

From: Laura Buchheit [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 8:42 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: support for HB 268 - support for education

To the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for hearing public testimony regarding HB 268. I appreciate your dedication to building a strong financial foundation for our state.

As part of a strong foundation, support for education is vital - education today is an investment in our present children and future citizens. Part of showing support for education is funding a BSA increase of at least \$680. An increased BSA will support students directly through instruction materials and indirectly through supporting teacher salaries - financially supported teachers can focus on our students instead of second jobs! A financially strong education system supports stable families, communities and economies.

Thank you for voting to pass SB140. Please continue to support education by passing HB 268.

Thank you for your work.

Sincerely,
Laura Buchheit
Juneau, Alaska
(formerly Gustavus, Alaska)

From: Marita Kaplan [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 3:52 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Budget cuts for victim services

To those who vote on this issue and are representing the needs and interests of THE PEOPLE,
please hear our outcry for victim services funding in the State of Alaska!

My family is currently using services of a shelter and the advocacy support provided there.
Without the service we would face emotional and financial ruin. Thanks to the shelter service criminal charges
could be avoided.
The shelter is helping to stabilize a whole family, whose members are able to work and continue a productive
life.
Without this option my family would have had no other choice but to have police involved which as a
consequence would have led to
more expenses for the state as well as for the family and this not only in a financial sense.

Please continue flat funding for victim services!

Thank you,
Marita Kaplan

From: Tracey Schaeffer [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 7:33 AM
To: House Finance
Cc: Rep. Thomas Baker
Subject: Operating/Mental Health Budgets

First, let me express my sincere appreciation for the early childhood funding in the budget (\$5 m for Head Start and \$6.1 m included in HB 89) These are so important not only to build stability in the early childhood education factor but in getting people back to work!

The Governors Childcare Taskforce has done some great work connecting with us and listening. As a childcare provider, I feel like they have heard what we are saying. Childcare is not easy, and it's almost like we must fight to do it. We are the only licensed facility in Kotzebue with a huge waitlist. Without financial help we will soon have to charge families more (\$1700 a month), and in a community like Kotzebue where everything is so expensive this will cause people to leave their job and likely our community.

One story: we have a young family who was able to send Dad out for training to be a lineman. Mom was able to keep her job since she has childcare. The people taking care of the infrastructure in the bush are retiring and not many skilled people are there to take their place. This is one more person willing to go out in a blizzard and keep the power on. Childcare matters for the health of our communities in so many ways!

Thank you!

Tracey Schaeffer, OTR/L
Trauma Informed Occupational Therapist and Certified Yoga Instructor
Arctic OT Services, 907-355-6025
Fax: 1-888-822-0741
Want to be trauma aware? Connect before you correct and get curious, not furious!

From: Dan Busch [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 8:38 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support Alaska's Public Schools

We are big supporters of SB 140, an important step towards funding Alaska's public schools. This increase is critical. Please continue to support an increase of no less than this by keeping it in the operating budget. We do NOT like nor support the items that the governor is threatening the legislature about if not included, especially one time bonuses instead of a revamped defined benefit retirement plan. We strongly urge the legislature to override any veto of school funding.

Sincerely,
Dan and Randy Busch
Kodiak, Alaska

Tom Boutin, Juneau

Please don't dip into savings to fund the operating and capital budgets, and anticipated emergencies like wildfire suppression. Alaska has full employment and high oil prices, and our annual oil production will very likely be no higher at any time in the future. So spending down one-time savings now would make no sense.

We saw oil production drop 80 percent from its peak while our population doubled. We still produce nothing today that compensates for that lost oil product. Through all of 2023 we had the media complaining the administration could not keep up with new SNAP enrollment when we also had reports of two vacant jobs for every Alaskan that wanted a job. One adult in 5 is on food stamps but jobs are going begging, and Alaskans who want to work in the private sector are leaving for higher wages – pretty much the antithesis of the Alaska I moved to 51 years ago. Clearly we have unprecedented structural problems in our economy that do not suggest deficit spending as a remedy.

Incidentally, I do not believe these economic problems would be addressed by more spending on education or better child care. I don't see how better benefits for public employees can head off economic dislocation. Alaskans need to find something we can produce that the world wants to buy. In Juneau, and in much of the Alaska media the state economy is like a Mexican piñata during the state budget process. To one degree or another the 61 elected people who work in the

capitol building don't allow one another to take a swing at that piñata without wearing a blindfold so they will not consider the economy.

I know that the BSA appears in another bill, and I know that as a political strategy the PFD amount determination awaits all other spending decisions. My fear is that we will have overspent when all spending decisions have been made.

We have uncounted enterprise funds that lose money; a railroad, a campground business, we're a huge low-income housing landlord, we have a gas line development company in which no one would invest a dime of their personal DB or DC pension yet we budget millions for it, we have a rocket launching business, and a marine freight and passenger business. To some degree the state and municipal government sector has become so disproportionately large that it displaces the manufacturing sector we should have found. If we could shut down at least one money-losing governmental enterprise every year we might better prepare for a time when arctic oil production is no longer allowed, and we would save money in the bargain.

Thank you for your time and for this hearing.

Finance Committee Testimony

Moving to Alaska was one of the easiest decisions I've ever had to make. It is a state full of beauty and opportunity and the people are resilient and warm. I am writing today to ask that my perception of this place I have come to love be upheld. Alaska has much to offer but it requires a person to be of a certain caliber. Asking for help is hard for those that pride themselves on their self-sufficiency and resilience, but when we pair a beautiful yet unforgiving landscape with a proud people, our community can fall victim to unnecessary hardship and suffering. Alaskans struggle with mental health. The data is unanimous, we have one of the highest suicide rates in the country and it continues to compound, year after year. I ask for further consideration regarding funding for Crisis Intervention and Mobile Integrated Healthcare programs. These programs have yielded results everywhere they have been implemented and help to fill the gaps in our traditional healthcare model. It is estimated that our nation's battle with the unmet needs of the mental health crisis costs tens of billions of dollars a year. If we don't provide the funding for these programs, it will cost us much more than that.

Benjamin Watson

Community Paramedic

Ketchikan Fire Department

From: Michelle DeWitt [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 9:02 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Victim Services (DV/SA) budget concerns

I am writing today out of concern for the budget issues facing Alaskan victim service organizations. Please do not cut the Dept of Public Safety Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault – Grants Line.

I live in Bethel, which is served by Tundra Women's Coalition which is funded through the CDVSA at the Dept. of Public Safety.

They are looking at cuts that would heavily impact their ability to respond to emergencies. I am a former TWC staff person and a former TWC Executive Director. I know firsthand the stress of operating a 24-hour emergency response organization, especially in the context of a potential massive budget reduction. Currently, the budget has a \$4 million dollar deficit which may result in a 20% loss to programs like TWC. For TWC, that would mean the loss of three full-time staff at an already under-staffed, under-funded organization with this reduction. This is an organization that operates 24/7 and serves people who often do not receive justice or services elsewhere.

I know the state must make difficult choices during the budget process and appreciate the time and attention each member of House Finance is giving to making these decisions. Given our state's rates of family and sexual violence and the geographic and institutional reasons that make it difficult for people to access safety and services, I ask that you work to restore this \$4 million and ensure that organizations doing this incredibly difficult work and the survivors they serve are not impacted by those difficult budget cut decisions.

Michelle DeWitt
[REDACTED]

Bethel, AK 99559
[REDACTED]



March 13, 2024

House Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Sent via email

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson, Foster, and Edgmon and members of the House Finance Committee:

Thank you for your service to the state and taking public testimony on the budget.

Native Peoples Action is a statewide, nonpartisan nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting our traditional ways of life, also known as subsistence. We do this work through ensuring that Indigenous voices are heard at all levels of policy making and uplifting the work already done in communities.

We would like to thank the chair and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Fish and Game for removing the \$300,000 earmarked by the administration to actively fight the federal government on subsistence-related issues. While we understand the intent, the state has failed Title 8 of ANILCA and currently does not have a rural subsistence priority or a subsistence division. It does not seem equitable in any sense to not have subsistence prioritized on the state level and actively fighting the federal government that upholds subsistence. Please keep that out of the budget. We also would also encourage the committee to keep the \$250,000 for the restoration of the subsistence division and we thank the subcommittee for the recognition of its importance.

We would request that the committee *remove* the \$1.5 million allocated for litigation for "statehood defense" efforts. Again, while we can appreciate the state wanting to take over Title 8 of ANILCA, not having a subsistence division running, nor avenues for public process like the Regional Advisory Councils, Federal Subsistence Board comment period, and already overstrained BOF/BOG processes, we feel like this money could be better spent supporting the state rebuilding subsistence priority, rather than attacking. We request that it be removed or reallocated to the subsistence division.

Gunalchéesh/Háw'aa/Quyana/Mahsi'/Baasee'/Maasee'/Dogedinh/Thank you,

Jackie Arnaciar Boyer
Deputy Director
Native Peoples Action

March 13, 2024

House Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 519
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Comments on HB 268 and HB 270

Dear Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee,

The joint mission of the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ABADA) and the Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB) is to advocate for programs and services that promote healthy, independent, productive Alaskans. AMHB/ABADA are statutorily charged with advising, planning, and coordinating behavioral health services and programs funded by the State of Alaska. The Boards offer the following comments on the proposed FY25 budget as it concerns Alaskans with behavioral health conditions.

