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**From:** Kelly McBride <kelly.mcbride@galenanet.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 3:39 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** SESA

I am writing to give written testimony regarding the Special Education Service Agency (SESA). They provide support to our students with low incidence disabilities in Galena and across the state in homeschool programs.

The onsite visits and follow up consultation and training to staff is extremely valuable. Special education positions are hard to fill, and with the high turnover staff do not have the depth and breadth of experience that the SESA consultants can offer. I have found them to be extremely responsive and professional.

I give my support to the program without hesitation.

**Kelly McBride**

Assistant Special Education Director, Galena City School District & IDEA Homeschool  
901 E. Palmer-Wasilla Highway, Suite 120, Palmer, AK 99645  
Teams Phone: (907) 290-2816

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**From:** Canyon Lewis [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 3:35 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Fwd: public testimony on the state Operating Budget (HB 53) ANSEP

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

**From:** Canyon Lewis [REDACTED]  
**Date:** Wed, Mar 12, 2025 at 3:31 PM  
**Subject:** public testimony on the state Operating Budget (HB 53) ANSEP  
**To:** <house.finance@akleg.gove>, <[alheaslet@alaska.edu](mailto:alheaslet@alaska.edu)>

Hello,

Please take this as a testimony to continue providing ANSEP its base finding and even consider increasing it if you would like to see more talented young people in this state and don't want to see our beautiful state and country degrade away to disengaged or corrupt decision makers in years to come.

After attending and being supported by this club in UAA. Giving me a consistent place to study, and collaborate with other dedicated students. I personally have gone on to be an Engineer for seven years in Thailand and recently moved back to Sitka Alaska to start a successful catering and restaurant business. Contributing to the economics of this State. Adding jobs and investing in support from other local businesses.

Living in a van through winter in order to fund my tuition. None of these dreams and contributions would have come to fruition without the ability to utilize the ANSEP university kitchen, and have the support of a warm, stable place to study and collaborate with my colleagues.

Thank you,  
Canyon

UAA Alumni (B.S. M.E. 2018)

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**From:** Henry Kushin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 3:22 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** ANSEP Funding

Greetings,

I am a current University Success Student, and have been with ANSEP throughout my whole academic career. ANSEP has been paramount to my financial and educational development. I am sending this email to ask you respectfully, continue fully funding the ANSEP budget with no cuts. Without it, my career and many others will surely wither.

Sincerely,  
Henry Kushin

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**From:** Dinkins, Tra <tdinkins@asrc.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 2:42 PM  
**To:** House Finance; alheaslet@alaska.edu  
**Cc:** dinkins1; Dinkins, Tra  
**Subject:** UAA ANSEP Acceleration Academy Funding

**Importance:** High

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

I am writing as a parent to express my strong support for restoring full state funding for the Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program (ANSEP). My daughter is enrolled in the program, and I cannot overstate its impact on her education and future.

Before discovering ANSEP, we had chosen homeschooling due to concerns about public schools' priorities and academic environment. However, ANSEP offered an unparalleled opportunity for our daughter to challenge herself, pursue a rigorous educational path, and receive the support needed to excel. Though initially hesitant, she now finds the program both challenging and rewarding. The structured yet immersive learning environment, combined with hands-on support from staff, has allowed her to thrive.

Since joining ANSEP, she has maintained straight A's and is on track to earn her bachelor's degree by the time she completes high school. This program has provided an incredible financial and time-saving benefit, allowing her to progress at an accelerated pace without the burden of excessive tuition and student debt. The opportunity to earn college credits while in high school is invaluable for our family and countless students across Alaska.

One of the most impressive aspects of ANSEP is its close relationship with university professors, which has been evident on multiple occasions. Most recently, a UAA professor encouraged our daughter to interview for a spot in her German 102 class. Thanks to ANSEP's support and advocacy, she is now enrolled in the course and excelling. This is particularly meaningful to our family because of Isabel's investment in studying German from kindergarten through 8th grade. Having the opportunity to continue her language studies will only serve to broaden her future opportunities.

As a minority, I understand the additional challenges my daughter may face throughout her academic and professional journey. My goal is to equip her with every possible tool to overcome obstacles and succeed. The ANSEP team and their strong partnerships with local colleges provide an unmatched level of support and opportunity. I can only imagine how different my path would have been had I had access to a program like this growing up, and I only wish we had known about it sooner.

Reducing ANSEP's base funding would have serious consequences for students like my daughter who are dedicated to investing in their futures. ANSEP is a proven success in STEM education and dual enrollment, preparing students for careers that require significant educational investment. The program's track record speaks for itself—higher retention and success rates, financial savings for families, and a stronger workforce for Alaska.

I urge you to restore full state funding for ANSEP and ensure that students continue to have access to this life-changing opportunity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Tra

**Tra Dinkins**

**Sr. Enterprise Applications Manager**

Arctic Slope Regional Corporation

My Contact Information: 📞 907-206-4007 | ✉️ [tdinkins@asrc.com](mailto:tdinkins@asrc.com)

Personal Contact Information: 📞 907-223-1205 | ✉️ [REDACTED]



[Book time to meet with me](#)

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**From:** Michele Yatchmeneff <myatchmeneff@alaska.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 2:09 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** ANSEP Testimony

I wanted to submit my written testimony for ANSEP and urge the House Finance Committee to restore full state funding for ANSEP.

