

House Finance Committee

HB 72 — Operating Budget

Written Testimony

Through 11 a.m. — March 6, 2015



February 20, 2015

Senator Mike Dunleavy
Chairman, Senate Education Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Representative Wes Keller
Chairman, House Education Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Dunleavy and Representative Keller:

As you requested, the Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA) and the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) have worked together to produce a list of potential efficiencies and cost savings in K-12 education that are responsive to the current fiscal shortfall. ACSA surveyed its membership and AASB worked through an exercise with its membership to create the following list. This coversheet identifies areas jointly identified.

Efficiencies or cost savings identified across both entities include the following:

1. **The 70 percent rule** ([AS 14.17.520](#)): How much time and expense are devoted to collecting data to comply with this law at the district and state level? The rule itself applies an arbitrary percentage to a complex system.
 - Repeal of AS 14.17.520 requested, per AASB Resolution 2.20.
2. Streamline and share costs associated with new [teacher evaluation](#) requirements by creating models that could be used by districts. The State Board of Education should revise the requirements to allow districts flexibility in implementing the use of student test scores in teacher evaluations. More than fifty districts creating teacher evaluation and administrative evaluation tools is duplicative, an unfunded mandate, and is time intensive.
 - a. AASB resolution 4.13 *"urges the State Board of Education & Early Development to reconsider the weight ascribed to student growth measures in the educator evaluation system and the timeline for implementation. Specifically, the AASB encourages the Board to revise regulations pertaining to the local incorporation of student data so that districts have the authority to decide, now and in the future, the appropriate weight ascribed to student learning data, at a figure no less than 20 percent, thereby giving districts greater flexibility in the implementation of the system. AASB also urges the Legislature to fund resources and training needed for districts to implement the new teacher evaluation system."*

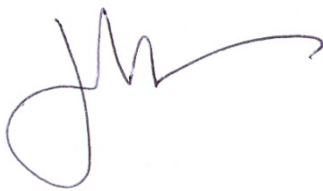
2. **Mandated training.** <http://education.alaska.gov/ELearning/> Districts are required to train employees to recognize sexual abuse, prevent suicides, administer CPR and first aid, restrain and isolate students in emergencies, among many. Many of these requirements were approved with fiscal notes showing no cost at the state level, but require substantial effort and expense to comply with at the district level. Identify those trainings that could be eliminated or changed to a multi-year cycle. Another example is technology assessments for teachers (which should not apply to elementary schools, pre-school teachers, gym teachers, music teachers, etc.). <https://www.eed.state.ak.us/mandatedtraining/>
3. Both ACSA and AASB have strongly advocated elimination of the mandatory **PERS termination studies and “below the floor” charges.** (AS 39.35.255). The contribution floor that requires the studies and past service cost payments to PERS/TRS in excess of 22 percent for employees who are separating from service is outdated and onerous for local governments and school districts.
4. Expand **technology and broadband capability** in communities and districts to reduce the cost of providing basic instruction in some districts; the delivery of services by licensed professionals to students; the acquisition of textbooks and other curriculum materials, and the cost of performing tests and assessments.
5. Allow districts to **rehire retired** individuals (at least temporarily) to fill crucial employment needs. Districts should be able to hire who they need for superintendents, principals, teachers and other staff positions by accessing a pool of seasoned professionals that are currently statutorily excluded from consideration.
6. Streamline **school maintenance** reporting requirements.
7. **Consolidation of student information supplied to the state:** Many of the reports provided to state and federal agencies from the school are repeated. Examples include much of the District Report Card, reporting of dropouts to the Alaska Military Academy, pre-school reports, and AK STEPP.
8. Allow school districts and municipalities to share interest earned on school district funds in **centralized treasuries.**
9. Clarify that the responsibility for the cost of **physical examinations** for kindergarten students rests with parents or guardians, not school districts. Reference AS14.30.070. Some physicals (such as for kindergarteners) could be eliminated, and perhaps the schedule could be stretched.
10. Consider a **biennial cycle** for adopting the state budget. Local governments and school districts would likely follow. An alternative would be to forward-fund K-12 education or adopt K-12 budget bill early in each session to better coordinate state and local budget processes.

11. Eliminate the requirement of **preschool teachers** that are certificated to be fingerprinted and background checked twice.
12. Eliminate the requirement for district run **pre-school facilities** to be reapproved by local fire marshals.
13. Eliminate the district's responsibility to pay for **mandatory health exams** for staff.
14. Provide incentives to districts to **share in health care pools**.
15. Provide state models for **opt-out testing** as opposed to being created by individual districts.
16. Increase the **10 percent ceiling** on reserves, which can be in conflict with requirements for bond reserves needed to retain low interest rates.
17. Include a **local fiscal note** in addition to the state fiscal note on any legislation that is introduced.

Attached please find the full survey results from the ACSA membership. We appreciate very much the chance to provide input as we all work together to move education forward within the constraints of current fiscal realities.

We look forward to being a resource to you as the legislative session moves forward.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to be 'JR' with a large loop at the end.

Joseph Reeves
Executive Director, AASB

A handwritten signature in purple ink, reading 'Elizabeth Skiles Parady' in a cursive script.

Lisa Skiles Parady, J.D., Ed.D.
Executive Director, ACSA/ASA

From: [Sen. Johnny Ellis](#)
To: [<lee@afabco.org>](mailto:lee@afabco.org)
Cc: [House Finance](#); [Rep. Geran Tarr](#)
Subject: Re: HR73 Mental Health Budget
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 1:07:16 AM

I agree with every word.

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 4, 2015, at 11:29 PM, "techno curmudgeon" <technocurmudgeon@gmail.com> wrote:

Lee Thomison

2312 E 16TH AVE
Anchorage Alaska 99508

May 4, 2015

To the House Finance Committee,

It has been brought to my attention that HR 73 (Mental Health Budget) proposes to reduce \$500,000 from adult day care programs. I am sure you will hear many facts and figures and testimonies on the effects of these reductions and the valid health and public benefits these programs provide, so I will cut to the chase for my note here.