- Maintain \$1,387,000 (GF) for *Human Services Matching Grants* for critical safety net services in the more populated areas of the state.
- Maintain \$861,700 (GF) for *Community Initiative Matching Grants* that target smaller communities lacking resources or infrastructure to provide critical safety net services.
- Add \$1,000,000 (GF/MH) to *Start Up Crisis Now Grants for Mobile Crisis/Crisis Stabilization* to leverage Alaska Mental Health Trust investments to support implementation of best-practice Crisis Now framework statewide and are in-line with recommendations made by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.
- Add \$250,000 (GF/MH) in *Crisis Now Services Grants* within the Division of Public Health, to support the implementation of Mobile Integrated Health teams in rural and off-the-road-system communities and align with recommendations made by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.
- Add \$75,000 (GF/MH) to fully fund the position of Comprehensive Program Planning Coordinator, which is currently coordinating the statutorily required Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program 5-year plan.
- Maintain \$126,100 (GF/MH) to fund the *Juneau Mental Health Court*, a critical component in promoting success and better outcomes for individuals with mental health or substance use disorders who are involved in the criminal justice system.

Thank you for your consideration of these budget items and thank you for your work and service to Alaska.

Sincerely,



James Savage, Chair
Alaska Mental Health Board



Renee Schofield, Chair
Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

From: Catherine Chambers [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 11:02 AM
To: House Finance
Cc: Rebecca Logan
Subject: Alaska Resource Education Funding

Good Morning Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to you in regards to the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was heard yesterday, 3/12 in the House Finance Committee Meeting. Alaska Resource Education was originally appropriated \$1 million dollars to support their efforts in educating students across the state of Alaska about our critical industries: Forestry, Rocks and Minerals, Mining, Energy and Electricity, Oil and Gas, and Renewable Energy. Just this month, ARE released its latest curriculum, Alaska's Renewable Revenue, which is designed to teach middle and high school students about financial literacy, the Fund, its structure, investment management, and how the Fund is used to convert non-renewable mineral resources into a renewable economic resource for Alaska.

Over the last five years, ARE educated over 40,000 students, many of them in rural communities. It is rare to see a non-profit educational organization making that same impact. Their small team of four educators and a handful of support staff are incredibly dedicated, donating hundreds of hours of their personal time to also volunteer for Alaska's trade associations and other impactful organizations in Anchorage.

I urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help the organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community.

Thank you,
Catherine Chambers

--
Catherine Chambers
[REDACTED]

From: Baker, Jeff [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 11:14 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Funding for Alaska Resource Education

House Finance Committee Members,

I'm writing to ask that funding for Alaska Resource Education (ARE) be reinstated in the state operating budget. ARE does a tremendous job educating Alaska's children on the importance of natural resources and what they do for Alaska. Natural resources are the backbone of our state economy and the typical school curriculum doesn't provide the necessary education to inform students of this importance to the state and the career paths that can be had. Consequently less young people are looking to Alaska's natural resources for career options and more and more young people are leaving the state. ARE trained more than 40,000 students in Alaska over the past 5 years. No other organization is reaching this many Alaska students with such a diverse, comprehensive curriculum that encourages students to pursue careers in Alaska. Funding for ARE will help with our future workforce which is currently in desperate need for more workers.

Respectfully,
Jeff Baker
House District 9

From: Judy Patrick [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 11:22 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Alaska Resource Education Funding—please restore!

Dear Committee Members,

I serve on the board of Alaska Resource Education (ARE) and I see first-hand the positive effect our curriculum has on students in Alaska.

One example is our POWR course (Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources) which teaches high school age girls about energy and minerals and empowers them to make their own decisions about how our resources should be developed and introduces them to a wide variety of career opportunities.

ARE teaches the science, applications and careers that correlates with Alaskas natural resources, from gold, to zinc to oil and gas, just to mention a few. And importantly, many of Alaska minerals are necessary for the production of renewable energy.

ARE does the State of Alaska a valuable service by educating our youth in areas that public schools simply do not. By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our students the opportunity to learn about our resources and also life changing career opportunities.

Sincerely,
Judy Patrick

[REDACTED]
Wasilla, Alaska
99654

From: Matt Jolly <mjolly@Lynden.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 11:49 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Alaska Resource Education Appropriation Funding

I want to take a moment to advocate for Alaska Resource Education (ARE) and urge the house finance committee to put the \$1M appropriation back in the operating budget. The work they are doing is vital to Alaska's future. It is no secret that we have a labor shortage in Alaska, primarily with skilled and qualified workers across multiple industries.

ARE has reached over 40,000 Alaskan students in the last 5 years, many of whom are in rural communities, educating them about careers and training in our resource industries. That averages out to 8,000 students per year far exceeding the 2,300 that REAP reached last year.

They are covering topics ranging from oil and gas, energy, renewable energy to mining, rocks/minerals, and forestry. This is a very diverse and comprehensive curriculum encouraging our students to pursue careers at home here in Alaska. Aside from working directly in classrooms they are partnering with programs like Girl Scouts and P.O.W.R. STEM Camps and Scholarships as well.

We have the labor need; we should be doing everything we can to utilize our home-grown human resources to fill the needs in our various resource industries. I appreciate your consideration and thank you for keeping Alaska's future in mind by putting this appropriation back in the operating budget.

Regards,
Matt Jolly

Matt Jolly, President | Alaska West Express
1048 Whitney Road | Anchorage, AK 99501 | (907) 339-5151 | mobile [REDACTED]

From: Pete Stokes [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 11:54 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Funding for Alaska Resource Education (ARE)

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

Please restore the funding for Alaska Resource Education, a great program for rural students to become involved in resource development careers:

Benefits of ARE funding:

- ARE trained 40,000+ students in Alaska in the last 5 years – many of them in rural communities (For comparison – REAP had a renewable energy education program that only reached 2300 students last year)
- Their curriculum is focused on Alaska's natural resources : Forestry, Rocks and Minerals, Mining, Energy and Electricity, Oil and Gas, Renewable Energy – most school districts aren't teaching these topics.
- Their curriculum also includes Economics and Energy Costs and Careers and Training
- No other organization is reaching this many Alaska students with such a diverse, comprehensive curriculum that encourages students to pursue careers in Alaska.
- Their youth programs include work with the Girl Scouts, P.O.W.R (Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources) STEM Camps and Scholarships

Very truly yours,
Peter Stokes

[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99517

Sent from my iPhone

From: Taylor Burgh <tburgh@akresource.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 11:58 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Alaska Resource Education funding

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you in regards to the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was heard yesterday, 3/12 in the House Finance Committee Meeting.

I am the Operations Manager at Alaska Resource Education (ARE) and I see first-hand the positive effect our hands-on, STEM-based, and standards-aligned curriculum has on students in Alaska. We play a crucial role in fundamental education and workforce development for Alaska's natural resource industries through our comprehensive statewide programming.

One example of this impactful programming is our POWR course (Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources). This is a district-wide program for female students in Anchorage to learn about energy and minerals and empowers them to make their own decisions about how our resources should be developed as well as introduces them to a wide variety of career opportunities.

ARE does the State of Alaska a valuable service by educating our youth in areas that public schools simply do not. In 2023 alone, we reached over 12,000 students across the state equating to over 22,000 quality student contact hours.

By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our students the opportunity to learn about our resources and life-changing career opportunities. ARE's commitment to preparing the next generation of skilled workforce is commendable and vital for the state's economic prosperity.

I urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help our organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community.

Sincerely,

Taylor Burgh
Operations Manager
[Alaska Resource Education](#)
907-570-1666

From: Mike Schaffner <mschaffner@graphiteoneinc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 12:04 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Leila Kimbrell
Subject: ARE financing

Dear House Finance Members,

I am writing this letter to you to ask that you would reconsider removing the \$1m financing for the ARE educational program. My perspective may be a bit different than many who are writing for support of educational programs in that I do not have any children in school. I have spent the last 37 years in the mineral industry and have consistently watch the number of U.S. metallurgist, geologists and mining engineers drop. Spending most of my time in management/executive positions, I have had to deal with the lack of qualified U.S. engineers by importing professionals from other countries. These positions are for very high paying jobs, typically +\$150K and are the feedstock for many of the executive positions. A review of the executive teams, and engineering staff of U.S. mining companies will confirm that many are from foreign countries. Having work with the ARE team, I can assure you that they are having an impact on the students that they speak to, and I can assure you that the students who choose to pursue a career in this industry will be highly sought after for challenging and rewarding careers. I would ask you how many of the other projects that you are funding have clear path to a viable employment future that will also have a direct impact on the financial strength of Alaska? We do support the efforts of ARE financially and with donation of our time because we know how important their efforts are, but we can't do it alone.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mike Schaffner

Sr Vice President of Operations

mschaffner@graphiteoneinc.com

775-304-5412

907-952-2100

Graphite One 
graphiteoneinc.com

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Haugstad Advocacy & Litigation Office, LLC

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Anchorage, AK 99515

(907) 202-8888
www.haloak.com

March 13, 2024

House Finance Committee
c/o: House.Finance@akleg.gov

Dear Committee Members,

This letter is sent to state my support for the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) program through Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC).

AWAIC is the only domestic violence emergency shelter in Anchorage. It provides a 67-bed emergency shelter, 24/7 crisis line, and other core programs. It also provides essential services to those not residing in our shelter including case management, support, and groups, and has two transitional housing programs. These services are funded through local, state, and federal grants.

I understand that CDVSA will be losing funding this year. I want to encourage you to maintain funding for AWAIC despite the budget decreases. AWAIC shelter providers much needed services to the community. CDVSA funding decreases will have direct impacts on AWAICs ability to serve Alaska residents.

Thank you for your hard work and consideration.

Sincerely,



Bryan D. Haugstad

To whom it may concern,

3-13-24

I am asking the senate finance committee to please figure a different resource somewhere in the state besides CDVSA - direct services in domestic violence and sexual assault programs to cut. Our direct services cannot sustain a 20% cut.

The Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis Center is the only facility to house women, children and some men that are fleeing from domestic violence or sexual assault. We are an Island of 15,000 people and this includes 7 villages. We are their only salvation for safety and hope. Most people do not have the funds or the ability to get off the island safely over to the mainland. A one way ticket is almost 400.00.