I joined ANSEP as a student in 2003. Because of ANSEP, I have accomplished:

- Being the first and only Alaska Native in the world with my PhD in Engineering Education
- First Alaska Native woman to join UAA's College of Engineering as faculty
- First Alaska Native in the world to get tenure in engineering
- First and only Alaska Native to join UAA's Chancellor's cabinet as the Alaska Native Education & Outreach Executive Director
- Get 3 degrees in engineering: BS in Civil Engineering from UAA in 2005, MS in Engineering Management from UAA in 2009, and PhD in Engineering Education from Purdue University in 2015

For 30 years, it has created opportunities for thousands of Alaska students. ANSEP Acceleration Academy accomplishments:

- Students graduate high school with an average of 63 college credits – nearly two years of university coursework completed
- Some students achieve remarkable milestones—one student recently graduated with 125 college credits
- Families and the state save millions by reducing the need for university remediation and shortening the time to degree completion
- Students avoid three or more years of tuition and living expenses, easing financial burdens and increasing access to higher education
- Higher retention and success rates strengthen Alaska's workforce and economy

Please consider my testimony and restore ANSEP's funding.

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Qaġaasakuq



Office of Alaska Native  
Education & Outreach  
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

**Michele Yatchmeneff, PhD** (Unangaġ, she|her)

Executive Director for Alaska Native Education & Outreach

Associate Professor of Engineering

Office: (907) 786-1853

Email: [michele@alaska.edu](mailto:michele@alaska.edu)

UAA is located on the unceded ancestral homelands of the Dena'ina, Ahtna, Alutiiq/Sugpiaq, and Eyak/dAXunhyuu Peoples.

*Dena'inam tanangin kugan angâgîzaq*

*"I live on Dena'ina lands."*

Unangam Tunuu to English translation

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**From:** Clarissa Zeller [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:50 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Fwd: ANSEP Funding

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

**From:** Clarissa Zeller [REDACTED]  
**Date:** Wed, Mar 12, 2025 at 1:48 PM  
**Subject:** ANSEP Funding  
**To:** <[alheaslet@alaska.edu](mailto:alheaslet@alaska.edu)>, <house.finance@akleg.gove>

Hello House Finance Committee of the AK State Legislature,

I have been a part of ANSEP since 2010 and am an Alumni. Growing up in rural Alaska understanding the skills for the workforce was small, but I made it to where I am today because of ANSEP. This program set me up for success in the real workforce by providing me internships that make me stand out in the hiring process. I can say that this also is true with my other ANSEP alumni. Because of this impact I have tried to give back by being a Youth Peer Mentor for the program over a period of eight years and I plan to do more mentoring in the future. Please do not take away from our future leaders of Alaska.

Best regards,

Clarissa



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**From:** Anchor Point Food Pantry [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:26 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** On-going need for food

Dear Finance Committee,

Thank you for making the hard decisions to feed Alaskans!

Food, Rent, heating, gasoline,... prices are so high that it makes it near impossible for people to afford to eat. As a pantry we try to help them, but even we pantries need your help. TEFAP, SNAP, and school meals are very important for those that are hungry to keep up their health and strength to be able to work or concentrate on their studies. Thank you for everything you can do in this regard.

With everything in place, as it is at this point in time, we still have 80 households a week that need us, and we make 60 bags of weekend food for the school children. If they get less help from you, they will need more help from us.

Again, thank you. We know you will do your best.

***Melissa J. Martin***  
APFP President, E.D.  
[REDACTED]

*We are here to help with food because we all go through tough times.*

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**From:** Kathy Albright [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:11 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** alheaslet@alaska.edu  
**Subject:** Support for ANSEP's budget request

Dear State Legislature,

Last week the House Finance Subcommittee proposed reducing ANSEP's base funding. This would have serious consequences for the ANSEP Acceleration Academy High Schools, as well as the students and communities it serves across Alaska. ANSEP is the most successful longitudinal education program in the nation for STEM-dual enrollment. For 30 years, it has created opportunities for thousands of Alaska students. We urge the House Finance Committee to restore full state funding for ANSEP.

In looking for a high school strong in math and science for our son, we came across the ANSEP acceleration program. It is a fantastic opportunity for all Alaskan students. It is needed more than ever with the out of control higher education costs, the increased cost of living, increased out-migration and the aging population. Now is the time to put more money into successful educational programs, like this one; it is not the time to reduce the base funding.

Please show that you care about Alaska's future and Alaska's children. Investing in their future now, creating opportunities for them now - it will result in a better future for all of us later.

Thank you,  
Kathy Albright

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**From:** Jessica Simonsen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 12:25 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** HB 53 testimony

Dear House Finance Committee,

I want to express my appreciation for your vital support of child care funding.

I urge you to maintain the \$7.725 million in recurring Child Care Grants that were reinstated in the Finance Subcommittee's version of the FY26 Department of Health budget.

Please also preserve the \$5.3 million in additional support for the state's important Infant Learning Program.

Consider allocating funds for the ROOTs Award to help recruit and retain early childhood educators in Alaska and funds to OCS to maintain paying the above and beyond four foster children.

Alaska's families, businesses, and children depend on this funding. It has provided children with safe environments when caregivers are working; it has enabled parents and caregivers to participate in the workforce; it has helped child care providers keep their operations running; and it has contributed to a more stable and dependable workforce for employers statewide.

Child care fuels business success!

Every family across Alaska deserves access to affordable, high-quality child care. Such care is crucial for our community and economy, enabling parents to stay employed. It's also key for Alaska's children to have a healthy start and be kindergarten-ready.

This is why your continued support is needed. Please back child care priorities again this year.

Thank you!

