

## James Ellis

---

**From:** amdg@alaska.net  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 28, 2013 9:35 AM  
**To:** James Ellis  
**Subject:** Testimony on HJR 1

James, here is the testimony I hope to be able to offer by phone at tomorrow's hearing.

My name is Kristina Johannes and I am in favor of HJR 1. I represent myself.

This amendment will remove a clause from our constitution that unnecessarily restricts the right of the legislature to define public purpose in view of the conditions prevailing at each time in our history. There is no good reason to keep this restriction on our legislature in place. It is not required by the federal constitution.

Our legislators should have the maximum freedom to make decisions. This is a great opportunity to effect that change. Legislators already have this freedom in regards to the other public purposes; why should education be any different?

Barrie White, a constitutional convention delegate, urged the removal of this clause warning that it would lead us into trouble. I think his warning was prophetic. Because of this clause, the Alaska Supreme Court has restricted the right of the people to debate the issue of educational reform. That's why it is necessary to not only remove this clause but to also insert the clause that clarifies to the Courts that the people want their freedom back. I ask you to support this amendment.

Thank you.

## Support for educational choice

Edward A. Kornkven [kornkven@alaska.net]

Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2013 1:31 PM

To: Rep. Lynn Gattis

Edward A. Kornkven  
108 Dunbar Avenue  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
(907) 378-6883  
kornkven@alaska.net  
February 27, 2013

Dear Rep. Gattis,

Thank you for considering the proposal to allow the Alaska Constitution to be amended to permit school vouchers for private education. My wife and I have overseen the non-traditional education of our children for over 20 years. Two of them have graduated from UAF and one will graduate from UAF this spring. Two are pursuing non-academic paths and the youngest will graduate from the IDEA high school program in May. In the early days of our homeschooling, there was widespread and steadfast opposition from the "education establishment," and much doom was forecast about the damage to children and the public education system that would stem from home education. The proof was in the pudding and, while far from perfect, home education has demonstrated that those fears were mostly groundless.

During my morning coffee in a local coffee shop, I heard a radio ad from the NEA recycling the same familiar message: protect the status quo at all costs. Of course it is we parents, and our children, and the taxpayers of Alaska who are paying the cost of an educational monopoly in Alaska. It will no doubt be argued that parents such as myself who want educational options already have them. But as you well know, education costs money and an unaffordable "choice" is no choice. That is why we have public education, after all.

The reasons for supporting parental choice in education are numerous, but one that is foremost to me is ending the monopoly in education. If that monopoly were working well for all our children, there might be a stronger argument for it, but we don't allow monopolies in most other arenas, especially when it can be shown that alternatives can improve the product. In the case of education, alternatives can improve the quality not just for those who choose them, but also for education as a whole. There is every reason to expect competition to improve quality even for those who elect conventional public schooling (likely the great majority).

The objection that parents might use their voucher to educate their children in a school that other taxpayers don't support is a longstanding red herring. First of all, that is already happening to many parents who don't have the resources to pay for their own options. Secondly, consider all the education options that are not implied by educational choice: the state is not being asked to set up a preferred religion; the state is not being asked to set up private schools and force unwilling students and parents to attend; the state is not even being asked to promote any particular schools. The state is merely being asked to remove an outdated and misguided roadblock to freedom. This is also an issue of liberty. There is something incongruous about a state of freedom-loving people being denied such a fundamental choice as the education of their children. This consideration alone surely supersedes the blatant self-interest of a national teachers' union. Please support the steps required to make real educational choice available for all

2/28/13

Support for educational choice

Alaskans, beginning with allowing the constitutional issue to come before the voters. The actual risk is minimal and the likely benefits to families, education and freedom for Alaskans are great. Thank you for hearing me, and thank you for your service.

Sincerely,  
Edward Kornkven

## **HJR1**

Jon Agosti [partsrfel@gci.net]

**Sent:**Friday, February 22, 2013 8:12 AM

**To:** Rep. Lynn Gattis

Hello Representative,

I and many others support HJR1, the constitutional amendment regarding private school funding, and urge you to support this bill.

Thank you,

Jon Agosti

2324 Loussac Dr.

Anchorage

**HJR 1**

david nees [davidneesak@gmail.com]

Sent: Saturday, February 23, 2013 12:54 PM

To: Rep. Lynn Gattis

I sent this to ADN reporter Lisa,  
feel free to share

Lisa,  
I believe you and any who testified yesterday are confused or worse yet misinformed as to what HJR1 is. The proposed amendment to the state constitution has no language in it about vouchers. It only removes the barrier for funding private school with public money.