First let me say that I do not have a dog in this fight other than the fact that I know folks that are either participants in these programs or are caregivers for someone in these programs, and as an Alaskan taxpayer and property owner I firmly believe that public money should be wisely and judiciously spent.

That said, I have come to the conclusion that public money spent supporting adult day programs is money well spent. Reducing the amount is false economy.

Adult day programs provide a middle way between full long term care facilities and full stay-at-home caregiving for seniors who require fulltime care. The long term care facility is significantly more costly to either or both the family and the taxpayer. The stay-at-home option drags most families down, reducing the caregivers' and families' income, net wealth, and their very health. This in turn impacts the financial contributions, including wages, including taxes, that such families can return to the public good so that it ultimately costs more, one way and another, to take care of the larger, more extended issues that arise.

Either way, the community loses both hard and soft dollars. Adult day services provides an overall cost-effective option between the two extremes for the majority of seniors requiring fulltime care. Adult day services is one of the few

cases I've seen of win-win all around. Because of this, as an Alaskan with a vested interest in seeing public monies efficiently utilized, my vote is to support these programs to the fullest because they are intuitively cost effective in both the short run and even more so in the long run.

Thank you for your time,

Lee Thomison

cc: Senator Johnny Ellis, Rep. Geran Tarr

Testimony of John Bioff in Support of Fully Funding
Alaska Legal Services Corporation

Submitted to: House Finance Committee

From: John Bioff, General Counsel, Kawerak, Inc.

Date: March 5, 2015



My name is John Bioff. I am the General Counsel for Kawerak, Inc., which is the regional non-profit tribal consortium located in Nome. Kawerak provides social services to the 20 tribes in the Bering Strait region of Alaska. Part of my job is to provide legal services to the tribes in our region, and in doing so I have a strong partnership and working relationship with Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) and their attorney for our region as the work that we do often intersects. My testimony today is provided on behalf of Kawerak.

In our region, a very large number of residents qualify for ALSC legal services. These are the people who need the services ALSC provides the most because retaining a private attorney will be out of the question for them given their income. In our region, the bulk of legal services provided by ALSC are in areas of family law, such as child custody, divorces, adoptions, and civil protective orders, landlord tenant, wills and probate, and land issues such as allotments and trespass. ALSC provides fundamental protection and relief in areas that those of us with the financial ability to retain private attorneys take for granted. Basic areas such as protection of children and family, and shelter. The ASLC attorney in our region has been vitally important providing legal assistance to those with low or no income, and provides a safety net that would be wholly missing in our region otherwise.

There is no other similar legal resource in our region. Kawerak cannot provide these legal services. ALSC has also reached out to partner with other organizations in the region, such as Kawerak. And in turn regional organizations support ALSC. Bering Strait Native Corporation historically has paid the ALSC rent and prior to this Kawerak provided space for their office as in kind support. ALSC has support from the Native community in this region.

In a state this large and spread out, with rural areas with large populations of people with little or no income who depend on subsistence to survive, and in which access to justice is a challenge, ALSC is critical in providing civil legal services to those most in need.

For these reasons, Kawerak urges the State Legislature not to make cuts to ALSC funding that will serve to limit the ability of ALSC to continue providing such critical legal services.

From: [Jerry Dzugan](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: AMSEA Thanks
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:57:38 PM

AK HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE - March 5, 2016

Good afternoon. My name is Jerry Dzugan. I am with the Alaska Marine Safety Education Assn. (AMSEA).

We want to **thank you** for your support of our efforts to reduce the rate of drownings and vessel casualties in Alaska. We appreciate that this legislature and administration is making health, life and safety issues a priority while it makes very difficult decisions about funding.

We are a non-profit organization whose mission for the past 30 years has been to work collaboratively to lessen the loss of life on our waters. We are also the only organization in the state that trains commercial fishermen in required and desired safety training.

Last year, AMSEA instructors, who are located statewide, trained well over 7,300 fishermen, school children and members of the public. 14 people contacted us last year alone to say that AMSEA training was critical to helping them survive an emergency on the water. This program's effectiveness has been recognized by 15 state, regional and national awards.

A recent independent study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH) found that fishermen who had taken AMSEA training within the last 5 years had a statistically significant higher rate of surviving an emergency at sea than those without this training. This is the 3rd consecutive independent study confirming the effectiveness of this program.

We will continue to work very hard to lower the risks on Alaska waters by delivering Alaska relevant, hands-on marine safety training across all regions of the state. Thank you again for your efforts in keeping these health, life and safety concerns a priority in what we realize is a very challenging fiscal environment.

Jerry Dzugan
director@amsea.org
907-747-3287



O'Hara Corporation

120 Tillson Avenue, Ste. 1, Rockland, ME 04841

ph: 207-594-4444 • fax: 207-594-0407

oharacorporation.com | info@oharacorporation.com

From: Frank O'Hara III
192 Nickerson St, Suite 301
Seattle, WA 98109
fohara3@oharacorporation.com

To: Co-Chairs Neumon and Thompson
House Finance Committee, delivered via email addresses

Dear Co-Chairs Neuman and Thompson,

On behalf of O'Hara Corporation, we respectfully urge you to resist the dramatic cuts to the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) budget. Our three family owned fishing vessels, Constellation, Defender, and Enterprise catch and freeze various types of sole and flounder. In the U.S. market, we are seeing increased pressure and competition from other white meat fish species such as tilapia and pangasius. Due to reduced quotas of our species in 2015, the supply for the sole and flounder we produce is down, but this has not stimulated a price increase. We are hearing from customers that the readily available and low cost farmed fish is moving in and taking over market share.

ASMI represents and markets the highly regarded, wild caught seafood produced in Alaska. Speaking especially for our sector, now more than ever we need ASMI to market the cold water, high quality seafood the fishing vessels in our fleet produce.

ASMI branding increases the value of our fish, which means we can sell it for more, our crew get more for it, communities see greater economic impact, and the State receives greater tax revenues. The ASMI programs around the world show great results and help us compete with farmed and other Russian and Norwegian seafood.