We provide direct services to victims when they are staying at the shelter and even when they are not at the shelter. We assist with Public Assistance packets for medical and food stamps, Housing Voucher packets, housing rental applications, finding places with housing deposits, Counselors, doctor appointments and much more.

We assist victims with trying to get legal representation for their divorce, custody and or child support issues. We assist with Restraining, Sexual Assault and Stalking orders to help keep people safe.

We have our own Sexual Assault exam room on our premises. This helps because it is local and confidential. We supply confidential personal support for our victims. We attend law Interviews, grand Jury and trial courts with victims to help them feel safe and comfortable.

Our direct services help women and children leave dangerous situations and help them utilize resources to be able to stay and maintain life on their own. Not having to go back to live in a dangerous home or atmosphere.

Direct services are a vital part of our community and without us and our shelter, women and children will be on the streets or forced to stay in a violent relationship because there is no where for them to go. Please find a way to not cut the CDVSA grant money.

Penny Lampl

SART & Shelter Coordinator

Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis Center

422 Hillside Drive - Kodiak, Alaska 99615

(907)486-6171 - SART@kwrcc.org

From: jetta whittaker [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 12:12 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Please support the increased BSA! And override a veto of SB 140 if needed!

House Finance Committee Members,

- Thank you to everyone who voted to pass [SB 140](#).
- I now ask for your continued support for a BSA increase of **no less than \$680** as part of passage of HB 268, the operating budget.
- While not a magic bullet that will rectify all problems with the educational system, this increase to the BSA will go a long way toward stabilizing our public schools, and will buy some time for more significant systems changes to be carefully considered and analyzed.
- I am a volunteer Reader Buddy at my neighborhood elementary school. I really love seeing the "light bulb" go on as each early reader begins to understand the inherent power of forming letter sounds into being able to read words. However, I also see how little time students get with 1:1 instruction, due in large part to high Pupil Teacher Ratios that are resulting from our school district's inability to hire and retain teachers. This is a statewide problem!
- I am very concerned about how an Alaska Reads Act will affect students and teachers alike when fully implemented but underfunded. More funding is needed to ensure student success.
- Please fund the BSA increase in HB 268 and, if necessary, vote to override a veto of SB 140.
- On behalf of Alaska's current and future students and teachers, thank you!

Jetta Whittaker

[REDACTED]
Juneau AK 99801
[REDACTED]

From: Deantha Skibinski [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 12:16 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Please reinstate ARE funding

Importance: High

Dear House Finance Committee members:

I write and humbly ask you consider reinstating the funding for the [Alaska Resource Education Program](#).

I have lived in Alaska my entire life, and to show my age, my birth year quailed me for the first ever Permanent Fund Dividend. At an early age I learned why it existed and the immense benefit of Alaska's resources to our economy and people. I learned this because I had parents in the resource industries, so the information was regularly shared at the dinner table.

Today's students don't necessarily get subjected to a resource education, and ARE has been working hard to change that. They trained 40,000+ students in Alaska past five years – many of them in rural communities. The curriculum is focused on oil and gas, minerals, forestry, energy and electricity, and renewable energy - cornerstones of our economy and livelihoods. The program educates students on the fundamentals of the resource industries, but also, careers and training.

We have unprecedented worker shortages, and in the resource industries, a lot of that is due to lack of awareness of the opportunities. Students that are unsure of their career path are becoming more aware of a career with a \$135,000 annual average wage with benefits that will keep them right here at home - thanks to ARE.

Please don't let this important program funding get caught up in politics. Please reinstate the funding.

Thank you,

Deantha Skibinski
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99515
[REDACTED]

From: J P Tangen [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 12:16 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: This is to strongly recommend that funding for Alaska Resource Education be restored to the budget

Regards,

J. P. Tangen

From: William Bieber <whbieber01@alaska.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 12:16 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Alaska Resource Education ARE

To whom it may concern,

It is my understanding that the legislature is considering cutting funding for ARE. This would be a devastating mistake for our future workforce needs. Alaska already has a deficit when it comes to interested students in working in the industries. Employers know the value of getting young folks exposed to highly compensated employment opportunities within the state. The ARE program has been doing an outstanding job working with young folks and educating them on our resource industry and opportunities.

The proposal to cut funding for this program is not only short sighted but ridiculous. Please fight to keep the ARE funding in place.

Thank you,

Bill Bieber,

William H Bieber
Executive Director
Mining and Petroleum Training Service- MAPTS
162 College Road - Soldotna , Alaska 99669
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Extension (IANRE)
Office (907) 262 0234
Cell [REDACTED]
<https://www.uaf.edu/mapts/>

From: Paul Manuel [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 12:18 PM
To: House Finance

I support full funding of ARE a great learning institution
Thanks Paul Manuel

From: Cassie Hickey [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 12:24 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Written Testimony for Victim Services

Good Afternoon,

My name is Cassie Kepinger and I am the Kodiak Women's Resource & Crisis Center's Board of Directors Vice President.

With these budget cuts, the effect it will have on our local shelter is detrimental. Our community of Kodiak relies heavily on the KWRCC to support our victims in the Koniag Region. The KWRCC is the only shelter for Kodiak and services many victims. Not only do they provide shelter, but they also provide advocacy and case management to victims throughout the life of a case. We are please asking that you do not cut the budget.

Respectfully,

Cassie Keplinger
BOD, Vice President

Savaya Bieber

From: Walker, Jesse [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 12:32 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Alaska Resource Education Funding

Dear House Finance Committee,

My name is Jesse Walker, and I am a lifelong resident of District 3. I am writing to urge you to reconsider removal of funding for Alaska Resource Education (ARE) from the budget. ARE's mission is critical to the future of Alaska's economy. Alaska is a natural resource state. The economic benefits of the development of those resources rely on a pipeline of Alaskans who are interested in working in natural resource industries. ARE's curriculum and outreach ensure that young Alaskans enter the workforce with background knowledge and awareness of the career opportunities available to them, right here in Alaska.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Jesse Walker

[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99801
[REDACTED]



Glenda Ledford
Mayor

Wasilla Police Department

City of Wasilla
801 N Wasilla-Fishhook Road
Wasilla AK 99654-6430

P: 907.352.5401
F: 907.357.7877
www.CityofWasilla.gov



William Rapson
Chief of Police

March 13, 2024

To the Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to address the proposed mental health budget amendment related to senate bill 188 (SB188). I do not support cutting the mental health operating budget by \$1.25M.

The Wasilla Police Department and residents of the Wasilla area have greatly benefited from the Matsu Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) and the larger 'Crisis Now' services available in the Mat-Su through the Matsu Health Foundation. Since adopting the "crisis now" approach and model, our department has witnessed a significant improvement in our ability to respond promptly and effectively to individuals experiencing mental health crises. By focusing on immediate intervention and support, we have been able to mitigate potential risks, provide timely assistance, and facilitate smoother transitions to appropriate care pathways. Here are some notable achievements we have observed:

Reduced Response Time: The "crisis now" model has enabled us to streamline our dispatch processes and triage appropriate calls by directly dispatching the MCT who are better able to reach individuals in crisis more swiftly, offering them the support they need when it matters most.

Increased Engagement: We have experienced a surge in engagement with individuals seeking help during moments of crisis. The accessibility and immediacy of the MCT and their services under the "crisis now" model have encouraged more individuals to reach out for support, fostering a stronger sense of trust and connection within the community.

Improved Outcomes: Through timely intervention and personalized support, we have witnessed improved outcomes for individuals experiencing mental health crises. Our ability to intervene early has helped prevent escalations, reduce hospitalizations, and support individuals in navigating their recovery journey more effectively.

Positive Feedback: We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both service users and partnering organizations regarding the impact of the MCT, and the "crisis now" model. Many have expressed appreciation for the swiftness and effectiveness of their interventions, underscoring the vital role this resource plays in the community.

While we are proud of these achievements, we recognize that sustaining and further expanding the reach of the "crisis now" model requires ongoing support and collaboration. As such, I request you do not cut this important and useful funding so we can ensure the continued success of these endeavors and this essential program and resource. Please contact me with any questions.

William "Bill" Rapson
Chief of Police
Wasilla Police Department

From: Melissa Toffolon <mt@actionabledataconsulting.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 12:41 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: SB188 FY25 Mental Health Budget (GOV)

Dear House Finance Committee,

I am writing in reference to **SB188** FY25 Mental Health Budget (GOV). My name is Melissa Toffolon and I am a resident of Mat-Su and I work as the Mat-Su Crisis Now Coordinator. I am asking that you restore the proposed \$2 million of crisis services funding that has been cut in the Mental Health operating budget. This funding is a really good "bang for the buck," because it funds services like the Mat-Su Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) which provides actual behavioral health intervention to people in crisis. If the MCT did not exist, these individuals would be taken to the emergency department or Mat-Su Pretrial and NOT get the care they need while costing State government money (DOC and Medicaid).

There are many organizations in Mat-Su that are working together to make sure that people served by the MCT then go on to receive the outpatient care they need to make them whole and not go into crisis again.

The MCT started to serve the city of Wasilla in March of this year. They have had 287 calls and their visits have included helping residents with the following:

1. Domestic violence calls
2. People with alcohol and drug crisis
3. Child abuse situations
4. House fires
5. Vehicle repossession where people will be homeless
6. Loss of life calls
7. People with suicidal ideation
8. Calls requiring family mediation
9. Calls involving a disoriented senior
10. Calls involving veterans in crisis
11. Youth who have experienced trauma

The MCT is currently working with the Alaska State Troopers and the Palmer Police Department to provide their services in a larger portion of the borough reaching many thousand more people. Currently, Medicaid reimbursement does not come close to funding these services. The money in the Mental Health budget is crucial to keeping this service up and running and will ultimately save the state many more dollars.