It was put in by the education committee in 1957 of which there were 6 members, Mr Fisher was one of 6. He presents this as a non controversial clause that all committee members agreed with, this is simply not the case. They were working under the limitations of the time.

All of the research for the constitution would have come from the UAF library and the law books of the attendees and the other states constitutions, available in book form only.

In 2013 Alaska with the advent of modern tech. such as the internet it simply takes about one hour to find the minutes of the constitutional convention day 44.

It is noteworthy because you finally see there was lively debate about Article VII.

About halfway down the record you will see there was some discussion about whether to include the work indirect in the language, some discussion of the meaning of private and public.

There was reference to a 1947 supreme court case (since over ruled) discussion of the same clause being in 21 other states (Blaine Amendment). Mr Fischer even admits in his testimony he had never heard of the Blaine amendment, so the drafters were not even aware of a failed US constitutional amendment, limits of the time. The president of the convention makes the mistake of stating Thomas Jefferson founded public education, in fact he established the University of Virginia.

Again limitations of the time. Mr Coghill was incorrect as a quick search on wikipedia proves.

"In 1838, he founded and edited *The Common School Journal*. In this journal, Mann targeted the public school and its problems. His six main principles were: (1) the public should no longer remain ignorant; (2) that such education should be paid for, controlled, and sustained by an interested public; (3) that this education will be best provided in schools that embrace children from a variety of backgrounds; (4) that this education must be non-sectarian; (5) that this education must be taught by the spirit, methods, and discipline of a free society; and (6) that education should be provided by well-trained, professional teachers. Mann worked for more and better equipped school houses, longer school years (until 16 years old), higher pay for teachers, and a wider curriculum.

Under the auspices of the board, but at his own expense, he went to Europe in 1843 to visit schools, especially in Prussia, and his seventh annual report, published after his return, embodied the results of his tour. Many editions of this report were printed, not only in Massachusetts, but in other states, in some cases by private individuals and in others by legislatures; several editions were issued in England. In 1852, he supported the

decision to adopt the Prussian education system in Massachusetts. Shortly after Massachusetts adopted the Prussian system, the Governor of New York set up the same method in twelve different New York schools on a trial basis."

The Alaska constitutional framers were working under the limitation of 1957 Alaska. such as.

No road connecting Fairbanks and Anchorage.

One state University in Fairbanks, a single railroad route.

A newly completed road to the US. A territory who's economy hinged on the federal government, a territory that was the poorest in the United States.

In 1957 Alaska

There were no village schools as native education was done at regional schools, since overturned by The Moly Hooch decision.

So funding of village schools was not an issue as missionary schools in villages paid their own way.

Educating Natives was not even considered by the framers.

The BIA ran the Indian schools with Federal dollars.

Natives had to go past signs at stores that said "No dogs or Indians" we just celebrated. When you are in Juneau you have can sit in the **Elizabeth Jean Peratrovich gallery**.

**Discrimination against natives was the norm in 1957.**

Today in Alaska we have 100% state funded schools in towns and villages across the state. They are failing to educate those children. The system may need an adjustment.

The constitution is a living document. Changes have to be regarded as responses to the changes in the state.

The PFD Alaskans enjoyed was a hotly contested Constitutional amendment that almost did not make it out of the committee along with lowering voter age to 18 and the limited entry system. There have been 44 attempts to change our constitution 18 have gone to the voters. It is part of the normal ebb and flow of change.

I suggest that you and the rest of the media would begin referring to this as what it is a proposed Constitutional amendment, not the voucher amendment.

David Nees

244-9103

522-1118

**hjr1**

Vickie Walber [dvwalber@acsalaska.net]

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 26, 2013 8:03 PM

**To:** Rep. Lynn Gattis

Why cant the state give us the choice to send our children to the school of our choice,I want my children to have at least the same chance I did in school,

## HJR1

Bertha Groeneweg [groeneweg@acsalaska.net]

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 26, 2013 7:23 AM

**To:** Rep. Lynn Gattis

We strongly urge you to support passing the constitutional amendment  
HJR1.

Bob & Bertha Groeneweg

Anchorage, AK



**FW: SCHOOL VOUCHERS**

LIO Ketchikan

**Sent:** Friday, February 22, 2013 1:47 PM**To:** Sen. Gary Stevens; Rep. Lynn Gattis

FYI...