Reading the statistics on other large seafood producing countries, their budgets for marketing are far greater than our own. For over 30 years ASMI has built the value of the Alaska seafood brand, and a weakened ASMI will severely hamper its ability to find new markets and better prices for the fisherman and processors in Alaska.

Alaska seafood has earned the trust and respect of consumers around the world through relentless attention to sustainability, product quality, and Alaska's image. ASMI is critical to maintaining the value of our fisheries to all stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration,

Frank O'Hara III

F/T Araho ★ F/T Constellation ★ F/T Defender ★ F/T Enterprise ★ F/V Sunlight

From: [John Hagen](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Budget Process Comment
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 7:13:59 PM

I realize that we are in tough budgetary times, brought on by low oil prices cuts should be made, but not so deeply and aggressively to the fishing industry. It is important that we do not to cut budget items that could harm fishing businesses like turning off management or marketing programs. When oil prices are low, fishermen will contribute more money to the Alaska economy. Just a \$.25 decrease in fuel price at the pump means thousands of dollars in my pocket at the end of the season. The cost of doing business across the board will decrease for all fishermen. Fishermen will bring more money to the state economy. I am a fisherman who lives in Haines, Alaska.

I would like you to reconsider specific cuts being made to the ADFG, ASMI and the Alaska Marine Highway.

Cuts being made to the Chilkat DIDSON sonar project and the Chilkoot River weir are detrimental to my ability to fish and make a living. The Chilkat DIDSON project is crucial for telling how many fish are actually in the river. Without that tool during the 2014 year Chilkat River would have been severely over fished. Using fish wheels ADFG estimated far more fish in the river than actually were there. The sonar gave much more accurate numbers, fishing operations were closed and enough fish reached the lake.

Also, As the Constantine/Palmer mine moves forward at the headwaters of the Chilkat River, it is also important to maintain accurate numbers of fish returning to this lake.

The Chilkoot Lake has one of the largest returns of red salmon and pink salmon in Southeast Alaska. It is responsible for millions of dollars of fish dollars, tourist dollars (both cruise ship and rod and reel). It is important to protect this system by fully funding management programs on this river.

ASMI is responsible for helping to market Wild Alaska Salmon, and maintain it as a brand. In a time where our wild stock fish are increasingly fighting with farmed fish on the open market, it is important to let our fish tax dollars be spent to help create more fish tax dollars.

The ferry is vital to life in Southeast Alaska. I moved here because of reliable ferries, not to be physically isolated. Deep cuts to the ferry system will change the way of life in Haines. Limiting ferry service would be no different than closing the Seward Highway because it is too costly to keep open.

John Hagen, Box 262, Haines, AK 99827

From: [Andrea Bateman](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Testimony to restore Best Beginnings funding to the state budget
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 2:15:50 PM

I am a pediatrician, a mom, and a member of the Advisory Team of the Anchorage Imagination Library, a program of Best Beginnings. I am asking that you restore funding to Best Beginnings in the state budget.

Every summer I see children in my office for their kindergarten checkup, and every year I see kids who, at age 5, don't know their ABC's and can't count to ten. We know that children who start school this far behind sometimes never catch up. Imagination Library is a cost-effective program that gives children like this the chance to learn at home, with their parents, and be ready to read and learn at kindergarten entry. Every child in our program receives a free, high-quality, developmental-appropriate book in the mail every month, from the time they are enrolled until their fifth birthday. That means enrolled children will start school with a library of almost 60 books in their home! What amazing thing to give a child.

The best part of this program is that almost 100% of the funds that are supplied by Best Beginnings go DIRECTLY to purchasing books. The Anchorage Imagination Library currently serves almost 10,000 children in the Anchorage area, and it is entirely run by volunteers. Only a small portion of our funding goes to items such as printing and mailings.

I challenge you to find a program with such a big impact at such a small overhead.

I ask you to think about what it will mean to Alaskan families to not have Imagination Library books in their homes.

I want you to think about reading with your children, or remember back to when your parents read to you, and how important that is to a child.

Please reconsider your decision to cut the funding to Best Beginnings.

Sincerely,
Andrea Bateman, M.D.
Latouche Pediatrics
Anchorage Imagination Library Advisory Team/Family Engagement Chair

From: [Audrey Buma](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Best Beginnings and early education
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:03:23 PM

Dear House Finance Committee,

I am writing in the hopes to help convince you to not cut early education funding out of the budget. Please do not cut Best Beginnings, Parents as Teacher or Pre-kindergarten grants. As a mother of two small children I can't imagine not having the help these organizations have given. It is important to help children and their families at this stage in life so they have a better future. These early years are so important to having functional hard working adults later.

I was talking to my 5 year old son about why we were going to the hearing on Wednesday. We ended up talking about the Dolly Parton Imagination Library books, I told him his brother would no longer get them if the cuts happen. He looked at me with great concern and said "Mommy that is really mean of them to do that." Cole (5) has received those books once a month for the last year or so. He looked so forward to them when they came in the mail and I can't count how many times my husband and I have read them to him. He loves to have me read his little brother Owen's (7 months) books now.

Please reconsider and think of all the Alaskan children that these cuts will hurt.

Sincerely,

Audrey Buma
Juneau AK

From: [Katie Conover](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Best Beginnings funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 6:08:33 PM

Cutting funding from Best Beginnings will negatively impact young children- directly and immediately. Since 2009 I have been involved with Imagination Library, one of the many programs supported by Best Beginnings. This program provides developmentally appropriate books to families with children under 5 years of age, free of charge, in the mail each month. Dolly Parton and the Dollywood Foundation cover all the costs of the books, local communities need only raise money for the cost of postage. For 6 years I have been raising money, applying for grants and assisting in the administration of the program for over 3000 children as a volunteer. We have been organizing family involvement events, educating parents on child development and supporting literacy in these early readers as volunteers. There are close \$0 spent on admin costs. This could not be done without the grants and support from Best Beginnings. Many of our volunteers work full time jobs and raise families in the Mat-Su. Some volunteers are retired educators that just keep giving. The feedback from Imagination Library families at our events and from online are clear- Mat-Su needs this program. While a preschool programs statewide may not be economically feasible at this time, Imagination Library is a positive and effective step in the early childhood direction and one we can afford. It is the best "bang for our buck". Please fund Best Beginnings and Imagination Library.