Jessica Simonsen  
[REDACTED]  
Anchorage AK 99504  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Jesse Yarbrough <Jesse.Yarbrough@comconnections.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 11:04 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** 2026 Operating Budget Request

I am writing in regards to the FY26 operating budget for clinic/rehab services. I would like to thank the House Finance Subcommittee for supporting the \$13.7M increment for Behavioral Health, and would encourage the full Committee to consider approval. These services are vital in our remote communities and it allows us to provide quality personnel to render aid to the most vulnerable. As an employer who has been working with an agency for 10 years, I can attest that the lack of rebasing in July 2022 has significantly hampered our ability to provide these much needed services. The current rates are too low to allow us to be competitive in hiring staff and providing the breadth of personnel needed to address the needs of our community.

Thank you for your consideration.



Jesse Yarbrough  
Finance Director  
Community Connections  
721 Stedman St, Ketchikan, AK 99901  
T: 907.225.7825 X303  
F: 907.225.1541  
E: [jesse.yarbrough@comconnections.org](mailto:jesse.yarbrough@comconnections.org)  
Office Hours 8-4

All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.  
*Gandalf*

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**From:** Rob Bashleben <robbash@linksprc.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 5:39 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY2026 budget policy needs HB 53/HB 55

**Hello - My name is Robert Bashleben As a fellow Alaskan resident of Palmer, Alaska and an employee who sees Matsu residents daily needs and resouces affected due to Developmental disabilities and/or financial stresses, please consider including the following items in the upcoming budget for FY2026**

- 1. Special Education Service Agency (SESA) \$480 K (DEED)** The Special Education Service Agency (SESA) provides training and resources to special education teachers and school staff in rural Alaska who support students with Low Incidence Disabilities (LID), including autism, deaf and hard of hearing, vision impairment, deaf-blindness, emotional disabilities, and multiple disabilities. SESA's budget is based on total public-school enrollment, which is declining, while the number of students needing SESA's services continues to grow. This funding gap forces SESA to serve more students with fewer resources, and without an increase, they will have to implement a waitlist-violating federal law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which mandates timely special education services.
- 2. Deaf Navigator Program \$75 K (DOH/SDS).** The Deaf Navigator Program provides essential support for Alaskans who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf blind, helping them navigate services and access resources. Originally housed at The Arc of Anchorage and now operated by Hope Community Resources, the program has never received a funding increase since its inception. Without this funding, critical support for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community will be at risk, limiting access to communication assistance, advocacy, and essential services.
- 3. Functional Needs Coordinator, \$175 K (DMVA/Emergency Operations)** – Add \$175 K for an Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Coordinator within the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) so they can meet the emergency planning and response necessary for Alaskans with disabilities. Unlike most emergency operation centers, Alaska does not have an AFN Coordinator.
- 4. Human Services Transportation Grant Program--\$250 K (DOTPF/ACT)-** Add \$250 K in GF/MH capital funding for the Human Services Transportation Grant program. This program was previously funded at \$1.0 M and is currently in the draft FY 26 budget at \$750 K.
- 5. Public and Community Transportation Match Funding—\$1.0 M (DOTPF)** - To maintain access to federal funding and sustain community transit, we request \$1 million in capital funds to assist transit providers in meeting their match obligations for federal grants.

Rob Bashleben  
ADRC Program Director

[robbash@linksprc.org](mailto:robbash@linksprc.org)

Office:907-373-3650

Cell: [REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 2:01 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** ROBERT M MACNAUGHTON  
**Subject:** senior community grants comments

Hi, my name is Rob Mac Naughton, a lot of us are 70 years old. Senior community grants/state funding, an inflation adjusted senior community grants is a godsend for many of us. It keeps a lot of us sane, fed, helped with daily care and aging in place for many who are in need or low on family support.

Please remember we all get old and need these service at some point in time. This is the most needed and appreciated help provided by community grants. Thank You

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**From:** Bobbie Scanio [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 11, 2025 10:43 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** ANSEP

When my son was bored and not engaged in public school, we knew we had to find something that would be a better fit for him. He wasn't interested in sports or the standard class and that's when we began exploring other options. When we learned about ANSEP—an incredible program that provides young people in Alaska with access to higher education options that truly empower them to thrive.

Getting into ANSEP took work. He had hold himself to high standard—maintaining good grades and staying focused—but the program's impact has been undeniable. It's not just an alternative path to high school education; it's a transformative experience that sets students up for success in ways traditional routes don't always offer.

ANSEP isn't just about graduating high school. It's about making sure students leave with real, tangible skills and a plan for the future. The average ANSEP graduate walks away with 63 college credits—about two years of university coursework already completed. That means they're entering the next chapter of their education with less financial burden, fewer years of tuition, and more access to opportunities.

And what I love about ANSEP is the lasting impact it has. By helping more students succeed, we're strengthening Alaska's workforce, and ultimately, contributing to the growth of our entire economy. This program is doing incredible work, and I'm excited to see the positive difference it's making in the lives of so many young people.

Please do not cut funding to a program that is doing something so great for Alaska and our youth.

Thank you,

*Bobbie Scanio*



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**From:** Barbara Burch [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 11, 2025 9:45 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Just a few thoughts

1. EDUCATION: You have to raise the \$\$\$ for education!! this is a MUST!! Our Alaskan students are in need of a good education. Alaskan teachers need to have a decent salary and a good retirement. You must raise the per pupil number! \$1500 for each student. Also, we can't know how well correspondence students are doing if they are not required to take the State proficiency assessments. This should be required. Cell phones have no place in schools!! Time to take social media, bullying and tic tok out of schools.