Sincerely,
Melissa Toffolon, MPH, PhD
(907)414-8180



Melissa Toffolon, PhD, MPH

<https://actionabledataconsulting.com/>

(907) 414-8180

I acknowledge my residence in Bentah (Wasilla) and Nuutah (Palmer), the ancestral territory of the Dena'ina and Ahtna Peoples. I offer my reconciliation and respect to their elders past and present.

For more information see: (<https://usdac.us/nativeland>); (<http://www.chickaloon-nsn.gov/>);

(<https://kniktribe.org/>)

From: Wesley Nason [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 12:51 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Alaska Resource Education (ARE) Funding

To House Finance Committee:

Please put the funding back in the education appropriations for the following reasons:

- ARE trained 40,000+ students in Alaska last year – many of them in rural communities (For comparison – REAP had a renewable energy education program that only reached 2300 students last year)
- ARE curriculum is focused on Alaska's natural resources: Forestry, Rocks and Minerals, Mining, Energy and Electricity, Oil and Gas, Renewable Energy – most school districts aren't teaching these topics.
- ARE curriculum also includes Economics and Energy Costs and Careers and Training
- No other organization is reaching this many Alaska students with such a diverse, comprehensive curriculum that encourages students to pursue careers in Alaska in critical resource development industries.
- ARE youth programs also work with the Girl Scouts, P.O.W.R (Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources) STEM Camps and Scholarships

Sincerely,

Wes Nason

[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99517

Sent from my personal iPhone

From: melissa@kwrc.org
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 1:29 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Melissa Austin; Penny Lampl; Rebecca Shields
Subject: Senate Finance Committee Testimony

To whom it may concern,
I Melissa Austin form Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis Center in Kodiak AK am asking the Senate Finance Committee to please and try to figure out somewhere else to cut budget besides CDVSA-direct services in domestic violence and sexual assault
Programs. Our direct services cannot survive a 20% cut.

The Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis Center is the only place to house women, children, and some men that are fleeing from domestic violence or sexual assault. We are an Island with approximate 15,000 people and this also includes 7 of our villages.

We are their only place for safety and hope. Most people cannot afford or have the ability to get off our island. Just a one way ticket cost \$400.

We provide direct services to victims when they are staying with us and even if they are not. We assist with Housing packets to get their vouchers, Public assistance to get Medicaid and Food stamps, rental applications, doctor and counseling appointments

And much more.

We assist victims with trying and needing to get legal help for divorces, custody, child support issues. We assist in helping victims get restraining, sexual assault and stalking orders to help keep people safe. We also attend law interviews, grand jury proceedings

And trial courts with victims to help them feel safe and navigate through the system.

We have our own Sexual assault exam room on our premises. This helps because it is local and protects victims confidentiality. We supply confidential personal support for our victims.

Our direct services help women, children, and men leave dangerous situations and help them utilize resources to be able to maintain life on their own. This way they do not have to go back to a dangerous situations.

Direct services are a vital part of our community and without us and our shelter, women, children, and men will be on the streets or forced to stay in violent relationships because they have nowhere to go.
Please find a way not to cut CDVSA funding grant money.

Thank you so much to Senate Finance Committee for taking my testimony into consideration.

Melissa Austin

Lead Advocate & Case Management
Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis Center
422 Hillside Drive
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
907-486-6171
907-486-4264 fax

melissa@kwrc.org

www.kwrc.org



From: Kelly Droop <kdroop@papekenworth.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 1:36 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for Funding Alaska Resource Education (ARE)

Importance: High

Please do NOT remove the \$1M in funding from the State budget for Alaska Resource Education.

As companies in our state are struggling with workforce development, it is short sighted to not get this interactive and efficient program to even more students – where Alaska's youth quickly learn about job opportunities in natural resources, tourism, fisheries and more in a practical and interesting way. Our kids need their interest sparked to pursue careers in our state!!!

This educational program reaches students in practically every district and is actually effective AND fiscally responsible:

- ARE trained 40,000+ students in Alaska last five years – many of them in rural communities (For comparison – REAP had a renewable energy education program that only reached 2300 students last year)
- Their curriculum is focused on Alaska's natural resources : Forestry, Rocks and Minerals, Mining, Energy and Electricity, Oil and Gas, Renewable Energy – most school districts aren't teaching these topics.
- Their curriculum also includes Economics and Energy Costs and Careers and Training
- No other organization is reaching this many Alaska students with such a diverse, comprehensive curriculum that encourages students to pursue careers in Alaska.
- Their youth programs include work with the Girl Scouts, P.O.W.R (Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources) STEM Camps and Scholarships

Thank you,
Kelly



KENWORTH
ALASKA

Kelly M. Droop, PMP
Regional Manager

Phone: (907) 865-5487
Cell: [REDACTED]

From: Kyle Beebe [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 1:41 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Alaska Resource Education ARE funding

As both a Geological Engineer employed in the resource extraction industry in Alaska, a member of the Board of Directors of the Alaska Miners Association, and a Commissioner of the Alaska Minerals Commission, I want to strongly urge you to restore funding to Alaska Resource Education ARE.

The ARE group is an extremely strong proponent, and resource providing training, and understanding to an enormous sector of our school age population, ensuring that an understanding of the opportunities to an individual, as well as the local and state governments in supporting responsible resource development in the state of Alaska is beneficial to all within the state and the nation as a whole. Careers in STEM which draw our youth to remain, or return to the state in the future help ensure our growth going forward, ensure we can continue to supply the resources and training to keep our nation independent, profitable, and effective going into the future.

In a management position, where we are trying to hire these specialized and valuable skill sets, I and my team must seek outside of Alaska in the vast majority of cases to fill our ranks with skilled, and willing employees. This is frequently quite challenging, because of the remoteness and difficulty in getting people to move up here from the lower 48 states. There's a vast gulf in understanding, and commitment from applicants to move here and work long term. It would be so much more beneficial to teach our own residents of the value and benefit of taking on those roles, and even more important to disseminate the information that these roles even exist, are available, and can be done by those already in the state. This makes for a win-win situation for all involved, from the individuals, to the companies, to the state and local governments in all ways. Keeping our people supported, providing excellent paying jobs, and using people who want to live locally to re-infuse that income in the local economy is so much better than letting it all fly out of state to be spent elsewhere, and where long-term commitment is nearly nonexistent.

Again, I urge you to restore funding to ARE, as the value to keeping this organization funded is massively out-weighed by the value conferred.

Regards,
Kyle Beebe

From: Genevieve Bell <genevieve@flowline-alaska.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 1:45 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: ARE Funding

To the Honorable Members of the Finance Committee,

Please support funding for Alaska Resource Education. I understand there is opportunity to help fund this incredible education focused non-profit entity. They supplement traditional education with Alaska specific facts about Natural Resources and topics not otherwise covered in standard curriculum. They can help with careers and transitions as kids reach working age, and that is incredibly important to small businesses like ours. We proudly employ the Laborers, Operators and Pipefitters Union trades and we have supplemental non-union staff. ARE also supports Women in Resources with their youth programs. ARE is doing great work supporting our young people and our Resources Industry, and in turn we should be supporting their efforts.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Thank you,

Genevieve Bell
Flowline Alaska, Inc.
1881 Livengood Ave.
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Work Direct 907-455-1256
Cell [REDACTED]

Flowline Alaska, Inc is open Monday – Thursday from 7:00am-5:30pm.

From: Shirzadi, Rysen <rshirzadi@asrcenergy.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:00 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: ARE Funding

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you in regards to the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was heard yesterday, 3/12 in the House Finance Committee Meeting.

I am Rysen Shirzadi, a proud supporter of Alaska Resource Education (ARE) and I see first-hand the positive effect of the hands-on, STEM-based, and standards-aligned curriculum has on students in Alaska. ARE plays a crucial role in fundamental education and workforce development for Alaska's natural resource industries through our comprehensive statewide programming.

Examples of this programming include:

Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources (POWR): This is a district-wide program for female students in Anchorage to learn about Alaska's mineral and energy resources as well as the wide range of career opportunities while also busting the myth that these jobs being "for the boys".

Bristol Bay CTE Energy Camp: This is a week-long intensive for students from all 4 school districts in the Bristol Bay region and is being offered for dual credit through UA. During this camp students will explore training locations and career opportunities in energy and support service industries throughout the Kenai Peninsula.

ARE Rockstars: This week-long camp hosted at NACTEC in Nome will bring students from across the Bering Sea region to learn all about cross-industry careers students can have right out of high school including geotechnical, soil sampling, heavy equipment operators, and many more that are relevant to the infrastructure and mining projects that are proposed for the region.

Kuslivaq Career Academy: ARE offers 3 quarters of curriculum and direct instruction for the students from across Southwest Alaska in LKSD attending the academy. In these programs, students explore and engage with the intricate choices Alaskans must make in the realms of transportation and infrastructure, energy, and resource development through hands-on and problem-based learning.

Beyond these extended programs, ARE taught over 12,000 students in 2023 across the state about the basic science and economics associated with Alaska's natural resources.

ARE does the State of Alaska a valuable service by supporting educators and providing resources experiential learning opportunities for students. In 2023 alone, ARE taught over 12,000 students across the state equating to over 22,000 quality student contact hours.

By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our students the opportunity to learn about our resources and life-changing career opportunities. ARE's commitment to preparing the next generation of skilled workforce is commendable and vital for the state's economic prosperity.

I urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help this organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community.

Very Respectfully,

Rysen Shirzadi

Development Engineer
ASRC Energy Services, LLC
3900 C Street, Suite 701
Anchorage, AK 99503
Cell: [REDACTED]

One Crew, One Journey

Honoring the values of our founders as we develop the future.