Thank you,
Katie Conover

From: [Laura Cisneros](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Best Beginnings Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:00:02 PM

Dear House Finance Committee members,

I am writing to you today as a mom first, and a Best Beginnings employee second.

Frequently, we don't know what we don't know. When my son was 3 years old I was introduced to Imagination Library and Best Beginnings. Through the information provided through this program program and organization, I learned that my husband and I had been doing a lot of things right. I also learned that there was **so much more** we could be doing to give my child the best start possible in life.

We put the information we received from Best Beginnings and Imagination Library into practice in my home and are seeing the results. My son, now 7, started kindergarten a year early and continues to excel in 2nd grade this year.

One reason that compelled me to join the Best Beginnings team was to contribute to the efforts of the organization and its partners in helping parents like me learn what they don't know. This is accomplished through delivery of free books, family activities, public awareness efforts, trainings, professional development opportunities, and more.

Best Beginnings and its partners positively impact tens of thousands of Alaska children's lives. As a result, I respectfully request that you restore funds to Best Beginnings at the amount in the Governor's budget.

Thank you for your service and your consideration.

Respectfully,

Laura Cisneros

Project Manager, Best Beginnings

Proud mom of an Anchorage Imagination Library graduate

Laura Cisneros/Project Manager/ Best Beginnings

3350 Commercial Drive, Suite 104A, Anchorage, AK 99501 / P: 907.297.3309/ F:
907.297.3304

lcisneros@bestbeginningsalaska.org

www.bestbeginningsalaska.org

From: [Mitzi Reynolds](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Best Beginnings Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 7:41:30 PM

Although I have moved from the state, it makes me sad to learn that, once again, Best Beginnings is at risk of being unfunded. My career was school administration in bush Alaska and I know that rural kids don't get the same start as those in the more populated areas.

Please don't put those children more at risk in trade for the relatively small number of dollars it will 'save.'

Best Beginnings is run on a shoe string, as it is. The amount of good that comes from that program is multiplied exponentially as parents learn to work with their children and support their healthy growth. When those children become parents, the good will continue...

Please, PLEASE do not cut funding for Best Beginnings in Alaska~

Thank you,

Mitzi Reynolds

From: [Imel, Ray](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Begin Again!
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:59:56 PM

I'm writing to ask to you cut the funding for Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers and Pre-K. I have been a teacher for 20 years in the Juneau School District. I have one student in middle school right now. I can tell you these programs are a waste of time and money. Well, my experiences and plenty of research are pretty clear that these things aren't a waste of time and money, but, still, the kids will never know. And that is key here. They won't be able to blame us if we keep this quiet. Let's kick this can down the road. Better to fully fund prisons and treatment programs, that's where they'll end up. Call me a glass half empty person, but the way I see it. By the time they figure out we are to blame, we'll be long gone. I hope you'll join me in my new group of ageing road runners, we have already cut PE so the kids won't be able to keep up. We had to make hard choices. Tough luck buddy. I mean even if we had the money, we shouldn't spend it on them. They are after all, our future, where none of us live, because we are in the present. And what are the chances they are going to take care of us when we are old? Right, we'll be lucky if we can even get a kidney if we need one. Since we haven't saved or invested enough to care for even ourselves, we need to start running and keep running, keep our heads down and run like...

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From: [Sarah Sjostedt](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: best beginnings
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 5:21:06 PM

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of the best beginnings program. As a concerned citizen and Registered Nurse working in the Emergency room I see the value of early education. Developmentally early education is one of the best indicators for future success in both education and society. It is essential that Alaska maintain safety nets and rich educational experiences for all of its citizens, especially its young and most vulnerable.

I am currently pursuing a Family Nurse Practitioner Program at University of Alaska Anchorage, with the intention to practice in Alaska. I know that as a future APRN I will encourage my patients and parents to enroll in early education programs like best beginnings and head start, as they have been well studied to improve outcomes for children and families. It saddens me that the house finance is considering cutting funding to such vital programs.

Please reconsider funding best beginnings, the imagination library, and other early education programs. We are in tough financial times, but cutting education is not the answer. To remain an industry leader our state needs well educated and bright youth to address the problems of the future, they may not be well equipped to do this without programs like Best Beginnings.

Thank you,
Sarah Sjostedt, RN BSN (and future APRN).

From: [Andrea Hilbert](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Early Learning Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 5:49:05 PM

Please continue to support Best Beginnings, the Imagination Library, Family Nights, and Parents as Teachers!

My daughter loves getting the books every month and we just recently started participating the Parents as Teachers program. I know it will have a big impact on my daughters learning and development.

If these programs are cut I believe it will have a big impact on Alaska's families.

Thank you,

Andrea Hilbert

From: [Richard Erickson](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: budget hearings
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:30:05 AM

To The Chair and Committee

With low oil revenues, the legislature is looking at ways to cut budget expenses, which is always good. But over-reacting following a crisis event has historically caused considerable problems (ie 911 and patriot act, bank bailouts). Budget cuts that result in slowing Alaska's economy are particularly undesirable.

I believe drastic trimming of expenses can be mitigated by increasing State revenues. By drastic, I mean disproportionate cuts such as proposed for public broadcasting, elimination of broadband support for rural communities via the OWL program, early childhood education, and non-funding of municipal revenue sharing, heating assistance, and energy credits.

All Alaskans are benefiting from low oil prices through reductions in the cost of petroleum products. Gasoline and heating fuels are more than \$1 cheaper than a year ago. If the State imposed a \$1 additional tax on fuel, consumers would be back where we were a year ago in their fuel costs. This would not appear to be a great hardship.