2. TAXES: Time to begin to collect some taxes from everyone. Whether a sales tax or an income tax, gas tax, oil tax, alcohol tax, marijuana tax, it's time to find ways to bring some revenue into our State. We have so many workers who come to Alaska make lots of money and then go home every 2 weeks and spend their income in other states. Find ways to bring some revenue to Alaska.

3. DEMOCRACY: Stand up to the crazy things that are happening in Washington DC. Stand with Lisa Murkowski. Stand up for democracy and our Canadian neighbors!

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**From:** Amy Newman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 11, 2025 12:50 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Written Testimony: HB 53/ HB 55

Legislators,

I am writing in support of HB 53/55, particularly the portion requesting funding in the amount of \$175,000 for a Functional Needs Coordinator. This position is extremely important for Alaska's disabled population, of which my 16-year-old daughter, Julia, is a member. In emergencies, the unique needs of disabled people are often overlooked in major disasters. They may not be able to evacuate as easily, whether due to cognitive or physical disabilities, designated safe shelters may not be accessible to their needs, or a host of other issues. A position specially dedicated to ensuring these issues are addressed in any emergency evacuation is vital.

Thank you.

Amy Newman  
Anchorage, AK

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**From:** Andrea Colvin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 11, 2025 10:05 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Support for the \$5.7 million increase to Infant Learning Program

Good morning, Senator Stedman and Representative Himschoot,

I am writing to you as both a concerned citizen and a resident of Sitka. As a mother of a child currently enrolled in the Infant Learning Program (ILP), as well as a special education teacher within the Sitka School District, I want to express my deep support for this essential program. ILP plays a critical role in supporting children who experience developmental delays and their families, and I would like to highlight its immense value, not only to the children and families it serves but also to the state as a whole in maintaining efficient and effective programs.

To provide some background, ILP offers home-based early intervention services, including therapy and education, for children from birth to age 3. These services are part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), specifically Part C of the Act. Special education services for school-age children fall under Part B. Each state has the authority to set its own eligibility criteria, and Alaska's standards are among the most restrictive in the nation. Currently, a child must demonstrate a 50% delay to qualify for ILP services, while eligibility for Part B services requires a 25% delay.

Unfortunately, the ILP system in Alaska has been flat-funded for the past 11 years. During this period, the value of the funding has decreased by 25%, despite significant increases in costs for travel, qualified staff salaries, benefits, and other essential expenses. They have continued to provide services through the challenges of a global pandemic, all while working tirelessly to support our children and families.

At present, the House Finance Committee has allocated \$5.7M to the ILP budget. I strongly hope that you will support this crucial funding. The National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study (NEILS) shows that children who receive early intervention services are better prepared for success in school. In fact, 46% of all children who receive early intervention no longer need special education services by the time they enter kindergarten. Moreover, we estimate that the cost to the state for each child enrolled in special education from kindergarten through 12th grade is approximately \$230,000. Investing in early intervention to prevent the need for special education services is a far more cost-effective approach.

I wholeheartedly support the additional funding for the Infant Learning Program, and I urge you to consider the long-term benefits this investment will have on both our children and the state's fiscal health. By helping children early, we can avoid costly special education services and better prepare them to be productive citizens.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or need further information. I am more than happy to assist in any way I can. You can contact me at 206-369-5847 or via email at [andreacolvin91@gmail.com](mailto:andreacolvin91@gmail.com).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrea Colvin

Parent and Community Member of Sitka

and

Special Education Teacher, Sitka School District

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**From:** Whitney Street <wstreet@picak.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 10, 2025 4:29 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** written public testimony - ILP funding remain in the Operating Budget

Hello House Finance Committee,

I am a developmental therapist working for an ILP program in Anchorage. Our services are sometimes a families' first glance into IDEA services for children with developmental difficulties. Until enrollment most families have no idea our program exists. I had no idea ILP programs existed, as a new teacher. It was not until completing the Early Childhood Special Education Masters through UAA that I learned about the world ILP has to offer. I support the \$5.72 million increment to the ILP system/investing in the ILP system to help kids do better when they go to school and decrease their need for special education later saving the state millions every year. Perhaps with more funding there will be more outreach, and others will start recognizing ILPs and that there is help for children before they get to school. ILPs work with the most vulnerable population, babies (0-3 years old), with delays and qualifying diagnoses. These are the formative years that lay the groundwork for all future development. If we are prioritizing funding for these ages the trickle down and benefit will be seen in public schools. I was a teacher for 7 years prior to the 3 years I have been working in the ILP world. When I was a teacher, it was common knowledge that kids have been coming into kindergarten with less and less knowledge and school readiness skills. A struggle that would be mitigated for children identified and supported before entering school, through ILP programs.

Thank you for including my voice. I am available for follow-up or further questions. Please see contact information below.

**Whitney Street** M.Ed, IMH-E®  
Developmental Therapist  
Program for Infants and Children  
[wstreet@picak.org](mailto:wstreet@picak.org)  
(907) 206-0187



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

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**From:** Kari Sagel [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 10, 2025 1:52 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Infant Learning Program Increase

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

I am writing in support of increasing the amount of funding for the Infant Learning Program by the proposed 5.7 million. Any dollar Alaska invests in the most vulnerable children insures a future of safe, healthy, able, and engaged children - the real true measure of success of any government, society, community, school, or family.

Spending money now saves money later in a reduction of future services whether it is special education costs, remedial services, mental health services, or legal system costs.

Please include this funding in the budget! The Infant Learning Program helps children and families directly and when they need it most as a family.