From: Chuck Heath <Chuck@hawkpros.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:01 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Alaska Resource Education funding

Hello,

I heard this morning that your committee removed ARE's funding from the budget bill. I'd like to respectfully request that you reverse that decision, and here's why: I retired as after 26 years of teaching in the Anchorage and Mat-Su school districts. I was introduced to Alaska Resource Education around the year 2000 through a course they offered to educators. I began using materials supplied by ARE in my classroom shortly after completing the course. My students loved the lessons – especially the ones involving the rock/minerals kits ARE supplied. At the end of the ARE unit, my students had a firm understanding of what kind of natural resources Alaska contained, how these resources were used to help us in everyday life, how to responsibly develop these resources, and what kind of careers these resources provided.

At the time, I was the only teacher in the school taking advantage of ARE's program. Many other teachers, including the sixth grade teacher in the classroom next to mine, were teaching the opposite type of lessons, i.e. the oil, gas, and mining industries are bad characters bent on ruining our state.

Shortly after I retired, I got involved with ARE. I was elected to their board of directors and eventually became vice chairman. Even though I am no longer a board member, I am passionate about ARE's mission, and I'll continue to support them. In my opinion, funding for ARE should be increased, not removed. ARE is the only organization out there that's actually getting into schools around the state and teaching kids (and teachers) the reality of what our resources provide us.

Thank you,
Chuck Heath



Chuck Heath
General Manager
3201 C Street, Suite 406 | Anchorage, AK 99503
Office (907) 278-1877 | Direct (907) 802-1649 | Cell [REDACTED]
chuck@hawkpros.com | hawkpros.com



From: Bonnie Broman <bbroman@valhallametals.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:02 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Committee Substitute for HB 268

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you in regards to the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was heard yesterday, 3/12 in the House Finance Committee Meeting.

I am an educational partner and supporter of Alaska Resource Education (ARE) and I see first-hand the positive effect of the hands-on, STEM-based, and standards-aligned curriculum has on students in Alaska. ARE plays a crucial role in fundamental education and workforce development for Alaska's natural resource industries through our comprehensive statewide programming.

Examples of this programming include:

Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources (POWR): This is a district-wide program for female students in Anchorage to learn about Alaska's mineral and energy resources as well as the wide range of career opportunities while also busting the myth that these jobs being "for the boys".

Bristol Bay CTE Energy Camp: This is a week-long intensive for students from all 4 school districts in the Bristol Bay region and is being offered for dual credit through UA. During this camp students will explore training locations and career opportunities in energy and support service industries throughout the Kenai Peninsula.

ARE Rockstars: This week-long camp hosted at NACTEC in Nome will bring students from across the Bering Sea region to learn all about cross-industry careers students can have right out of high school including geotechnical, soil sampling, heavy equipment operators, and many more that are relevant to the infrastructure and mining projects that are proposed for the region.

Kuslivak Career Academy: ARE offers 3 quarters of curriculum and direct instruction for the students from across Southwest Alaska in LKSD attending the academy. In these programs, students explore and engage with the intricate choices Alaskans must make in the realms of transportation and infrastructure, energy, and resource development through hands-on and problem-based learning.

Beyond these extended programs, ARE taught over 12,000 students in 2023 across the state about the basic science and economics associated with Alaska's natural resources.

ARE does the State of Alaska a valuable service by supporting educators and providing resources experiential learning opportunities for students. In 2023 alone, ARE taught over 12,000 students across the state equating to over 22,000 quality student contact hours.

By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our students the opportunity to learn about our resources and life-changing career opportunities. ARE's commitment to preparing the next generation of skilled workforce is commendable and vital for the state's economic prosperity.

As a women in the sciences industry, I've participated as an educator to several school groups through the ARE program, and believe in the importance of this program to provide STEM-based educational tools to our kids in Alaska. This program that I wish I had available to me as a young person who knew wanted to pursue a career in the sciences industries. I strongly urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help this organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Broman

Bonnie Broman
Vice President-Exploration
Valhalla Metals Inc.
M 907-888-8271
www.valhallametals.com



VMXX:TSXV

The information in this email is intended only for the named recipient and may be privileged or confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify us immediately and do not copy, distribute or take action based on this email. If this email is marked 'personal' Valhalla Metals is not liable in any way for its content. E-mails are susceptible to alteration. Valhalla Metals shall not be liable for the message if altered, changed or falsified.

From: Beki Toussaint <btoussaint@akresource.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:08 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Alaska Resource Education funding

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you in regard to the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was heard yesterday, 3/12 in the House Finance Committee Meeting.

I am the Program Director with Alaska Resource Education (ARE) and have worked for ARE for 12 years. I have personally helped thousands of students become more informed citizens about issues facing Alaska. We do not teach any sort of pro- or anti- agenda, we simply teach facts and science. I also know we have helped students want to work and live in Alaska after thinking they had to leave to get a good job before going through our various programs.

Examples of this programming include:

Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources (POWR): This is a district-wide program for female students in Anchorage to learn about Alaska's mineral and energy resources as well as the wide range of career opportunities while also busting the myth that these jobs being "for the boys".

Bristol Bay CTE Energy Camp: This is a week-long intensive for students from all 4 school districts in the Bristol Bay region and is being offered for dual credit through UA. During this camp students will explore training locations and career opportunities in energy and support service industries throughout the Kenai Peninsula.

ARE Rockstars: This week-long camp hosted at NACTEC in Nome will bring students from across the Bering Sea region to learn all about cross-industry careers students can have right out of high school including geotechnical, soil sampling, heavy equipment operators, and many more that are relevant to the infrastructure and mining projects that are proposed for the region.

Kuslivaq Career Academy: ARE offers 3 quarters of curriculum and direct instruction for the students from across Southwest Alaska in LKSD attending the academy. In these programs, students explore and engage with the intricate choices Alaskans must make in the realms of transportation and infrastructure, energy, and resource development through hands-on and problem-based learning.

Beyond these extended programs, ARE taught over 12,000 students in 2023 across the state about the basic science and economics associated with Alaska's natural resources.

ARE does the State of Alaska a valuable service by supporting educators and providing resources experiential learning opportunities for students. In 2023 alone, ARE taught over 12,000 students across the state equating to over 22,000 quality student contact hours.

By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our students the opportunity to learn about our resources and life-changing career opportunities. ARE's commitment to preparing the next generation of skilled workforce is commendable and vital for the state's economic prosperity.

I urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help this organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community.

Sincerely,

Beki Toussaint
Program Director
Alaska Resource Education
C: [REDACTED]
O: 907-276-5487

Ignite. Inspire. Educate.

From: Heidi H <heidi_h@awaic.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:16 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: concerns about proposed budget cuts

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for receiving my testimony. I am the Grants & Program Director at Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC) in Anchorage. We serve all victims of domestic violence in Anchorage, regardless of gender, and operate the only emergency domestic violence shelter in the city. I am very concerned about proposed cuts to victim service funding, including cuts to the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) and to Human Services Community Matching Grant (HSCMG) funds. Both CDVSA and HSCMG funding provide a critical safety net to the most vulnerable members of our community. As a recipient of funds from both these programs, AWAIC knows their importance firsthand. Without these funds, we could not continue to serve the hundreds of adults and children that come through our doors each year. We would need to cut positions and the number of available shelter beds should this funding be cut. In a community with levels of violence as high as ours, our services are critical. Please reconsider these proposed cuts, and help communities across the state maintain their safety nets.

Heidi Hill

Heidi Hill (she/her) | **Grants & Program Director**
AWAIC | 100 W 13th Avenue | Anchorage, AK 99501
Main (907) 279-9581 | **Direct** (907) 743-5715 | **24-Hr Crisis Line** (907) 272-0100
heidi_h@awaic.org



LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Kusilvak Career Academy

4335 Wisconsin Street - Anchorage, AK - 99517

Phone: (907) 245-7208



March 13, 2024

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Conrad Woodhead and I am the Director of Kusilvak Career Academy (KCA) in Anchorage, part of the Lower Yukon School District (LYSD). I am writing to you in regards to the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was heard yesterday (3/12) in the House Finance Committee Meeting. KCA has worked with Alaska Resource Education (ARE) and I see first-hand the positive effect of hands-on, STEM-based, and standards-aligned curriculum has on students in Alaska. ARE plays a crucial role in fundamental education and workforce development for Alaska's natural resource industries through our comprehensive statewide programming.

Examples of this programming include:

- Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources (POWR): This is a district-wide program for female students in Anchorage to learn about Alaska's mineral and energy resources as well as the wide range of career opportunities while also busting the myth that these jobs are "for the boys".
- Bristol Bay CTE Energy Camp: This is a week-long intensive for students from all 4 school districts in the Bristol Bay region and is being offered for dual credit through UA. During this camp students will explore training locations and career opportunities in energy and support service industries throughout the Kenai Peninsula.
- ARE Rockstars: This week-long camp hosted at NACTEC in Nome will bring students from across the Bering Sea region to learn all about cross-industry careers students can have right out of high school including geotechnical, soil sampling, heavy equipment operators, and many more that are relevant to the infrastructure and mining projects that are proposed for the region.
- Kusilvak Career Academy: ARE offers 3 quarters of curriculum and direct instruction for the students from across Southwest Alaska in LYSD attending the academy. In these programs, students explore and engage with the intricate choices Alaskans must make in the realms of transportation and infrastructure, energy, and resource development through hands-on and problem-based learning.
- Beyond these extended programs, ARE taught over 12,000 students in 2023 across the state about the basic science and economics associated with Alaska's natural resources.

ARE does the State of Alaska a valuable service by supporting educators and providing resources experiential learning opportunities for students. In 2023 alone, ARE taught over 12,000 students across the state equating to over 22,000 quality student contact hours.