In 2008*, the total taxable gallons of fuel used was approximately 600,000,000 gallons. A \$1 tax would bring in over 1/2 billion dollars. In addition, an additional 300,000,000 gallons of heating/electrical fuel is not taxed at present and over 1 billion gallons of international flight jet fuel is not taxed.

I would rather pay a little more for fuel than see my neighbors lose their jobs.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to express ourselves.

Richard Erickson
Whale Pass

*L&R Committee – 2009 Final Report
Appendix B – Alaska Fuel Metering Project
Alaska Fuel Metering Project - National Institute of ...
www.nist.gov/.../07-lr-ap..
National Institute of Standards and Technology

From: [Dan Repasky](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Operating Budget Concerns
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:59:26 PM

I am a 3rd generation Alaskan. My maternal grandparents came to Palmer with the Colonists in 1935. I've lived in Anchorage since 1970, when my father's Air Force career ended and we came back to the state where my Mother was born in 1936. When our state income tax was repealed back in the early 1980's I said to myself all they are doing is kicking a football deep into the end zone and it'll take a great team to bring it back. Tough times require visionary leadership. Our legislators should be looking at re-establishing a tax structure along with and as a condition for tightening the budget.

The report release by the DOLWD in February 2015 on nonresidents working in Alaska for 2013, provides guidance on this issue. It's telling that one in five of all Alaskan jobs are filled by nonresidents and that over 40% of the electrical workers in oil and gas are nonresident while 13% of electrical workers overall are nonresident. I am an electrical worker and I'm concerned.

Rather than address a funding need and propose a tax structure to gain income from these many out of state workers (and admittedly Alaska's residents as well) some in the legislature and in other governmental bodies seek to cut jobs in state and local government, the two areas were the highest percentage of Alaska residents work. Those with the clout to influence us seem to be saying, "Let's lay off Alaskan workers to balance our budget." That's what the take away I got from the Commonwealth North report; cut employees, reduce wages and benefits, only tax Alaska's governmental employees.

How about we address the 20% of Alaska's workforce from the Lower 48 that come and go, taking our jobs, our income, and using our resources without spending a dime in taxes on infrastructure, education, or public safety? It's time to end this free rider mentality that allows so many to work in Alaska and then leave without contributing to the support of our State. It's tough to legislate when budgetary woes are the norm. I appreciate your public service in this difficult time and your consideration of my thoughts.

<http://almis.labor.state.ak.us/reshire/nonres.pdf>

Sincerely,

Daniel Repasky

2807 W34th Avenue

Anchorage, AK 99517

907-242-9398

From: [Don Fritz](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Dan Saddler](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Lynn Gattis](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Lance Pruitt](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Lance Pruitt](#); [Rep. Mike Chenault](#); [Sen. Anna MacKinnon](#); [Sen. Peter Micciche](#)
Subject: 2016 Operating budget
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 9:34:03 PM

March 5, 2015

The Honorable House Finance Committee Members

Alaska State Capitol

Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Honorable House Finance Committee Members:

My name is Don Fritz and I am a longtime Alaska resident and an employee of the State of Alaska.

I, representing only myself, am writing you to urge you to make additional cuts to the FY16 operating budget. While I am appreciative of the cuts that Governor Walker and the House Finance Subcommittees have identified to date, my belief is that the House Finance Committee needs to seek an additional approximately four hundred million dollars of reductions in the FY16 unrestricted general fund operating budget. As identified by Doctor Scott Goldsmith, the current state budget is approximately one billion dollars above what one could model as sustainable. While I am not advocating that we reach a 4.5 billion sustainable budget level in one year, my belief is that additional cuts can be made to the FY16 budget that would put us a few hundred million dollars closer to this goal.

While we have greater than 10 billion dollars in reserves, we also have several billion dollars in debt and unfunded liability to the state's retirement systems. My view is that we fail ourselves when we ignore the debt in considering our financial well being. If we fail to quickly learn to live within our means, we fail both ourselves, and more importantly future generations of Alaskans who will not be able to enjoy the profits of the nonrenewable natural resources because of our greed and inability to moderate our spending. And the future generations will be left to shoulder the burden of our debts and liabilities.

As such I encourage you to seek additional cuts across State government and to avoid adding money back into the budget for certain "needs" without offsetting those added monies with additional decrements in other areas.

I do not desire to start paying a state income tax or sales tax because of failed leadership that has been unable to live within a budget. That said, I would suggest either capping or eliminating the permanent fund dividend, with the monies being placed into the corpus of the fund so that the fund can eventually grow to the point that it can fulfill the purpose that it was created for. Future generations are depending on you, I hope that you do not fail them. Thank you for your time and hopefully your continued efforts to reign in state spending.

Respectfully,

Don Fritz

From: [Mr J.R.Myers](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [ACP Officers; alaskacp@yahooogroups.com](#)
Subject: WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON STATE BUDGET BILLS: HB 72 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUNDS HB 73
APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:29:59 AM

Dear Alaska Representatives,

I write with a certain sense of urgency, as the clock ticks on and Alaska plunges millions of dollars every day further into deficit spending. This must stop now! Governor Walker and many others, including myself, campaigned on the absolute need to forge a sustainable budget for the future economic and social well being of our people. This is not happening. I call you all to remembrance of those promises made on the campaign trail.

Now is the time we must embrace responsible governance via sound fiscal management. This requires a budget goal of NO MORE THAN \$4.5 Billion by 2017. Otherwise, we will see a confiscation of personal wealth on a scale never before experienced in Alaska. We will be forced to enact statewide sales and income taxes, and likely see the PFD funds raided and eliminated. All that while experiencing shrinkage of government services anyway. That is unacceptable. We have been promised too much for too long. We have accepted too many false economic projections. We have become enchanted by unrealistic selfish visions. We must wake up now!

You are about to sentence the People of Alaska to a bleak economic future under the current continuation of wreckless deficit spending. We know there remains much Waste, Fraud and Abuse at all levels. What we lack is the will to look beyond immediate advantage and personal gain towards a wiser long term Sustainable approach. This is likely our last chance to enact a Sustainable Budget for Alaska's future.