Thanks,

Kari Sagel

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**From:** Lisa Hodges <LHodges@cfc.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 10, 2025 8:42 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Voice for the Babies!

Dear House Finance Committee,

I have been working in the Infant Learning Program for the past 15 years. I had the pleasure of meeting so many families with young children with developmental delays or disabilities. These early years are the most critical time for brain development and we have the capacity to make change and build better outcomes for these families. I have witnessed this over the years. If we invest early, we will save money in the long run in special education. I support the \$5.72 million increase to the Infant Learning Program system!

Thank you!

*Lisa Hodges, MA, IMH-E®  
Early Learning Program Coordinator  
Developmental Specialist  
Infant Mental Health Specialist*

*Center for Community  
Early Learning Program  
700 Katlian St. Suite B  
Sitka, AK 99835  
907.966.4229 (phone)  
907.500.4845 (cell)  
907.747.4868 (fax)*

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**From:** andrew haas [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 09, 2025 2:12 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** State Operating Budget - HB 53

1. Please fully fund education by raising the BSA as much as possible.
2. Please finance this by minimizing the PFD. You have a constitutional obligation to fund education. You have no constitutional requirement to spend a lot of money on the PFD.
3. Please install testing requirements for home school students. You want to ensure education standards--and I agree. Start by requiring that everyone take tests.

In 2024-5 Alaska led the nation with the percentage of education money that it received from the Feds. More than 14% of last year's money that Alaska spent on education was from the US Government. We won't be seeing COVID money again; and it's now likely that other federal education money will be eliminated. We need to fully fund education so that our schools are not closed.



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)



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**From:** Meghan Hall [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:20 PM  
**To:** John Hall  
**Cc:** Sen. James Kaufman; Rep. Julie Coulombe; House Finance; Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Re: Funding

Love it but Dunleavy is from Scranton Pennsylvania. 😞  
Guessing he got a great education there.  
Meghan

On Thu, Feb 27, 2025 at 2:16 PM John Hall <[accchamp@gmail.com](mailto:accchamp@gmail.com)> wrote:

My thoughts: the greatest under- served resource in our State are the futures of our children  
For forty some years the Legislature/Governors have spent wildly on frivolous projects and not made an  
endowment with some of the permanent fund monies for public education.  
Instead the citizens have reaped benefits of no state taxes and annual PFD: no return to the State had to  
be made .

It is now our time to make hard choices and fund the public -good by providing good education for all  
children of this state. This will take money . How to get it? No dividends of PFD for a short  
time? Starting a tax revenue system in the state ( income or sales tax)

Please, Gov Dunlevy, sign the education bills purposed by the Legislature as a start.  
You grew up and did well by the education you received in AK ( in its glory, rich days). Provide the same  
experience for these young students.  
Make this a start to your legacy as an educator - governor.

I have lived in Anchorage for 48 years. Our Four children were well served by the public education they  
received.  
We have 7 grandchildren in Anchorage going to public schools. I worry for their future  
education. Please help our schools.  
Thank you  
John Hall

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**From:** John Hall [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:16 PM  
**To:** Sen. James Kaufman; Rep. Julie Coulombe; House Finance; Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Funding

My thoughts: the greatest under- served resource in our State are the futures of our children  
For forty some years the Legislature/Governors have spent wildly on frivolous projects and not made an  
endowment with some of the permanent fund monies for public education.  
Instead the citizens have reaped benefits of no state taxes and annual PFD: no return to the State had to  
be made .

It is now our time to make hard choices and fund the public -good by providing good education for all  
children of this state. This will take money . How to get it? No dividends of PFD for a short  
time? Starting a tax revenue system in the state ( income or sales tax)

Please, Gov Dunlevy, sign the education bills purposed by the Legislature as a start.  
You grew up and did well by the education you received in AK ( in its glory, rich days). Provide the same  
experience for these young students.  
Make this a start to your legacy as an educator - governor.

I have lived in Anchorage for 48 years. Our Four children were well served by the public education they  
received.  
We have 7 grandchildren in Anchorage going to public schools. I worry for their future education. Please  
help our schools.  
Thank you  
John Hall

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**From:** Billeen Carlson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 24, 2025 4:33 PM  
**To:** House Finance; Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** It's time

I am writing to urge you to consider implementing a modest, targeted state income tax on individuals earning over \$100,000 annually to address Alaska's ongoing revenue shortfalls. As you are aware, Alaska remains the only state in the nation without an individual income tax, leaving much-needed revenue untapped—revenue that could stabilize our budget, support critical infrastructure, and ensure a sustainable economic future.

Industries such as oil and gas, commercial fishing, and tourism generate significant income within our state but contribute disproportionately little to the tax base relative to the benefits they receive. These industries rely heavily on Alaska's extensive infrastructure, including highways, bridges, ports, and airports, which are maintained at significant cost to the state.

The oil and gas industry benefits from state-subsidized roadways and port facilities for the transportation of equipment and extracted resources, while commercial fishing operations depend on harbors, navigational aids, and state-funded fishery management services. Similarly, the tourism industry profits from the upkeep of national and state parks, recreational trails, and public safety services, including emergency response and law enforcement.

These industries extract resources, utilize public lands, and leverage the state's transportation and communication networks to maximize their profits while contributing little in return to sustain these critical services. On top of this, many non-residents working in these industries extract substantial earnings from Alaska's resources while making use of our roads, ports, emergency services, and public lands—yet they take their untaxed wages out of state.