Shannon Farstad

Legislative Information Office

1900 First Ave, Suite 310

Ketchikan, Ak 99901

907-225-9675

Click [HERE](#) to visit the Alaska State Legislature WebsiteClick [HERE](#) to watch live streaming of the Alaska State LegislatureClick [HERE](#) to send your legislator a Public Opinion Message during session

---

**From:** Ronald Kruckenberg [mailto:namu@alaska.net]**Sent:** Friday, February 22, 2013 1:16 PM**To:** LIO Ketchikan**Subject:** SCHOOL VOUCHERS

It's way past due for choice on our children's education. We need to have school vouchers shared equally so as the parents have a choice to raise with the school that fits the family needs and not the Dangerous NEA decisions they seed deemed to force onto us. Be conservative and spend less for our kids and with out all the greed in middle making us do what we do not want. it is not fare to charge us taxes and pay full charges because we want God in our curriculum privately. You make us PAY AND PAY. We do not want baby sitters; we want educators that stand up with morals and values we stand for. We have home schooled our three children. All tested nationally with advanced scoring. Two Eagle Scouts, One Cub Bridging over to Boy Scouts. Two black belts and One red belt, two in UAA now. We have done well for HOME SCHOOL. We need a CHANGE for the future!

Thank you for doing the right thing,

Ron and Kateryna Kruckenberg

# KENAI LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: [Kenai.Lio@akleg.gov](mailto:Kenai.Lio@akleg.gov)

**Phone: 907-283-2030 / Fax: 907-283-3075**

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME: Ron and Kateryna Kruckenberg

REPRESENTING: \_\_\_\_\_

BILL # or SUBJECT: HJR1

COMMITTEE & DATE: HEDC 022213

It's way past due for choice on our children's education. We need to have school vouchers shared equally so as the parents have a choice to raise with the school that fits the family needs and not the Dangerous NEA decisions they seed deemed to force onto us. Be conservative and spend less for our kids and with out all the greed in middle making us do what we do not want. it is not fare to charge us taxes and pay full charges because we want God in our curriculum privately. You make us PAY AND PAY. We do not want baby sitters; we want educators that stand up with morals and values we stand for. We have home schooled our three children. All tested nationally with advanced scoring. Two Eagle Scouts, One Cub Bridging over to Boy Scouts. Two black belts and One red belt, two in UAA now. We have done well for HOME SCHOOL. We need a CHANGE for the future!

Thank you for doing the right thing,

Ron and Kateryna Kruckenberg

[illegible]

**School Choice HJR1****Linn McCabe** [linn.mccabe@gmail.com]**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2013 11:34 AM**To:** Rep. Lynn Gattis**Categories:** Red Category

Dear Representative Gattis,

Please pass the school choice resolution so parents can send their children to the school of their own choosing. Many children do not flourish in the cookie-cutter environment of public schools.

When my children were in the school system, I often wished that I could afford to send them to a different school. It might have alleviated a lot of heartache for all of us as we had some very difficult times after one of them fell in with the wrong crowd.

Competition is a good thing in business; it drives prices down and quality upward. If schools knew they weren't assured of a certain number of students, they would work harder to do a better job of educating our kids.

Our kids are the future of this state and country. It's time to think outside the box because our current system is not working.

I don't know the dropout percentages, but I have heard they are very high. Additionally, if we expect to compete in the world, we need to raise the bar in reading, writing, math and science.

Thank you!

Respectfully,

Linn M McCabe  
1850 Parkway Dr  
Anchorage, AK 99504

(907)242-9474

Sent from my iPhone

**HJR1****Allen Hippler** [allen@faulknerwalsh.com]**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2013 9:40 AM**To:** Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux; Rep. Benjamin Nageak; Rep. Lora Reinbold; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Peggy Wilson;  
rep.harriet.drummon@akleg.gov**Categories:**Red Category

Dear Representatives:

Thank you for your public service.

I am writing to ask you to support HJR1, as a prerequisite to educational reform. The reason why goes back to our constitution. Alaska's constitution proclaims a 'right' to education. The question is simply, "How can we best deliver this 'right' to the people we think are entitled to it?" Public schools are not the only answer. A full belt of tools to address this question would include private schools, homeschooling, and support for those methods of education delivery. Providing competition and options will improve results for all children.

Thank you!

Allen Hippler

CFO

Faulkner Walsh Constructors

Rivercity Development, LLC

Top Fuel Co, LLC

Suite 881, LLC

Kuskokwim Seafoods

(907)344-2522 tel

(907)344-2836 fax

## HJR-1 & SJR-9 - School Vouchers

Bucket [akbucket@alaska.com]

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2013 7:02 AM

**To:** AK House [akbucket@alaska.com]; AK Senators [akbucket@alaska.com]

All,

It is a crime that the average citizen is disenfranchised from the government that supposedly represents them.

