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From: Yvonne Drozdowicz-Somfleth [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 5, 2026 2:09 PM
To: House Education
Subject: HB 261

Greetings,

My name is Yvonne Drozdowicz-Somfleth, and I am from Coffman Cove, AK. I am a part of the Southeast Island School District, as a parent of a 1st grader and paraprofessional.

I am writing this email, **in support of HB 261**. When we moved to Prince of Wales Island, we were a semi-retired couple, with grown children living their lives in Oregon. We didn't have to think about raising children, and all the things that come with it. (education, sports, teenager issues etc) Alas, this was short-lived, as my son had a son, and due to extreme circumstances, we brought the baby here, and we are now his legal guardians.

A few years ago, he began his school life at the Howard Valentine School, Coffman Cove, and I was told about "counts" of students in schools, that determined if a school was to shutter its doors or not. It bothered me, as now we have an elementary student, a few jobs as well, AND this could be in peril if we dipped below 10 students!

My first question was where do kids go to school then...we are literally either 45 min away or hour and fifteen minutes away from any school. In the winter, without a proper vehicle, getting a young child to school is almost impossible. I was told that the district would "bus" the kids to the nearest facility. So, technically I would expect my elementary child to spend up to 3 hours a day, **EXTRA**, just to go to school! I realize we chose to live remotely, yet to subject a youngster to not only a full day of learning, but to add travel time like this is borderline cruel, and a hardship! Especially because we have a beautiful school right in our small town!

There are many other ways to save money within our schools. One must just be creative, and receptive to different ideas. Parents, teachers, administrators and the community can work on ideas that could bring results.

Please, please, support HB 261! The fate of educating children in the great state of Alaska could be drastically affected if this goes the other way!

Thank you for your time in reading my letter.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Drozdowicz-Somfleth

[REDACTED]
Prince of Wales Island



