

Date: March 22, 2013

To: Senate Finance Committee

Re: Public Testimony, HB 65 Operating Budget

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon. I'm Taber Rehbaum, today representing Arctic Alliance for People, a network of nearly 40 human service providers in Fairbanks and the Interior.

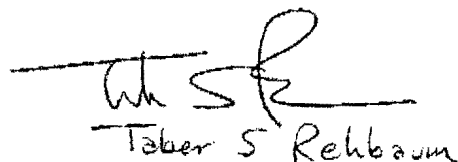
We urge you to fully fund the Pre-K Education program, Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers at the Governor's recommended funding levels.

These programs help children across the state come to school ready and prepared to learn.

We are also requesting an increment to the Health and Social Services Human Services Community Matching Block Grant in the amount of \$200,000. This amount, when divided amongst the participating communities and matched by the Borough, would provide sufficient funding for the eligible programs providing essential human services that have applied for funding to serve the people of the Fairbanks North Star Borough in the coming fiscal year.

We also ask that, however you structure the funding, please do not decrease support for Alaska's much needed Behavioral health programs. With our high rates of suicide, domestic violence and substance abuse, we need a robust behavioral health system to keep our citizens healthy and productive, and to reduce the need for far more costly incarceration or institutionalization.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our concerns.


Taber S. Rehbaum

Gena Graves
Chair of Success by 6

March 22, 2013

As a professional working with teen mothers for 20 years I know support, guidance and education can change a generation. Early childhood Education is a big part of that.

I have worked with new teen mothers that have often had little no parenting of their own; many have completed and are behind in secondary education; most have been taught the ways to survive from system to system but not how to thrive developing competencies of their own. Over the years I have guided and watched these young women grow, mature and learn. They have achieved their own education and developed a value of education from teaching their own children. They have learned together and they have become great teachers to their children benefiting from community programs. These programs have encouraged and directed them in teaching their children from birth. Program like those provided through *Best Beginning* partnerships such as Ready for Kindergarten, Imagination Library and the *Parents as Teachers* visiting teachers program. These programs have provided education and tools by which these parents have taught their own children, instilling the desire to learn and achieve both in their children and as importantly in themselves. They have become great parents and great members of our community because of program like these, despite the challenges and or deficits they have faced. They are working parents in our communities. They are teachers, professors, qualified child care workers, nurses, medical specialist, bankers, and small and large (over 200 employees) business owners. They are involved PTA members and community advocates and they continue to spread the importance and value of education and responsible citizenship. Their children are now better equipped to make great decisions and a more meaningful contribution to their communities - our communities throughout Alaska. They will not need the many costly services and systems that so often are needed as illustrated in numerous studies when not properly educated and parented and more importantly it is very likely their children will not need them in the future. I have been blessed to see how wise investments in resources in early educational program have truly changed a generation and very likely the generations to come.

It is because of this I am encouraging you to continue to support the funding proposed in Governor Parnell's original budget which meets current funding level. You may have noticed I did not ask to increase over last year's funding. I believe increases are not necessary this year because of good stewardship of existing funding levels but less funding will impact the scope and effectiveness of these programs. Please support and restore current funding levels of both *Best Beginnings* as well as those of *Parents as Teachers* so they can continue to have such a positive impact on Alaska's future.

Sincerely,

Gena Graves
5911 Katahdin Dr.
Anchorage, AK 99502
(907)227-2357

HB 65
written testimony
SFIN

ANC LIO

News Release 3/22/13
Please give the issue some coverage

Approximately 100 disability advocates (including us) will testify at the Anchorage LJO today—HB65 and 66—2:30.

Advocates are asking that funding not be cut.

Our issue: How about if the state chooses respect by giving disabled psychiatric patients and guardians with a complaint a formal appeal process past the walls of the institutions, like in most other states. The legislature needs to change the grievance procedure law AS47.30.847 to give patients and guardians these necessary rights.

Mental Health Advocates
Faith Myers / Dorrance Collins
929-0532

Faith Myers
Dorrance Collins



March 20, 2013

Senator Kevin Meyer, Co-Chair Senate Finance Committee
Senator Pete Kelly, Co-Chair Senate Finance Committee
Representative Bill Stoltze, Co-Chair House Finance Committee
Representative Alan Austerman, Co-Chair House Finance Committee

Gentlemen:

I am writing to express my support for full funding of the Alaska Moose Federation's habitat enhancement projects. The Ahtna Land Committee met on March 8, 2013. During that meeting, the Committee unanimously passed a motion to recommend that the full Ahtna Board support the Alaska Moose Federation request for funding to the Alaska State Legislature for habitat enhancement and other projects. This resolution is scheduled for action when the full Ahtna board meets on April 11, 2013.