A case in point is HJR-1 and SJR-9 which attempts to bring an issue to the vote of the electorate.

Those that oppose (aka Les Gara and his ilk)) have unlimited funds (stolen from the rest of us) to fly legions of union hacks to Juneau to fight any change for the better of our public educational system.

These self serving maggots want to continue their unlimited funding at the public's expense.

It is imperative that school choice public funding be fixed (a small start) – requiring a vote of the folks.

The public education establishment is a rancid black hole light years in the rear view mirror – as are our children's educational achievements.

I should like to add this missive in the record in **SUPPORT** for both these proposed pieces of legislation – unlike those special interests mentioned above I do not have the funds (public or private) to attend in person to testify.

--

Thomas B. Wood  
Eagle River, AK 99577  
907.227.8844

## HJR1/K-12 Parental Choice support

Yannick Hodgins [yannick@alaska.com]

Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 2:05 PM

To: Rep. Lynn Gattis

Dear Representative Gattis:

I am e-mailing as a parent of two children in elementary school. My son is in third grade and my daughter is in first grade. Because of my family's experience with the public school system here in Anchorage, I fully support the passage of HJR1 and K-12 Parental Choice education.

I firmly believe that every child has his or her own learning style, and unfortunately a regular public school can't teach children according to their individual learning style. It's one size fits all. Yes, there are charter schools, but the demand severely outweighs the number of seats available each year with waiting lists of over 300 at some of these charter schools. When my son entered kindergarten we lotteried for 5 different charter/alternative school and got into none of them. Therefore, we were forced to choose between the neighborhood public school or home school. We chose public school and hoped for the best.

It wasn't long before my son started coming home in tears, going to school in tears, complaining he was bored, and he was quickly losing motivation to learn. By November of his first grade year, only a year and a half into the public school system, he became a withdrawn and depressed little boy. We had him tested in first grade and he was just a few points shy of getting into the Rogers Park gifted program. Our only other alternative was the Ignite program at his school (Bayshore Elementary), but that wouldn't start until the second semester of second grade, and only for 2 hours per week. The rest of the time he was to be in his classroom, bored, waiting for other students to catch up.

We talked to his teacher multiple times who repeatedly told us that there is simply no funding to help bright kids excel in the public school system. She further told us that the funding is tied up in helping kids catch up and stay at their standard grade level. She said we could send him to school with extra work from home that he could do while waiting for the other kids to finish their school work. And, during our parent-teacher conference she couldn't even tell us at exactly what level he was in math or reading, only that he "was up to standard."

So, after a lot of tears, discussions and worry we decided to pull him out of his public school in the middle of first grade and send him to a private school, a nonreligious private school (Anchorage Montessori School). Fully expecting to pick up a tearful little boy that first day at his new school, I was amazed and thrilled to find a smiling, excited kid eager to tell me what he had learned and how he couldn't wait to go back the next day. After that, there was no turning back. Yes, we've had to make sacrifices in order to keep him and his sister at that private school, but I've learned that if the love for learning isn't instilled in a child at a young age, it'll be very difficult getting them to enjoy the rest of their school years, and possibly a huge challenge getting them to even want to go to college. Two years later, I'm constantly amazed at what my children are learning and discovering at their private school. I will never forget that while volunteering at my son's first grade public school class, I heard them reviewing their numbers from 1-100. My daughter, on the other hand, in first grade at her private school, just passed her addition test and is learning the concepts of multiplication and division. I think the biggest shock for me while volunteering at my son's public school was listening to one of the kindergarten teachers teach her students a rhyming song about fast food restaurants. My daughter, in kindergarten last year at her private school,

was learning songs about the continents and different countries.

We are very lucky in that with some sacrifice we can send both of our kids to a private school. Other families aren't as lucky and can't afford to make that choice. As a result, the potential of so many bright children in Anchorage is squashed as they sit there in their classrooms, stagnant, while waiting for other students to catch up. The Legislature is doing a disservice to all of our children if HJR1 doesn't pass. Every student, regardless of their financial situation, should be given the chance to find a school that best fits their learning style, public or private, and have the opportunity to excel to their fullest potential, and K-12 Parental Choice education would allow for that. I also believe that passing HJR1 would help to create some competition between the public and private schools, perhaps raising the learning and teaching standards of the public school system.

I wish I could be there on Friday morning to give public testimony, but I'm afraid I can't. I hope my letter describing my family's experience with both public and private school will help to shed some light for those who oppose HJR1. I would be more than happy to share my story with anyone if it could help pass HJR1.

Thank you,

Yannick Hodgins

(907) 242-3537

[yannick@alaska.com](mailto:yannick@alaska.com)