Don't continue to walk down the Hall of Shame! When casting your votes, act as statesmen, not as politicians. Please carefully consider your responsibility to our future. Enact a truly Sustainable Budget for Alaska at this critical time in our history. Do the right thing for Alaska now! All eyes are upon you and Governor Walker.

Peace & Blessings,
J.R. Myers, Chairman
Alaska Constitution Party

From: [Kenneth Brown](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Budget
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 12:42:46 AM

You people work for us not special interests, lobbyists etc. Your not there to make deals with your buddies for one in return, we elected you to work, not pass the buck. Now get that budget down to 4.5 billion or we will "un-hire" you!

Yours truly,
Pissed off citizen.

Testimony for the budget meeting

Pamela Samash
HC 66 Box 29715
Nenana, AK 99760
aksunshine123@gmail.com
322-2201

Good evening and thank you for your service and commitment to Alaska.

I would like to share my ideas with you on how to save money for our state.

A well known psychologist, Dr. Dobson, once said, "a country is only as strong as the family unit." In other words, strengthen the family unit and you strengthen the country.

My proposal to you is to look outside the box and do what you can to preserve marriages, stabilize healthy families, and promote good infant care.

Just think about, if you were able to save 300 marriages, you would probably save the state about 2 million on psychiatric care, drug rehabs and medical problems that occur from broken families.

Another way to save money is to do way more promotion of breastfeeding. There should be more public education, promotion and workplace protection. For example, there's no way an employee at Fred Meyers can successfully nurse her new child. They just will not accommodate her. Same with soldiers. Every child should be nursed for at the very least, the first year of life. In the event a mother cannot nurse, she should be educated to the importance of skin to skin contact with every feeding and avoid bottle propping. These simple steps will have lifelong benefits to both mother and baby that will save your budget money.

I am not saying for the govt to come into our homes and control our lives, instead what would be much more effective and less costly is public awareness and available options. One terrific institution that has a strong reputation and long history of promoting the family is the church. The state cannot promote religion, but it can protect religious rights so churches feel safe and prosper, and then they can focus on Christ and families.

Social programs are sometimes necessary, but I believe that often times people who make marital or parenting mistakes usually just need some guidance. Can the state help guide them if they reach out for help? Protecting parental rights is very beneficial for the family and creates allot less stress.

My question is, where are the TV commercials promoting marriage and breastfeeding, and where are the breastmilk banks in the northern regions and how about some "how to save your marriage" pamphlets in the divorce courts? And why is divorce so quick and easy when it's so devastating and ultimately expensive?

There are inexpensive ways that the state can promote, encourage and help families and marriages and it will save your budget millions of dollars. Statistics always show that families who love eachother, eat healthy and exercise have way fewer costly physical, mental and emotional problems. Perhaps you should put together a task force for the soul purpose of helping families stay together.

If you want to save money, then you need to save families.

Thank you for your time. I know you're all working really hard over there in beautiful Juneau. I hope that you find the answers and wisdom you're searching for.

Blessings

Pamela Samash

Ronn Buschmann
Box 1367
Petersburg, Alaska 99833
(907)723-1642
buschmann@gci.net

Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

March 4, 2015

Dear Legislator,

I am writing to request that you minimize any budget cut for Public Radio. In this financially challenging time, most of us recognize the need for some belt tightening. However, public radio is the lifeblood of rural Alaska. It is how we receive local information, notices of public meetings and other events. It is how we learn about emergencies, and how we stay connected with local and State government.

Our local radio station enjoys tremendous public support. As outside financial support has become tighter, the community has responded with fundraisers and local contributions to make up the difference. But a 59% cut would gut our programming and seriously impact the radio station's ability to be the community focal point it has become.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ronn Buschmann', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ronn Buschmann

PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
(Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Erica Kludt-Painter Circle one: Support ☒ Opposed ☐
REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): Petersburg School
BILL #: 272 Subject: General Operating Budgets
COMMITTEE NAME: House Finance HEARING DATE: Mar. 5, 2015

I ask that you keep the promise by reinstating the funding under HB 278. Cutting \$52 million out of our budget results in \$150,000 reduction next year and \$95,000 the following year. The finance committee has proposed even further cuts than this, including the remaining two years of our Obesity Prevention Grant worth \$300,000. This money needs to be reinstated. Our budget was responsibly prepared based on this forward funding, and will result in lost/reduced staffing, additional program cuts in our district, and cuts to activities/travel in the near future. We have been responsibly, gradually tightening our belt for years, and will continue to do so.

I ask that you reinstate the promised funding. If we need to consider revenue sources, it is time to consider a state income tax.

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely, Erica Kludt-Painter

PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
(Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Carissa Cotta Circle one: Support ☐ **Opposed** ☒
REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): Petersburg City Schools
BILL #: HB 278 Subject: Public Education Cuts
COMMITTEE NAME: House Finance HEARING DATE: 3/5/15

As a parent, teacher, and community member I oppose any cuts to public education, which will result in a reduction of services to our children. Our district is very well run with a long history of financial stewardship. Our programs are supported by the state's budget & the money in HB 278 has already been given (with school budgets based on that amount). To take that away now will cause many disruptions. This is absolutely harmful to our students. Please leave the monies given in 278 as they stand and allow us to continue our budgeted programs.

A solution you should carefully consider is to implement a state income tax. It is time!

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely,

Carissa Cotta

PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
(Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Cynthia Fry Circle one: Support Opposed
REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): Self-
BILL #: HB 72 Subject: Cuts to Public Education
COMMITTEE NAME: House Finance HEARING DATE: 3/5/15

Financial cuts to public education negatively impact our current student generation and our state in the future, as these individuals become active employed citizens. The variety and access to high quality learning for all students is critical. When cuts are made often Vocational Education programs are impacted first. These are the essential life learning skills our students need. In addition, cuts to education often are followed by larger class sizes and a decrease in access for early interventions for challenging students. When these early interventions and needs are not met then often these students struggle in High School with an increased of "Risky" behaviors often dropping out due to frustration and lack of personal connection to life long learning.