The moose habitat projects are important to the Ahtna region because of the high demand for our moose, especially in Game Unit 13. The habitat enhancement program will complement our predator control program.

Ahtna fully supports the habitat enhancement projects of the Alaska Moose Federation projects. Ahtna and the Alaska Moose Federation are working together to implement the habitat enhancement program in our region. Moose counts have been very low in our Game Units. Creative and innovative programs like the proposed moose habitat enhancement program will improve local lands with the goal being to provide a healthy habitat for moose. The work that the Moose Federation is proposing to do in Game Units 11 and 13 will be a blessing to all Alaskans who hunt in these units.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Anderson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Michelle Anderson
President

Cc: Senator Donny Olson
Senator Click Bishop
Representative Neal Foster
Representative Eric Feige

P.O. Box 649 - Glennallen, Alaska 99588
Phone: (907) 822-3476 - Fax: (907) 822-3495

**Testimony to Senate Finance Committee, March 22, 2013
HB 65, 66**

Mr. Chair, Committee members,

My name is Faith Myers. In the 1990's my vocation was in Early Childhood Education in which I have a degree. But over the last decade, my avocation has been in volunteering as a mental health advocate.

I would like to speak to two issues: Funding to Diversionary Mental Health Court should not be cut.

The second issue: We are asking that money be put into the state budget to improve the psychiatric patient grievance procedure law AS47.30.847. (There will be a fiscal note.)

Recognition of disabled psychiatric patients (of which there are thousands) should require the state to give all disabled psychiatric patients a special grievance procedure. As of today, Alaska may be one of the very few states that have not set up statewide uniform grievance procedure rules outlining due process and appeal processes for disabled mentally ill individuals.

Most hospitals in Alaska treating disabled psychiatric patients use the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Hospital Organization's grievance rules as their foundation. (JACHO based in Illinois) Seven days to notify a disabled person that the hospital received their complaint and then an additional seven days before the hospital sends a resolution. (14 days) No appeal process required outside of the hospitals. (Not good enough to prevent tragedies.)

In closing, we are asking the Senate Finance Committee to budget money to improve the grievance procedure law for disabled psychiatric patients. (AS47.30.847) There are several work drafts available.

Thank you,

Mental Health Advocate,
Faith Myers
Anchorage, AK. -929-0532



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Finance
 Committee on Operating Budget HB65 Dated 3/22/13
Committee Name
Bill / Subject

Please increase the Health & Human Services Community Matching Block Grant in the amount of \$200,000
 Please provide sufficient funding for the essential programs in our borough.

Please Fully fund Fairbanks School! I have 2 children, in 2 public schools and losing teachers is like losing Generals on the front line. In all of my childrens classes - there is always foster kids and kids who come from situations that aren't spectacular. Larger classes will affect these children the most.

Northern Area State Parks -
 increase increment +

SIGNED:

Astnd Larson

Testifier

PTA / North Star Youth Ctr / State Parks

Representing

Box 60492

3222933

FB AK

Address / Phone Number

99704

March 22, 2013

To the honorable members of Senate Finance:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I am asking you to fully restore the funds for Best Beginnings to meet the amount requested by Governor Parnell, adding \$37,500 to the House amount.

I am also asking you to restore the funding for Parents As Teachers that was requested by Governor Parnell, \$1,042,500.

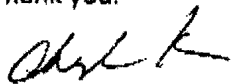
Our community has been the fortunate recipient of funds from Best Beginnings, and the Early Childhood Development Commission has made good use of these dollars. They have brought together a wide spectrum of organizations and individuals to guide them in meeting the needs of families with young children.

For example - families tell us that the lack of indoor play space in the winter is a huge stressor - the partnership dedicated funding to support families with physical activities for children. Providing resources to families with young children through a community website and establishing an annual health fair are other examples of local efforts in response to needs expressed.

They are currently working on developing a Parents As Teachers program for the community.

Why do these small steps matter, with so many big ticket items on the agenda? Early childhood is the best opportunity we have to lay the foundation for a child's life. What happens before school is hugely influential in the child's success (or failure) in school and beyond. It would be wonderful if we could invest even more in early childhood. In the meantime, we need to support what we have. Let's not go backwards.

Thank you.



Cheryl Keepers
PO Box 74898
Fairbanks AK 99707

To: Senate Finance Committee

3-22-13


First of all I would like to thank each one of you for your continued support with regards to restoring the funding for Strenthening families and for the Early childhood Mental Health project.