By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our students the opportunity to learn about our resources and life-changing career opportunities. ARE's commitment to preparing the next generation of skilled workforce is commendable and vital for the state's economic prosperity.

I urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help this organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community, as it is imperative to Alaska's energy industry, as well as our students.

Sincerely,

LYSD CTE and Residential Director
Kusilvak Career Academy

CHILDREN FIRST

Alakanuk Emmonak Hooper Bay Kotlik Marshall Mt. Village Pilot Station Russian Mission Scammon Bay Sheldon Point

From: Luke Metherell <lmetherell@alaska.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:18 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Committee Substitute for HB 268

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you in regards to the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was heard yesterday, 3/12 in the House Finance Committee Meeting.

I have engaged in educational functions with Alaska Resource Education (ARE) since 2018 and I see first-hand the positive effect of the hands-on, STEM-based, and standards-aligned curriculum has on students in Alaska. ARE plays a crucial role in fundamental education and workforce development for Alaska's natural resource industries through our comprehensive statewide programming.

Examples of this programming include:

Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources (POWR): This is a district-wide program for female students in Anchorage to learn about Alaska's mineral and energy resources as well as the wide range of career opportunities while also busting the myth that these jobs being "for the boys".

Bristol Bay CTE Energy Camp: This is a week-long intensive for students from all 4 school districts in the Bristol Bay region and is being offered for dual credit through UA. During this camp students will explore training locations and career opportunities in energy and support service industries throughout the Kenai Peninsula.

ARE Rockstars: This week-long camp hosted at NACTEC in Nome will bring students from across the Bering Sea region to learn all about cross-industry careers students can have right out of high school including geotechnical, soil sampling, heavy equipment operators, and many more that are relevant to the infrastructure and mining projects that are proposed for the region.

Kuslivan Career Academy: ARE offers 3 quarters of curriculum and direct instruction for the students from across Southwest Alaska in LKSD attending the academy. In these programs, students explore and engage with the intricate choices Alaskans must make in the realms of transportation and infrastructure, energy, and resource development through hands-on and problem-based learning.

Beyond these extended programs, ARE taught over 12,000 students in 2023 across the state about the basic science and economics associated with Alaska's natural resources.

ARE does the State of Alaska a valuable service by supporting educators and providing resources experiential learning opportunities for students. In 2023 alone, ARE taught over 12,000 students across the state equating to over 22,000 quality student contact hours.

By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our students the opportunity to learn about our resources and life-changing career opportunities. ARE's commitment to preparing the next generation of skilled workforce is commendable and vital for the state's economic prosperity.

I urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help this organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community.

Sincerely,

Luke Metherell

Luke Metherell

Southcentral Region Coordinator
Hunter Information and Training Program
Wildlife Conservation, Department of Fish and Game
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, Alaska

(307)-413-2652

lmetherell@alaska.edu

From: Amanda Becker [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:38 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Testimony for Funding for CDVSA Budget Within Dept. of Public Safety

Good Afternoon,

I am writing in support of increasing funding for the grants line in the CDVSA budget within the Department of Public Safety. As a board member of the Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis center, I was shocked to hear about the current budget proposal which has a \$4,000,000 cut in the Victim Services line which would amount to a 20% cut across the board for all Victim Service Agencies in the state.

Given the fact that Alaska currently ranks in 3rd place for highest rates of domestic violence when compared to all 50 states, and statistically has the highest number of murdered and missing native women, the idea of any cuts to much needed services is abhorrent. Our state is in a domestic violence crisis and cuts like these will leave the most vulnerable of us in even graver danger.

I am incredibly proud of my home in Kodiak and the amazing community that exists here. I am grateful for the continued community support that allows the Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis Center to provided much needed services not only in the city of Kodiak but the outlying native communities, including but not limited to Port Lions, Ouzinkie, Old Harbor, Akhiok, and Larsen Bay. The services provided by KWRCC include a 24/7 crisis line manned by trained advocates, an emergency shelter, access to multiple resources like legal advocacy, and outreach programs. But we can't operate just off of community support and must rely on additional funding through grants, fundraising, and other programs. The idea of having to cut back on any of our much needed programs or services is not something I wish to contemplate.

I know that all of you who serve as members of the House are equally proud of your communities and know how important it is to support those in crisis, so I humbly ask that the House Finance Committee please reconsider this cut given the massive negative impact it will have on our communities.

Thank you,
Amanda Becker
Kodiak

From: Amy Cook <amy@kritfc.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:40 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Tundra Women's Coalition

Dear Alaska House Finance Committee and Whom It May Concern,

My name is Amy, and I am a current resident of Bethel, AK. We have a wonderful organization in town called Tundra Women's Coalition (TWC). TWC was founded in 1978 by a group of strong and inspired women who wanted to serve and protect their community after coming together to take action in response to incidents of sexual assault and violence against women in the community.

Now, TWC has a 24-hr crisis line, a shelter for women and their children that has 43 beds, a Legal Advocacy program, village outreach through their Community Education Program, a youth program called Teens Acting Against Violence, Irniatma Ikayviat (Children's Advocacy Center), housing programs, administration offices and a thrift store. These are all vital programs and services to the community.

In the past, domestic violence shelters have suffered from devastating budget cuts. And now, if the Alaska's House Finance Committee cuts funding, TWC will lose about \$370,000 (20% of funding), which they have stated would be catastrophic.

Please protect the Tundra Women's Coalition and the services they provide. Can we ask that the Alaska House Finance Committee fully fund TWC and support the community?

Thank you for the time in hearing our words and our request.

In gratitude,

Amy Cook (she/her)
Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest
Fisheries Technician
Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
(907) 545-4379
[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Personal Email](#)

From: Chris Humphrey <Chris.Humphrey@exp.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:43 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Please restore the Alaska Resource Education (ARE) Funding in the Operating Budget

I understand the committee introduced a substitute operating budget that completely removed the \$1m appropriation for ARE. I strongly urge you to restore the budget as it a critical resource for developing the future workforce in Alaska. I have first hand experience with ARE and have seen the direct impact in their efforts in getting kids interested and pursuing high demand and quality jobs in professions that supports our vital resource development economy. This includes training for over 40,000 students in Alaska over the past 5 years alone. ARE is filling a gap in many schools of providing meaningful career guidance and training resources that are vital for the future of Alaska.



Chris Humphrey, PE

EXP | Vice President, Arctic Region

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----- This communication may contain confidential and proprietary information. DO NOT
DISCLOSE. -----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:54 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: FW: ARE Funding

From: Howard Grey [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 1:41 PM
To: Rep. Bryce Edgmon <Rep.Bryce.Edgmon@akleg.gov>; Rep. Neal Foster <Rep.Neal.Foster@akleg.gov>; Rep. DeLena Johnson <Rep.DeLena.Johnson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Julie Coulombe <Rep.Julie.Coulombe@akleg.gov>; Rep. Mike Cronk <Rep.Mike.Cronk@akleg.gov>; Rep. Will Stapp <Rep.Will.Stapp@akleg.gov>; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski <Rep.Frank.Tomaszewski@akleg.gov>; Rep. Alyse Galvin <Rep.Alyse.Galvin@akleg.gov>; Rep. Sara Hannan <Rep.Sara.Hannan@akleg.gov>; Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Daniel Ortiz <Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov>
Subject: ARE Funding

Please help us to retain the ARE program now and in the future. Many years ago, I was involved with a program offering bush community training and job placement in the drilling field. The program was not only a success for the trainees but also benefited industry by providing safe well-trained personnel. Later, ARE was formed and carried on with training for this and other similar training using Alaskans . At present there is a need for this kind of training, and I would hope we would still be able to look to Alaska providing this need.

Thank You

From: Tyler Mitchell [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:57 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: ALASKA RESOURCE EDUCATION

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you in regards to the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was heard yesterday, 3/12 in the House Finance Committee Meeting.

I am a supporter of Alaska Resource Education (ARE) and I see first-hand the positive effect the hands-on, STEM-based, and standards-aligned curriculum has on students in Alaska. ARE plays a crucial role in fundamental education and workforce development for Alaska's natural resource industries through our comprehensive statewide programming.

Examples of this programming include:

Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources (POWR): This is a district-wide program for female students in Anchorage to learn about Alaska's mineral and energy resources as well as the wide range of career opportunities while also busting the myth that these jobs being "for the boys".

Bristol Bay CTE Energy Camp: This is a week-long intensive for students from all 4 school districts in the Bristol Bay region and is being offered for dual credit through UA. During this camp students will explore training locations and career opportunities in energy and support service industries throughout the Kenai Peninsula.

ARE Rockstars: This week-long camp hosted at NACTEC in Nome will bring students from across the Bering Sea region to learn all about cross-industry careers students can have right out of high school including geotechnical, soil sampling, heavy equipment operators, and many more that are relevant to the infrastructure and mining projects that are proposed for the region.

Kusilvak Career Academy: ARE offers 3 quarters of curriculum and direct instruction for the students from across Southwest Alaska in LKSD attending the academy. In these programs, students explore and engage with the intricate choices Alaskans must make in the realms of transportation and infrastructure, energy, and resource development through hands-on and problem-based learning.

Beyond these extended programs, ARE taught over 12,000 students in 2023 across the state about the basic science and economics associated with Alaska's natural resources.

ARE does the State of Alaska a valuable service by supporting educators and providing resources experiential learning opportunities for students. In 2023 alone, ARE taught over 12,000 students across the state equating to over 22,000 quality student contact hours.

By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our students the opportunity to learn about our resources and life-changing career opportunities. ARE's commitment to preparing the next generation of skilled workforce is commendable and vital for the state's economic prosperity.

I urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help this organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community.

Sincerely,

Tyler Mitchell

From: Dave Larimer <dave.larimer@contangoore.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:58 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Testimonial on Appropriations for Alaska Resource Education (ARE)

Greetings and Salutations House Finance Committee!

