, the question for Alina shifts from "How do I build a future for my child?" to "Where are we going to sleep tonight?"