Secondly, I would like to state that Best beginnings has been a huge resource for families in the community many children have been able to receive books, who under normal circumstances would not have the opportunity to have a book read to them in the first year of their life. Learning to read and being introduced to books at an early age supports future success in school.

Home visiting is a way for parents to get brain development information while being home with their little ones. There are many children who will not qualify for Infant learning programs , but could be on the verge of being delayed, those families need services so that children are entering school ready to learn and reach their full potential. please consider restoring the Parents as Teachers funding to the levels in the Governors budget.

Best regards,

Shirley Williams


shirley.williams116@gmail.com

To: LIO

please have my comments added to the public record. I am unable to attend in person today. Thank you!

March 22, 2013

Public Opinion Message: Reference House Bill 65

For the record: my name is Heidi James Frost. My residence address is 13037 Ridgview Drive, Anchorage and my mailing address is POB 243705, Anchorage, Alaska 99524. My phone number is 907-351-5535.

My name is Heidi James Frost; I live in Anchorage and work for the Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska. I would like to ask for the \$100,000 increment for Independent Living Services to be kept in the operating budget. I was raised in Alaska, then left to serve in the US Air Force and then returned to Alaska. After getting out of the military, I was hit by a drunk driver and since then I have had a head injury. Luckily, I am working and am able to be part of the community. I, like the majority of individuals with disabilities, want to be an active and vibrant addition to the Anchorage community. Because of the services offered at Centers for Independent Living, many people with disabilities find the resources to do the same thing, be a part of their community. To live, work, and participate in the community is an important aspect of life. Centers for Independent Living help individuals be as independent as possible -- helping people to live in the least restrictive environment, helping people go back to work, and helping individuals be a part of the community. Centers for Independent Living don't offer housing, like assisted living homes do, but provide Alaskans with disabilities with a variety of services that increase the individual's ability to live as independently as possible. These services include, but aren't limited to, information and referral, system and individual advocacy, independent living skills training, peer support, and help transitioning out of nursing home and into less restrictive environments.

The \$100,000 increment will be used to help increase the rural outreach and increase the number of places who have access to Independent Living Services.

Sincerely,

Heidi James Frost
Heidi James Frost

907-351-5535

Heidi Frost
written testimony
HB 65
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ANC LIO

Good Afternoon Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Estrella Lee and I serve as the Alaska Parents as Teachers Coordinator. Parents as Teachers or PAT, is an evidence-based home visiting model. Families enrolled in the program receive personal home visits from certified parent educators; group meetings; developmental, health, hearing, and vision screenings; and linkages to community resources. Today I would like to speak to you on behalf of the program, with focus on the economics of early intervention.

Research has shown that children who participate in early education programs receive immediate benefits from improved kindergarten readiness and long-term success, better employment, and reduced delinquent and criminal behavior. The average annual cost for serving a family through that PAT program is \$4,000-\$5,000. I ask you to compare this cost to remedial services or later intervention by the Office of Children's Services when early intervention is absent.

PAT increases early detection of developmental delays and health issues through provided screenings. When delays are detected, participating children are referred to appropriate resources for early intervention. This results in long term savings when comparing to costs of special education. In addition to early detection, PAT also improves school readiness and success. As fewer years are spent in the K-12 education system due to reduced grade repetition, we see increased high school graduation rates, increased college attendance rates, and increased labor force participation and earnings in adulthood. Furthermore, when participating children reach adulthood and have children of their own, they may be less likely to maltreat their own children, showcasing an intergenerational cost benefit.

PAT is designed to enhance parent knowledge of child development and improve parenting practices. Parent education provided by PAT, starting with pregnant mothers, results in improved pregnancy outcomes, ultimately lowering the costs associated with premature or low-birth weight babies. In addition to prenatal parent education, continuing parenting education reduces the number of child accidents and injuries, ultimately lowering the costs for emergency room visits and other public health care costs. Moreover, research has found that when an early childhood intervention program is present, such as home visits that offer parent education, like those provided by the PAT program, there is a reduction in child maltreatment. While children participants reap the greatest benefit, government and tax payers also benefit from lower costs to the child welfare system. Undeniably, when a child is raised in a home environment that is conducive to healthy development, they are more likely to become a more productive, law-abiding citizen in adulthood, definitively imposing lower costs on society from crime and welfare use.

The economic efficiency of the Parents as Teachers program is clear. There are few investments that have the rate of return that early childhood programs do. Investing in Alaska's families, beginning in children's earliest years, produces significant long-term benefits not only for program participants, but our communities as well.

Estrella Lee
733 E. 8th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99520

March 22, 2013

269-0229

Estrella Lee
written testimony

HB US

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