

House Public Testimony  
HB 286 Operating Budget FY19  
HB285 Mental Health Budget FY19

Compiled emails  
March 4-5, 2018

**From:** Beth Klein [mailto:eklein@ruralcap.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 05, 2018 9:27 AM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Comments

Good morning,

My name is Beth Klein and I am the Services Supervisor for RurAL CAP Head Start. I want to thank you for your continued support of early childhood education and programming. It is inspiring to see the success of our programs in 24 communities across Alaska. School readiness is imperative to the success of our children and Head Start gives them just that, a head start.

Thank you all for all that you do

Beth Klein  
Head Start Services Supervisor  
Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc.  
[bklein@ruralcap.com](mailto:bklein@ruralcap.com)  
Direct #(907) 865-7343  
Toll Free 1 800 478-7227  
Ext. 7343

**From:** Kluti Kaah Head Start [REDACTED]@ruralcap.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 05, 2018 9:11 AM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Early Childhood Education

Hello,

My name is Suzy Rhodes. I would like to thank you for your support of Early Childhood Education. I live in the Glennallen/Copper Center area. We have a local school district and the only other early childhood education in the area is the RuralCap Head Start: Kluti-Kaah Head Start. It has been an amazing program for the kids in this area. This program does many great things, providing early childhood education and providing early screenings in health and things such as Special Education needs. I think that there is absolutely no better way for money to be spent than on our young kids, hence our future.

Thank you for all that you do,  
Suzy Rhodes

**From:** Lynn Whitmore [REDACTED]@acsalaska.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 05, 2018 5:48 AM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Testimony Regarding Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Grants

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am sending this e-mail encouraging you to budget adequate support staff for the administration of grant requests utilizing Pittman-Roberson and Dingell-Johnson funding. Many members of my community hunt and fish and utilize this great state's resources. We buy our licenses and equipment to do so. It would be really nice if we had the opportunity to use some of those funds for projects to improve our access, conservation and restoration of fish and wildlife resources in our neighborhood.

We cannot even begin to raise matching funds for a project if there is no agency able to administer our grant applications. I understand State resources are under a lot of stress but somebody in some state is going to receive those funds if we cannot manage them ourselves.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this comment.

...Lynn  
Anchor Point

**From:** Robert Coghill [REDACTED]@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 03, 2018 1:43 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Mental Health Budget

I am writing to ask you support the following funding in the budget you are considering today.

- Substance Use Disorderly funding for Treatment and Community Support at the Governor's request. To halt the damage from substance abuse we have to address the consumer of legal and illegal substances.

- Please support the sub committees funding for Hospital beds for mental health issues. This will go a long way toward meeting the need.

- Also, I ask you to support the sub committees proposal for API Alaska Psychiatric Institute. Court mandated beds are creating a situation where others with severe mental illness are unable to receive appropriate services.

- Lastly, I ask you to consider that Public Defenders are underfunded and due to impossible caseloads there exists a situation whereby justice is not timely or swift. Victims do not receive appropriate justice and the cost to the State increases in many areas.

Thank you for your consideration,

Robert A. Coghill Jr.

[REDACTED]  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

**From:** Christy McMurren [REDACTED]@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 04, 2018 3:45 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** mental health operating budget

I am writing to encourage you to fiscally support public guardians in the Office of Public Advocacy. Their caseloads are so high that the guardians cannot keep up with the needs of their clients. I collaborate with GAL's on behalf of children in state's custody. These are babies, toddlers and older children who have been entrusted to our care by the courts. They need a legal advocate to speak for them and their best interest. The number of children assigned to any one GAL has risen remarkably in the past two years. If we don't take care of these children now, we will pay for it later.

I am also asking you to support 41 more positions in the Public Assistance Field Services. The problems caused by people not having insurance, food, and help with rent just cascade into more and more problems. I don't think it helps our state as a whole to have waitlists as long as a month for help with getting food, for instance.

**Recidivism Reduction Services - Third Year**

Please support the Governor's request of \$375,000 state funds (GF) to provide access to community reentry and rehabilitation supports for returning citizens after incarceration.

Funds support community reentry and rehabilitation services that may include substance abuse and/or mental health treatment, housing and employment assistance, health care, peer support and recovery services, case management, life skills and financial training, and more. Research shows that community supports greatly increase a returning citizen's chances for rehabilitation, and decreases the likelihood they will reoffend.

Thirdly, I am in favor of continuing funds for returning citizens who have been incarcerated. When people coming out of jail or prison do not have any community support, then they are likely to go back to jail or prison and we have the same revolving door as before. I applaud the state for being willing to try a new approach to dealing with recidivism. Now, let's put some money where our mouth is. Again, it's cheaper in the long run to do it right the first time.

Fourthly, and perhaps, most importantly, we, as a state, must confront the ongoing crisis in our child protection system. It is not cost effective to start to train new caseworkers, only to have them quit under the enormous burden of their job. The information on how to effectively manage a child protection system is readily available. Again, it's cheaper in the long run to do it right. Never mind the cost to our state's children. Babies can't wait! PLEASE fund more caseworkers so that they can do the job they want to do. The investment in training caseworkers is worth it, if we can keep them. As with GAL and child protection, we need to fund more public defenders. We'll pay more in the long run.

Do you sense a theme here? Thank you for your consideration of these efforts. Just because we don't fund these agencies doesn't mean the problems go away. They just come back bigger and harder to manage.

Christy McMurren  
Anchorage, Ak

**From:** Carol Carman [mailto:district9@mtaonline.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 05, 2018 1:31 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB 285 and HB 286

Hello House Finance,

Looking at the budget, I have some questions and some really disturbing thoughts.

Why is the **PFD** calculated in the budget?

- Are you trying to manipulate us into thinking the PFD is an 'expense' rather than a 'royalty payment'????
- The PFD is not calculated by statute AGAIN - you are stealing from the people AGAIN.

Why is **Commerce and Economic Development** reduced by 27%?

- Shouldn't you be encouraging our economy?

Why is **Health and Social Services** increased by 19.5%?

- Why are you taking from the economy to provide more welfare or medicaid?

Why do you keep **INCREASING** the budget???

- You are not showing **ANY** fiscal common sense.

*Carol Carman*  
*Chair, ARP District 9E*  
907-746-8670 - [Facebook](#)



*Promoting Public Safety &  
Strengthening Our Community*

March 4, 2018

Alaska House Finance Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
120 4<sup>th</sup> Street, RM 3  
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HB 285 and HB 286, the Mental Health and Operating Budgets

Dear House Finance Committee:

The Juneau Reentry Coalition (JREC) is a collaboration of individuals, community stakeholders, public and not-for-profit agencies, faith-based and business partners who are united and committed to reducing recidivism among ex-offenders returning to our community. The mission of the JREC is to promote public safety by identifying and implementing strategies that increase a former prisoner's well-being within the community and reduces the likelihood of their return to prison through recidivating.

JREC supports continued State investments into recidivism reduction services and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment and community supports. JREC asks that you continue investing into these community programs in the operating and mental health budgets.

Thank you,

Don Habeger  
Community Coordinator  
Juneau Reentry Coalition