According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP), a significant portion of wages earned in Alaska leaves the state untaxed, representing a major loss of potential revenue ([itep.org](https://itep.org))

To address this imbalance, I propose a 5% income tax solely on individuals earning more than \$100,000 annually. This measure would:

- **Ensure higher earners contribute fairly:** A tax threshold of \$100,000 protects lower- and middle-income Alaskans while ensuring that those who have the most financial capacity contribute to state services.
- **Capture revenue from non-residents:** Many workers in high-earning industries, such as commercial fishing, oil extraction, and seasonal tourism, are non-residents. A state income tax would finally ensure they contribute their fair share to the infrastructure they rely on.
- **Diversify revenue sources:** Relying on oil and gas revenue alone is unsustainable, as fluctuating global oil prices repeatedly leave the state in financial uncertainty. A stable income tax would provide much-needed fiscal resilience.

## Revenue Potential and Economic Benefits

A previous ITEP study estimated that a 2.5% flat tax in Alaska could generate between \$526 million and \$696 million annually, with \$38 million to \$51 million coming from non-residents. A 5% tax on earnings above \$100,000 would likely yield even more significant revenue while ensuring that the tax burden does not disproportionately affect working-class Alaskans ([taxfoundation.org](http://taxfoundation.org)).

By ensuring that high-earning individuals and non-residents contribute to the infrastructure and services they use, we can create a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous Alaska. I urge you to champion this initiative to protect our state's future and ensure that all who benefit from Alaska's resources pay their fair share.

Thank you for your time and service to our great state. I look forward to your leadership in addressing this critical issue.

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**From:** Billeen Carlson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 24, 2025 2:50 PM  
**To:** House Finance; Senate Finance Committee; gov.pressoffice@alaska.gov; House Labor and Commerce; Senate Labor and Commerce  
**Subject:** Project 2025's Harmful Economic Impact on Alaska

I am reaching out to bring your attention to the significant economic risks that **Project 2025** poses to Alaska. This policy agenda, developed by conservative think tanks, includes sweeping deregulations and federal restructuring that would have **disproportionate and damaging effects on our state's economy, Indigenous communities, and essential services.**

### Key Concerns for Alaska

1. **Threats to Fishing & Tourism** – Proposed rollbacks of environmental protections (including the Endangered Species Act and Antiquities Act) could cause environmental degradation, harming industries that generate billions for Alaska's economy.
2. **Loss of Healthcare Access** – The proposed repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would strip healthcare from thousands of Alaskans, increasing financial strain on hospitals and clinics, especially in rural areas.
3. **Severe Education Funding Cuts** – The elimination of the U.S. Department of Education would result in lost **Title I** funding, reducing resources for Alaska's schools and disproportionately harming low-income and rural students.
4. **Social Security & Medicare Reforms** – Proposed increases to the Social Security retirement age and Medicaid benefit caps would hurt Alaska's seniors and low-income populations, reducing consumer spending and economic stability.

These policy shifts **prioritize deregulation at the expense of Alaska's long-term economic health.** Given our unique reliance on natural resources, tourism, and federal support for education and healthcare, **Project 2025's agenda would leave our state particularly vulnerable.**

[I have attached a document](#) with **detailed sources and cross-referenced analysis** outlining these threats. I urge you and your colleagues on the **Finance Committees** to assess these risks carefully and advocate for **Alaska's economic and environmental security.**

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**From:** Billeen Carlson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 21, 2025 8:13 PM  
**To:** House Education; House Finance  
**Subject:** Growing our own

Alaska has long grappled with alarmingly high teacher turnover rates, particularly in our rural communities. Recent data reveals that approximately 22% of our teachers leave their positions annually, with rural areas experiencing an even higher turnover of 36%—significantly above the national average of 16% .

In stark contrast, educators who receive their training within Alaska demonstrate a remarkable retention rate, with nearly 90% choosing to remain and serve in our communities. This compelling statistic underscores the critical importance of homegrown teacher preparation programs.

One such exemplary initiative is Educators Rising Alaska, a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program funded through the Perkins Grant. This program is dedicated to cultivating the next generation of Alaskan educators by providing high school students with hands-on teaching experiences and mentorship opportunities. By focusing on local talent, Educators Rising ensures that our future teachers are not only well-prepared but also deeply committed to their home communities.

Administered by the University of Alaska system, Educators Rising places a strong emphasis on Indigenous education, equipping future educators with the cultural competencies necessary to effectively teach in rural and Native Alaskan communities. However, this vital focus has recently come under unwarranted scrutiny from the federal government. The current administration’s executive orders have led to funding freezes and layoffs that disproportionately impact programs serving Indigenous populations .

The abrupt nature of these federal actions has sown confusion and threatens the stability of educational programs across Alaska. Given that over half of our state’s revenue is derived from federal funds, the implications of these cuts are profound .

In light of these challenges, it is imperative that the State of Alaska takes decisive and proactive measures to safeguard our educational infrastructure. I urge you to consider the following actions:

1. **State Funding Allocation:** Increase state financial support for teacher preparation programs like Educators Rising to reduce dependence on unpredictable federal funding.

2. Policy Advocacy: Vigorously oppose federal policies that undermine Indigenous education and advocate for the preservation of programs that are tailored to the unique needs of our rural communities.

3. Community Engagement: Foster partnerships between state agencies, local school districts, and Indigenous organizations to create a unified front in support of our educators and students.

The potential collapse of our public education system, especially in rural and remote areas, is a crisis we cannot afford. By investing in and protecting our homegrown educational programs, we not only ensure the retention of quality teachers but also honor our commitment to the diverse communities that make Alaska unique.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

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**From:** John Hargis <jhargis@lysd.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 3:28 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Fwd: Written Testimony in Support of ANSEP  
**Attachments:** SupportofANSEPLYSD.pdf

Please find my attached letter in support of ANSEP for inclusion in the record.