I'm writing to testify to the importance of keeping the \$1m in appropriations for the Alaska Resource Education (ARE).

I have worked closely with and have supported the work of ARE for over the last 10 years and have volunteered my time with classroom instructions. As a Geologist, and Resource Developer in interior Alaska, one of the biggest hurdles or frictions we have in the industry is educating the general public on how prolific Alaska Resources are. Our Alaskan Resources are vast, expansive, and hold high potential for us Alaskans.

ARE has and is actively bridging the education gap between what our Alaska resources are, how they benefit Alaskans, and how our Alaskan youths can and will benefit from them. While there are many stats on how ARE benefits Alaskan Students, I want to shift and ask you to look at the testimonials on their website <https://www.akresource.org/testimonials>. These are the testimonials of the real benefit of ARE...from the Teachers and the Students they have impacted.

Overall, the \$1m in appropriations is a minimal amount that has a significant impact to Alaska and its Future. It needs to be looked at as investment in Alaska and Alaskan student's future.

From my time in the Military running and leading operations, there is a military science term that fits well here...that is "**Force Multiplier**" or "a factor or combination of factors that gives personnel (or units) the ability to accomplish greater feats than without it". Much like GPS, and Night Vision are force multipliers for our fighting force, a nominal investment in ARE is a force multiplier for the education of our kids and Resource Development of Alaska.

I highly encourage and hope the substitute operating budget will incorporate the \$1M appropriations for Alaska Resource Education.

Thank you for your time. I'm available any time for additional testimony, questions, or comments.

Respectfully,

DAVE

DAVE LARIMER
Exploration Manager
1 (775) 397-6195

516 2nd Ave, Suite 401
Fairbanks, AK 99701



dave.larimer@contangoore.com

www.contangoore.com

From: Ella Ede <eede@akresource.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:59 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Funding for Alaska Resource Education
Importance: High

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you about the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was heard yesterday, 3/12, in the House Finance Committee Meeting.

I am the Executive Director of Alaska Resource Education (ARE) and have worked for ARE for 7 years. I am also a lifelong Alaskan with four children and two grandchildren. I care about the future of our state and the education of our young people and I believe we need to invest in them.

I have personally witnessed thousands of students become more informed citizens about issues facing Alaska. ARE does not teach any sort of pro- or anti- agenda, we simply teach facts and science about Alaska's natural resources and associated careers, including renewable energy and up and coming technology like carbon capture, offshore wind energy, and hydropower. We also focus on helping students through our various programs, so they want to work, live, and **stay** in Alaska when they often think they need to leave to get a good job. Outmigration of our young people is a real issue facing our state and is contributing to the current workforce shortages.

Examples of ARE's programming include:

Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources (POWR): This is a district-wide program for female students in Anchorage to learn about Alaska's mineral and energy resources as well as the wide range of career opportunities while also busting the myth that these jobs being "for the boys." This course is taught at King Tech High School during the third session of the fourth quarter.

Bristol Bay CTE Energy Camp: This is a week-long intensive course in March for students from all four school districts in the Bristol Bay region and is being offered for dual credit through the University of Alaska. During this camp students will explore training locations and career opportunities in energy and support service industries throughout the Kenai Peninsula.

ARE Rockstars: This week-long camp hosted at NACTEC in Nome will bring students from across the Bering Straits region to learn all about cross-industry careers students can have right out of high school including geotechnical, soil sampling, heavy equipment operators, and many more that are relevant to the infrastructure and mining projects that are proposed for the region.

Kusilvak Career Academy: ARE offers 3 quarters of curriculum and direct instruction for the students from across Southwest Alaska in the Lower Kuskokwim School District attending the academy. In these programs, students explore and engage with the intricate choices Alaskans must make in the realms of transportation and infrastructure, energy, and resource development through hands-on and problem-based learning.

Beyond these extended programs, ARE taught over 12,000 students in 2023 across the state about the basic science and economics associated with Alaska's natural resources.

ARE does the State of Alaska a valuable service by supporting educators and providing resources through experiential learning opportunities for students. Over the past 5 years ARE taught over 42,000 students across the states in 53 communities.

By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our students the opportunity to learn about our resources and life-changing career opportunities. ARE's commitment to preparing the next generation of skilled workforce is commendable and vital for the state's economic prosperity.

I urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help this organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community.

Sincerely,

Ella Ede
Executive Director
Alaska Resource Education
601 E. 57th Place, Suite 101
Anchorage, AK 99518
eede@akresource.org

mobile – [REDACTED]

From: Walker_Catherine <walker_catherine@asdk12.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 3:00 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Email in support of funding for Alaska Resource Education

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you in regards to the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was heard yesterday, 3/12 in the House Finance Committee Meeting.

I am the 2024 Alaska Teacher of the Year and I have participated in Alaska Resource Education (ARE) teacher trainings, classroom activities, and field trips and have experienced first-hand the positive effect of the hands-on, STEM-based, and standards-aligned curriculum has on students in Alaska. ARE plays a crucial role in fundamental education and workforce development for Alaska's natural resource industries through our comprehensive statewide programming.

One example of this programming that I have experienced firsthand is the Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources (POWR): This is a district-wide program for female students in Anchorage to learn about Alaska's mineral and energy resources as well as the wide range of career opportunities while also busting the myth that these jobs being "for the boys". Last summer I was the administrative designee for the POWR field trip and was impressed by the program and its focus on empowering women to work in natural resources as well as the focus on environmental sustainability and stewardship.

Other examples of ARE activities include:

Bristol Bay CTE Energy Camp: This is a week-long intensive for students from all 4 school districts in the Bristol Bay region and is being offered for dual credit through UA. During this camp students will explore training locations and career opportunities in energy and support service industries throughout the Kenai Peninsula.

ARE Rockstars: This week-long camp hosted at NACTEC in Nome will bring students from across the Bering Sea region to learn all about cross-industry careers students can have right out of high school including geotechnical, soil sampling, heavy equipment operators, and many more that are relevant to the infrastructure and mining projects that are proposed for the region.

Kuslivaq Career Academy: ARE offers 3 quarters of curriculum and direct instruction for the students from across Southwest Alaska in LKSD attending the academy. In these programs, students explore and engage with the intricate choices Alaskans must make in the realms of transportation and infrastructure, energy, and resource development through hands-on and problem-based learning.

Beyond these extended programs, ARE taught over 12,000 students in 2023 across the state about the basic science and economics associated with Alaska's natural resources.

ARE does the State of Alaska a valuable service by supporting educators and providing resources experiential learning opportunities for students. In 2023 alone, ARE taught over 12,000 students across the state equating to over 22,000 quality student contact hours.

By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our

students the opportunity to learn about our resources and life-changing career opportunities. ARE's commitment to preparing the next generation of skilled workforce is commendable and vital for the state's economic prosperity.

I urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help this organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community.

Sincerely,

Catherine Walker, NBCT

2024 Alaska Teacher of the Year

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From: Shirley McCaa <sjmccaa@alaska.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 3:17 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: URGENT: HB 268 Appropriations

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing regarding the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was released on 3/12 in the House Finance Committee Meeting.

We are in partnership with Alaska Resource Education (ARE) and I see first-hand the positive effect the hands-on, STEM-based, and standards-aligned curriculum has on students in Alaska. ARE plays a crucial role in fundamental education and workforce development for Alaska's natural resource industries through its comprehensive statewide programming.

MAPTS is in partnership with many of the programming at ARE. One example is our Delta Junction Training facility hosts their Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources (POWR) camp every spring. This program offers female students the opportunity to learn about Alaska's mineral and energy resources as well as the wide range of fantastic career opportunities for women in male-dominated fields.

Next week, we have the Bristol Bay CTE Energy Camp coming to engage with our Well Control class participants about their long-standing careers in oil and gas. ARE's energy camp is a week-long intensive for students from all 4 school districts in the Bristol Bay region and is being offered for dual credit through UA. During this camp, students will explore training locations and career opportunities in energy and support service industries throughout the Kenai Peninsula.

ARE has reached over 12,000 students in 2023 across the state about the basic science and economics associated with Alaska's natural resources. This equates to over 22,000 quality student contact hours.

By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our students the opportunity to learn about our resources and life-changing career opportunities. ARE's commitment to preparing the next generation of skilled workforce is commendable and vital for the state's economic prosperity.

I urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help this organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community.

Sincerely,

Shirley McCaa

Program Manager
Mining and Petroleum Training Service (MAPTS)
219 E Intl Airport Rd. Anchorage, Ak. 99518
Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Extension
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Direct line: (907) 786-6413
<https://uaf.edu/mapts>
www.facebook.com/MAPTSUA

From: Sheyna Wisdom <wisdom@aoos.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 3:24 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: URGENT: Committee Substitute for HB 268 for Alaska Resource Education

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you in regards to the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was heard yesterday, 3/12/24 in the House Finance Committee Meeting.

I am a long-time supporter and volunteer with Alaska Resource Education (ARE) and I see first-hand the positive effect of the hands-on, STEM-based, and standards-aligned curriculum has on students in Alaska. ARE plays a crucial role in fundamental education and workforce development for Alaska's natural resource industries through our comprehensive statewide programming. I worked in the oil and gas field for 15 years as a marine biologist and program manager and am now the Executive Director of the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) I am also a mom of a King Tech High School junior who volunteers with ARE, a Dimond High School softball coach, and volunteer with STEM events such as the Alaska State Science Fair and the Tsunami Ocean Bowl. So I am VERY closely linked to the importance of natural resources and STEM education in Alaska.