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely,



PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY (Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Beau Ward Circle one: Support ☐ Opposed ☒

REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): self

BILL #: HB 72 Subject: _____

COMMITTEE NAME: Finance HEARING DATE: _____

Like many young families, one of the key draws for living in Petersburg ~~and rural~~ is the quality of the schools. The school has been financially managed in a responsible manner. Cutting budgets so significantly, so rapidly, causes harm to the quality of the schools that undermines years of responsible planning. Taper your budget gradually rather than abruptly, or you cause permanent harm to the quality of schools and the desirability ~~of~~^{for} young, professional families of remaining in Alaska.

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely,

Beau Ward

PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
(Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Jill Nordtvedt Henhard Circle one: Support Opposed
REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): Self + Petersburg Schools
BILL #: 72 Subject: School Funding
COMMITTEE NAME: House Finance HEARING DATE: 3/5/15

Mr. Chairman and Committee,

I am here today to voice my opposition to Bill 72, which will drastically impact our school funding in Petersburg. I am a 40-year resident of Alaska, and I know first hand the importance of sufficient funding for Alaska Schools. Our district has budgeted carefully for the next years based on forward funding passed by the legislature, and without this money we will be forced to cut teacher and other staff positions, as well as student programs. This money was allocated to Alaska's students, and this allocation needs to stand. Please do not move forward with the proposed cuts to Public Education funding in House Bill #72.

Thank you very much.

Jill Nordtvedt Henhard

Petersburg Resident

Parent of 3 Petersburg Schools Students

Teacher w/ Petersburg High School

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely,



PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
(Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Mary Ellen Anderson Circle one: Support ☒ Opposed ☐
REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): Self, and Petersburg Schools, KFSK Radio
BILL #: HB 72 Subject: School funding, OWA funding
COMMITTEE NAME: House Finance HEARING DATE: 3-8-15

Please reinstate funding!

I suggest we look at a State income tax as so many people work in Alaska and live elsewhere, taking their \$ with them... unpopular, I know, but the time has come!

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Anderson

PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY (Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Paul M. Lutomski Circle one: Support Opposed

REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): Self

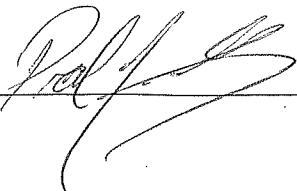
BILL #: HB72 Subject: Budget cuts to the Petersburg school district

COMMITTEE NAME: House Finance HEARING DATE: 3/5/15

Please do not make any cuts to the Petersburg, AK school district. I feel that we have a great school here in Petersburg and I would like it to stay that way. These kids are our future. If a local tax is not supported, how about a "tourist tax" to out of state residents. This would provide easy revenue to the borough from out of state tourists here in the summer alone.

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely,



PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
(Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Mara Lutomski Circle one: Support ☐ Opposed ☒
REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): SELF
BILL #: HB72 Subject: _____
COMMITTEE NAME: House Finance HEARING DATE: _____

I am opposed to the cuts proposed by the Subcommittee. Such severe cuts at such short notice is irresponsible to our schools - in particular our district which has very responsibly Budgeted.

our district / Borough has already lost rural schools federal funding. ^{However} Because of our responsible budgeting in the past we were still able to put forth a budget that ~~that~~ covers basic programs - if you cut further ~~we~~ we will lose teachers, and program that are essential.
Please Do Not cut our funding.

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely,

Mara Lutomski

PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
(Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Elizabeth Hart Circle one: Support Opposed

REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): self

BILL #: 72 Subject: Funding Cut for Petersburg School District

COMMITTEE NAME: Finance HEARING DATE: 3.5.15

Please reinstate the funding promised in House Bill #278. We need a healthy school district that includes maintaining the current teacher-student ratio. A healthy school includes a challenging academic program with a varied curriculum, as well as activities outside of academics. It has been shown multiple times that music and art as well as non-academic electives engage different parts of the brain and are vital to a healthy curriculum. Please help secure our future by continuing to provide our youth with a quality education. This is the only way the US can remain competitive in a rapidly changing global workforce. Responsible funding of quality education is the moral obligation of our state of Alaska legislature. Please invest in our children, our communities, and our future by reinstating the recently cut funds.

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely, Elizabeth M Hart

PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
(Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Elizabeth Hart Circle one: Support ☐ Opposed ☒

REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): self

BILL #: 72 Subject: Proposed 59% cut to Public Radio

COMMITTEE NAME: Finance HEARING DATE: 3.5.15

I am opposed to the House Finance Bill #72 proposed 59% cut to Public Radio. This cut would end public radio as we know it in the State of Alaska. This is a disproportionate cut to an already minimal sector of the state budget. Rural Alaskans depend on public radio for news, information, emergency broadcasts & weather reports in remote areas. Our local radio station, KFSK, is our only source for daily local news and information. KFSK is the local emergency broadcaster, providing public service announcements and emergency service announcements not available elsewhere. KFSK involves multigenerational community members. KFSK provides a healthy outlet for children, teens, & adults in the form of volunteer programs, of which there are five shows daily. KFSK, like most other public radio stations, already operates on a bare bones budget, having reduced employees by 2/3 over the past 20 years, with almost no decrease in service. KFSK would be unable to provide anywhere near the current level of service and programming under the proposed cut. Please reconsider a more equitable budget distribution.

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth M. Hart

PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
(Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Elizabeth Hart Circle one: Support Opposed

REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): Self

BILL #: 72 Subject: Proposed cut to Alaska Marine Highway

COMMITTEE NAME: House Finance HEARING DATE: 3.5.15

I am opposed to any cut in the Alaska Marine Highway. The schedule and ferry availability in Southeast Alaska is already minimal. The Alaska Marine Highway is truly the essential mode of transport within the archipelago of Southeast Alaska. The waterway is as essential to Southeast as the highways are to Southcentral. Please consider omitting the proposed road to Kake, which is unrealistic and ridiculously expensive to build & maintain in order to serve a small community. I propose re-investing these funds into the Marine Highway, adding new ships & routes to make the system more efficient. Cutting ship and routes will directly negatively impact the small communities that depend on the Marine Highway for transportation and incoming tourists.