--

John Hargis  
Superintendent  
907-591-2411  
[jhargis@lysd.org](mailto:jhargis@lysd.org)





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**From:** Friendly, Randall J <randall\_friendly@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 2:44 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Written Testimony  
**Attachments:** ANSEP\_written\_testimony.docx

Hello,

Please find my written testimony attached to this email.

Randall J. Friendly  
Waterfowl Biologist  
Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge  
807 Chief Eddie Hoffman Highway  
PO Box 346  
Bethel, AK 99559  
Office: 907-543-1038

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**From:** Michael Bourdukofsky [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:02 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Support for ANSEP Funding in HB 53  
**Attachments:** ANSEP Letter of Support HB 53 - MB.pdf

Attached and below is my letter of support for ANSEP Funding in HB 53.

**House Finance Committee**

Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Building  
Juneau, AK 99801

**Subject: Support for ANSEP Funding in HB 53**

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

I strongly urge you to continue full, *if not increased*, funding support of ANSEP. For more than 30 years, ANSEP has been an exemplary program that built a nationally recognized, award winning, longitudinal education model. Through the persistence of past and current ANSEP leadership, and a strong community of partners, parents, students, and alumni, ANSEP is making a difference in the lives of thousands of Alaskans.

ANSEP is making college more attainable, affordable, and relevant for thousands of students across Alaska and the **ANSEP Acceleration Academy** model is a major factor in these achievements. All Alaskan's deserve quality, affordable, and meaningful education experiences that propel them to be the future leaders of our state. ANSEP is making this possible for every single Acceleration Academy student. In a time when our state and our nation are looking for examples of *successful academic models that increase access to and supports merit-based opportunities*, ANSEP has been leading this charge for decades by "raising the bar" for all students. Consider these ANSEP Acceleration Academy students' achievements:

- Students graduate high school with an average of 63 college credits – nearly two years of university coursework completed.
- Families and the state save millions by reducing the need for university remediation and shortening time to degree completion.
- Students avoid three or more years of tuition and living expenses, easing financial burdens and increasing access to higher education.
- Higher retention and success rates strengthen Alaska's workforce and economy.

If you cut funding to ANSEP, you are diminishing 30 years of progress. Progress towards establishing an education and workforce development model that can be replicated and expanded to serve every Alaskan. Now is the time to be investing in successful academic models like ANSEP... not divesting. Don't be the leaders that set our state back decades. Now is the time to invest in the future of Alaska by **increasing** support in ANSEP!

Sincerely,

Michael Bourdukofsky  
ANSEP and UAA Alum, Class of 2003  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Samantha Ackerly [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 2:03 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** Gracie.Minnick@mssca.org  
**Subject:** Testimony for ILP in State Budget  
**Attachments:** Key Coalition - Bodhi Wallen.pages

To Whom it May Concern -

I am not able to attend in person but have written a testimony regarding why funding from state legislature is important for the ILP program in Alaska.

Thanks,

--

Samantha C. Ackerly

Cell: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

Unable to open attached content.

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**From:** Jenny Weisshaupt <jenny.weisshaupt@ccsjuneau.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2025 12:19 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Testimony this morning  
**Attachments:** Weisshaupt Public Testimony 2-26-24.docx

Dear House Finance Committee,

I wanted to share a copy of the testimony I provided at the Senate Finance Committee meeting this morning.

Please feel free to connect if you have questions about CACs, and also if you'd like to visit the CAC in Juneau. We are located near McDonalds.

Sincerely,

Jenny

**Jenny Weisshaupt**  
**SAFE CAC Program Manager**  
Direct Phone: (907) 463-6101  
Secure Fax: (888) 912-0869  
[ccsak.org/safechildadvocacycenter](https://ccsak.org/safechildadvocacycenter)



# LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 32089 · Mountain Village, Alaska 99632

Phone: (907) 591-2411

[www.lysd.org](http://www.lysd.org)

**George Smith**  
Chairman

**John Hargis**  
Superintendent

March 12, 2025

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program (ANSEP) and to urge the committee to restore full state funding for this critical initiative. ANSEP is the nation's most successful longitudinal education program for STEM-dual enrollment. For 30 years, it has created transformative opportunities for thousands of students across Alaska. The recent proposal to reduce ANSEP's base funding would have devastating consequences for the Acceleration Academy High Schools and the students and communities they serve. This program is not just an educational initiative—it is an investment in Alaska's future.

Interest in ANSEP remains exceptionally strong in the Lower Yukon School District (LYSD), where more than 70 students recently applied for just 32 seats in this nationally recognized program. The demand clearly demonstrates how vital ANSEP is to students and families in rural Alaska, providing them with unprecedented access to higher education and career pathways in STEM fields.

Through ANSEP, students graduate high school with an average of 63 college credits, significantly reducing the time and cost required to complete a university degree. Some students have even achieved remarkable milestones, such as earning 125 college credits before graduating high school. By reducing the need for university remediation and shortening time to degree completion, ANSEP saves families and the state millions of dollars while strengthening Alaska's workforce and economy.

The impact of ANSEP extends beyond academics. It provides students—many from rural communities and underrepresented backgrounds—with the resources, mentorship, and hands-on experiences necessary to succeed in STEM careers. The program empowers young Alaskans to pursue higher education, secure well-paying jobs, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

As a strong advocate for student success and workforce development in Alaska, I urge you to recognize the immense value ANSEP brings to our state. Please restore full funding to ensure that future generations of Alaskan students continue to benefit from this outstanding program.