Examples of this programing include:

- Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources (POWR): This is a district-wide program for female students in Anchorage to learn about Alaska's mineral and energy resources as well as the wide range of career opportunities while also busting the myth that these jobs being "for the boys". As the Executive Director of AOOS, and a woman leader in Alaska, I have participated as a mentor and presenter at this class.
- Bristol Bay CTE Energy Camp: This is a week-long intensive for students from all 4 school districts in the Bristol Bay region and is being offered for dual credit through UA. During this camp students will explore training locations and career opportunities in energy and support service industries throughout the Kenai Peninsula.
- ARE Rockstars: This week-long camp hosted at NACTEC in Nome will bring students from across the Bering Straits region to learn all about cross-industry careers students can have right out of high school including geotechnical, soil sampling, heavy equipment operators, and many more that are relevant to the infrastructure and mining projects that are proposed for the region.
- Kusilvak Career Academy: ARE offers 3 quarters of curriculum and direct instruction for the students from across Southwest Alaska in LKSD attending the academy. In these programs, students explore and engage with the intricate choices Alaskans must make in the realms of transportation and infrastructure, energy, and resource development through hands-on and problem-based learning.

Beyond these extended programs, ARE taught over 12,000 students in 2023 across the state about the basic science and economics associated with Alaska's natural resources.

ARE does the State of Alaska a valuable service by supporting educators and providing resources

experiential learning opportunities for students. In 2023 alone, ARE taught over 12,000 students across the state equating to over 22,000 quality student contact hours.

By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our students the opportunity to learn about our resources and life-changing career opportunities. ARE's commitment to preparing the next generation of skilled workforce is commendable and vital for the state's economic prosperity.

I urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help this organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community.

Sincerely,

Sheyna

Sheyna Wisdom (she/her), Executive Director
Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS)

wisdom@aoos.org

[REDACTED] (cell)

1007 W. Third Ave, Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99501

From: Emily Ice <eice@stepin autism.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 3:24 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: stepinalaskabcba@gmail.com
Subject: Budget Public Testimony

Dear Representatives Edgmon, Foster, Johnson, and committee members,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding budget items HB 268 and HB 270, particularly in relation to the unintentional discrimination against children with autism in Alaska's Medicaid program.

Since the incorporation of Autism Services under the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) in 2018, all other community behavioral health services have received a total inflation adjustment of 12.76%, yet Autism Services has not seen any inflation adjustments. This lack of adjustment has placed an immense strain on providers attempting to serve Alaska's Medicaid children, leading to growing waitlists that exceed two years in certain areas, including mine.

Medical experts agree that timely interventions are critical to achieving the best outcomes for those experiencing autism. A correcting inflation adjustment for autism services is needed, and needed now, to ensure the timely delivery of life-changing interventions to children with autism, save on long-term Medicaid costs, and ensure that the state can attract and train highly skilled service providers. Many families, including our military families and small business owners, have told me over the past year that they are leaving the state to find the care their children need.

Over the years, providers and families alike have tirelessly advocated through various channels, participating in all available public comment opportunities to address the inflation adjustment issue. This year, the division recognized the procedural error and indicated that the services would be included in future inflation adjustments. However, they did not correct the disparity caused by the lack of inflation adjustment over the past 6 years, thus it will not correct the lack of provider adequacy.

The urgency of this matter cannot be overstated; children are waiting for this care and cannot wait until the Rate Setting Methodology project is completed. Immediate action is necessary to identify a solution that offers relief to providers, enabling them to serve Medicaid beneficiaries affordably, and ensuring that vulnerable children across Alaska receive the necessary care they deserve.

It is imperative that the budget adequately addresses the needs of children with autism and ensures equitable access to essential services. I urge you to include a 12.76% one-time adjustment to Autism Services rates in the budget (est. general fund cost of only \$223,300 [\$223.3]). Furthermore, it's essential to recognize the fiscal responsibility of covering these services adequately. They are matched at 50% with the federal government and not only prevent much more expensive and intensive services but also allow children with autism to remain in their homes and communities, fostering their well-being and integration.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Emily Ice, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Cell: [REDACTED]

Work: 907-206-7396

Step-In Autism Services, LLC
stepin autism.com

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From: Sharlay Mamoe [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 3:27 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Testimony on Operating Budget

Hello!

My name is Sharlay Mamoe, I am writing to testify towards the operating budget. I am representing myself and I thank you for the opportunity to speak on the operating budget. I would like to thank you all for the early childhood funding that is currently included in the budget, including \$5 million for Head Start and the \$6.1 million that is included in HB89 to expand family access to child care assistance. These are both critical components to building stability in the early childhood education sector.

I work in childcare as an executive director and I know that the childcare educators do not have the financials that are needed to live in the state of Alaska and are having to find other forms of financial support, either from a significant other, another job, and/or state financial public support. Every day I question the status of some of my employees, will they be seeking other employment that can pay them better? I currently do have some staff members leaving, and every time we ask why they are leaving it is due to the pay, they need to find a higher paying job to be able to live, this pay is something we as an employer know they deserve but cannot afford to pay as we will put undue strain on the families that utilize our care.

Child care advocates, stakeholders, and providers, myself included, are requesting \$15 million in one-time funding for direct operating grants to child care businesses through the Child Care Grant within the Child Care Program Office. This funding will help stabilize our current child care sector and provide incentives for new businesses to start.

With our staffing fluctuations we are unsure how we will continue to care for the children in our facility. The pay discrepancies among the staff are truly saddening and would be greatly altered and boosted with direct funding to the child care sector. I hope funding will be appropriated to the sector and we are grateful and thankful for the funding that was provided to child care employees last legislative session. Thank you for your time to read/listen to this testimony, I look forward to some funding being given to the child care sector, and your efforts to fund our future.

Thank you!

~Sharlay Mamoe

•

From: Rick Trupp <rtrupp@saexploration.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 3:27 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: ARE funding

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you in regards to the Committee Substitute for HB 268 that was heard yesterday, 3/12 in the House Finance Committee Meeting.

Regarding the funding cut to the support of the Alaska Resource Education program (ARE), I urge you to reconsider and reappropriate the funding set in the budget initially.

There is a huge positive effect of the hands-on, STEM-based, and standards-aligned curriculum on students in Alaska. ARE plays a crucial role in fundamental education and workforce development for Alaska's natural resource industries through our comprehensive statewide programming.

Examples of this programming include:

Powerful Opportunities for Women in Resources (POWR): This is a district-wide program for female students in Anchorage to learn about Alaska's mineral and energy resources as well as the wide range of career opportunities while also busting the myth that these jobs being "for the boys".

Bristol Bay CTE Energy Camp: This is a week-long intensive for students from all 4 school districts in the Bristol Bay region and is being offered for dual credit through UA. During this camp students will explore training locations and career opportunities in energy and support service industries throughout the Kenai Peninsula.

ARE Rockstars: This week-long camp hosted at NACTEC in Nome will bring students from across the Bering Straits region to learn all about cross-industry careers students can have right out of high school including geotechnical, soil sampling, heavy equipment operators, and many more that are relevant to the infrastructure and mining projects that are proposed for the region.

Kusilvak Career Academy: ARE offers 3 quarters of curriculum and direct instruction for the students from across Southwest Alaska in LKSD attending the academy. In these programs, students explore and engage with the intricate choices Alaskans must make in the realms of transportation and infrastructure, energy, and resource development through hands-on and problem-based learning.

Beyond these extended programs, ARE taught over 12,000 students in 2023 across the state about the basic science and economics associated with Alaska's natural resources.

ARE does the State of Alaska a valuable service by supporting educators and providing resources experiential learning opportunities for students.

In 2023 alone, ARE taught over 12,000 students across the state equating to over 22,000 quality student contact hours.

By removing this much-needed funding you are adding a burden to public school teachers and denying our students the opportunity to learn about our resources and life-changing career opportunities. ARE's commitment to preparing the next generation of skilled workforce is commendable and vital for the state's economic prosperity.

I urge you to re-appropriate \$1 million to Alaska Resource Education to help this organization continue to grow and educate students in every Alaska community. Its not reasonable to reduce educational opportunities that foster a passion and understanding to our youth that helps in fostering the growth and healthiness of the state in years to come.

Sincerely,

Rick Trupp

General Manager

SAExploration

Safety. Acquisition. Experience.

8240 Sandlewood Pl. #202

Anchorage, AK 99507

Direct: 1.907-267-0316

Mobile: [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

Living in rural places like Kodiak, where I've called home, accessing support from domestic violence programs is incredibly vital for survivors like myself. These programs offer a wide range of services that can genuinely turn things around. They're there to help find a safe place to stay, provide legal advice, or simply lend an understanding ear to listen. It's a sensitive topic, often clouded by the fear of judgment, but having a sanctuary like this can truly preserve mental well-being, offering solace and reassurance.

However, finding such services in rural areas isn't always straightforward. It might mean traveling long distances, which can be especially challenging if privacy is a concern. While phone support can be helpful, there's nothing quite like having a face-to-face conversation to build trust, especially when sharing deep personal experiences. Discovering a program like KWRCC feels like finding a safe harbor in the midst of a storm.

These programs serve as a crucial support system. They don't just offer immediate help; they also work towards preventing violence from happening in the first place. They educate people about healthy relationships and how to support one another.

In my experience, seeking help from a domestic violence program in a rural area isn't just important—it's a game-changer, it's EMPOWERMENT; it's a lifeline that can truly make a world of difference for survivors and their communities.

Maintaining and supporting programs like these is essential for fostering safe and healthy communities. Their significance may not be fully understood until one finds themselves in a situation requiring assistance to escape abuse. By keeping these programs alive and accessible, we're not just helping individuals in crisis; we're elevating the well-being of our entire community. It's about creating a supportive environment where everyone feels empowered to seek help, break the cycle of violence, and thrive.

Wilson Ace San Mateo
KWRCC Resident
October 1 – December 23, 2023