Sincerely,

John Hargis  
Superintendent  
[jhargis@lysd.org](mailto:jhargis@lysd.org)

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name Randall Friendly and I am from the small community of Tuntutuliak in western Alaska. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed reduction in funding for ANSEP. As someone who grew up in a rural Alaska community with very limited educational opportunities, ANSEP was instrumental in helping me achieve my career as a Waterfowl Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Before I learned about ANSEP, I had always aspired to further my education beyond high school and pursue a professional career. Rural schools lack many of the resources available in larger communities or cities. These smaller schools often cannot offer advanced coursework and adequate materials, putting students at a disadvantage when competing for higher education and career opportunities.

I feel I speak for all rural Alaskans that ANSEP opens opportunities for anyone that wants to pursue a field in science or engineering. As a member of the ANSEP community and as a former student, I participated in both the Acceleration Academy and Summer Bridge programs, where I earned college credits early and built connections that ultimately led me to my career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Beyond academics, ANSEP also plays a critical role in supporting rural students as they transition from small, slow-paced communities to larger urban environments. Many rural students experience “cultural shock” when leaving home for college, struggling to adapt to a very different lifestyle than what they are accustomed to. ANSEP fosters a strong community like-minded peers, helping students adjust, help each other, and succeed for everyone that needs it.

The proposed reduction in ANSEP’s base funding will severely impact the students from all over Alaska. As a person who grew up with a subsistence lifestyle and as a professional who benefited from this program, I sometimes meet students from rural villages who tell me they want to do what I am doing today. Without ANSEP, I would not be where I am today, and I would not have had the opportunity to inspire the next generation of Alaskan born STEM professionals.

I hope the House Finance Committee reconsiders the proposal of reducing the budget for ANSEP. **Reducing ANSEP’s funding means reducing the chances of success for students who need it from Alaska.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Randall Friendly  
Waterfowl Biologist  
USFWS – Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

March 12, 2025

**House Finance Committee**

Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Building  
Juneau, AK 99801

**Subject: Support for ANSEP Funding in HB 53**

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

I strongly urge you to continue full, *if not increased*, funding support of ANSEP. For more than 30 years, ANSEP has been an exemplary program that built a nationally recognized, award winning, longitudinal education model. Through the persistence of past and current ANSEP leadership, and a strong community of partners, parents, students, and alumni, ANSEP is making a difference in the lives of thousands of Alaskans.

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- Higher retention and success rates strengthen Alaska's workforce and economy.

If you cut funding to ANSEP, you are diminishing 30 years of progress. Progress towards establishing an education and workforce development model that can be replicated and expanded to serve every Alaskan. Now is the time to be investing in successful academic models like ANSEP... not divesting. Don't be the leaders that set our state back decades. Now is the time to invest in the future of Alaska by **increasing** support in ANSEP!

Sincerely,



Michael Bourdukofsky  
ANSEP and UAA Alum, Class of 2003

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on the proposed operating budget. My name is Jenny Weisshaupt and I have lived in Southeast Alaska for 12 years. January 2024, I left 8 years of state service to pursue frontline work as the Program Manager of the SAFE Child Advocacy Center, a program of Catholic Community Service. This morning, I am speaking on behalf of CACs, which were left out of the operating budget despite intent language and Alaska Statute 47.17.033 which requires the Office of Children's Services to use CACs when available.

The CAC model is a public-private partnership that drives an efficient, coordinated response to the different systems responding to child cases of alleged sexual and physical abuse. We are in a sense, the safety net that holds the parties together with an intended purpose to reduce additional trauma to children, and to increase prosecutions of offenders. There are over 900 CACs nationwide.

In addition to allegations of sexual and physical abuse, SAFE CAC also accepts referrals for forensic interviews from around Southeast Alaska related to neglect, drug endangerment, sex trafficking, internet crimes and others as requested. This fiscal year, we have received over 100 referrals from OCS, police, Alaska State Troopers, the Alaska Bureau of Investigation, the United States Secret Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Homeland Security. We have also signed agreements with the US military. We anticipate we will receive another 75 referrals through the end of FY25. When needed, we offer same-week availability for mental health counseling and are the only location in Juneau to able to perform pediatric forensic medical exams.

CACs only exist through and at the service of our Multidisciplinary team. In Juneau, that includes law enforcement, child protection, prosecution, medical, mental health, the Division of Juvenile Justice, Tlingit and Haida, the school district, and the domestic violence shelter. Our MDT meets twice monthly and our case coordinators track cases throughout the legal process. Our family advocate helps the child and their family to get connected to local resources and to navigate the legal system and court process. In 2023, both our long-time forensic interviewers resigned, and our MDT partners experienced what it would be like to not have a CAC. They expressed desperation and almost complete inability to effectively meet the needs of the community and protect children.

In addition to direct services, by the nature of the work that we do, we develop a very specific expertise. As part of our grant requirements, we provide outreach and training to professionals, parents, and the broader community, including to mandatory reporters and schools. As capacity allows, we want to also support families for cases that may not meet the threshold of our law enforcement and OCS partners, such as child-on-child cases. We hope through increased public outreach and education, that we can increase the number of children recognizing and disclosing abuse.

We all know that when people do not heal from abuse, it can be a root cause of excessive drug and alcohol use, suicidal thoughts and attempts, and other health and behavioral issues that have ripple effects throughout families and communities. For these reasons and more, I thank you again for this opportunity to ask for the inclusion of CACs in the FY26 operating budget.