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Hart

– House Bill 72 –

LIO Testimony to the State of Alaska, House Finance Committee
5 March 2015

by
Charles E. “Ed” Wood
Petersburg, Alaska 99833

1. Thank you Mr. Chair, members of the House Finance Committee. My name is Charles Wood and I’m representing myself here today. A resident of Alaska since December 1954, Petersburg since 1962, I have been a self-employed commercial fisherman in Alaska for over 35 years.
2. There is no doubt that in times of severe fiscal deficits that government expenditures need to be reduced.
3. However, in my view, the proposed 59% cut to public broadcasting is excessive.
4. The impact of public broadcasting shouldn’t be taken lightly in the context of an informed public. For instance, just three days ago I heard a public broadcast notice on our local radio station, KFSK, that the Coast Guard’s mandated first aid/CPR course, that I need to update for my commercial fishing business, would be held this Saturday. Often when I am unable to attend our borough assembly meetings, I listen to them live on KFSK. I still remember listening to KFSK in the wee hours of the morning on 25 January 2013, to live updates on the tsunami warning, following the 7.5 earthquake off the coast near Craig. In contrast, at the time of the 1964 Good Friday 9.2 earthquake, and tsunami Petersburg had no local radio station. Living out the road, my family didn’t even have a telephone. In those days we got our news from KINY, an AM broadcast station in

Juneau, with less than perfect reception in Petersburg, and virtually no programming with local relevance to us.

5. My wife and I make annual personal financial contributions to our local public broadcasting radio station, KFSK Petersburg. I ask you to consider a lesser cut to the public broadcasting budget than the proposed 59%.

6. Thank you.



Charles E. "Ed" Wood

P.O. Box 383

Petersburg, AK 99833-0383

907-772-3480

fvtalon@icloud.com

From: [Robin Fritz](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Dan Saddler](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Lynn Gattis](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Lance Pruitt](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Lance Pruitt](#); [Rep. Mike Chenault](#); [Sen. Peter Micciche](#)
Subject: 2016 Operating budget
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 9:58:11 PM

March 5, 2015

The Honorable House Finance Committee Members

Alaska State Capitol

Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Honorable House Finance Committee Members:

My name is Robin Fritz and I am a longtime Alaska resident.

I am writing you to urge you to make additional cuts to the FY16 operating budget. While I am appreciative of the cuts that Governor Walker and the House Finance Subcommittees have identified to date, my belief is that the House Finance Committee needs to seek an additional approximately four hundred million dollars of reductions in the FY16 unrestricted general fund operating budget. As identified by Doctor Scott Goldsmith, the current state budget is approximately one billion dollars above what one could model as sustainable. While I am not advocating that we reach a 4.5 billion sustainable budget level in one year, my belief is that additional cuts can be made to the FY16 budget that would put us a few hundred million dollars closer to this goal.

While we have greater than 10 billion dollars in reserves, we also have several billion dollars in debt and unfunded liability to the state's retirement systems. My view is that we fail ourselves when we ignore the debt in considering our financial well being. If we fail to quickly learn to live within our means, we fail both ourselves, and more importantly future generations of Alaskans who will not be able to enjoy the profits of the nonrenewable natural resources because of our greed and inability to moderate our spending. And the future generations will be left to shoulder the burden of our debts and liabilities.

As such I encourage you to seek additional cuts across State government and to avoid adding money back into the budget for certain "needs" without offsetting those added monies with additional decrements in other areas.

I do not desire to start paying a state income tax or sales tax because of failed leadership that has been unable to live within a budget. That said, I would suggest either capping or eliminating the permanent fund dividend, with the monies being placed into the corpus of the fund so that the fund can eventually grow to the point that it can fulfill the purpose that it was created for. Future generations are depending on you, I hope that you do not fail them. Thank you for your time and hopefully your continued efforts to reign in state spending.

Respectfully,

Robin Fritz

From: [Carlo D.](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Alaska Construction Academy Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:47:09 PM

hello,

My name is Carlo, I am a combat vet, and I have been greatly impacted by the Alaska works program. It has helped my decide on my future career in carpentry and educated me in so many more ways. I would love for this program to help continue to benefit this great state and its people.

Thank you for your time.

To Whom It May Concern:

5 Mar 15

Subject: Alaska Construction Academies Funding

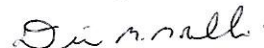
My name is Diane Morelli, I am writing to express my shock and dismay to possible funding cuts effecting the Alaska Construction Academies. I am a decorated veteran of 30-years and here is my story. After my retirement in January 2012, I found transitioning to the civilian workforce difficult. Many companies talk a good game saying they will hire veterans but the truth is, unless you walk in the door with experience in their particular industry, no one is willing to train you. Additionally, many military career fields do not simply cross over to the civilian workforce. So there I was with 30 years of honorable service and no job prospects for over 2 years.

Finally, I find out about the Alaska Construction Academy where I was treated with respect, fairness and opportunity. I applied for some training and was accepted to attend several classes. In particular, I was accepted into the "Women in the Trades" program. I learned about careers in carpentry, residential electrical work, ironwork, sheet metal fabrication, and weatherization. This training allowed me to get valuable hands on experience with course completion certificates to build my resume portfolio. This training allowed me to apply for a surveyor apprentice program for which I was selected. The hiring official said my experience in the trades provided by the Alaska Construction Academy had a direct impact on my selection.

I am grateful for the opportunity that Alaska Construction Academy provided to me when no one else would. Without this training, my future would not be as bright. This program provides applicants with great exposure to the trades, hands on experience, and direction.

Please do not cut any funding to this program. The Alaska Construction Academy's program works, the community needs it and people will succeed given the opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane Morelli".

Diane Morelli

From: [Margaret Bell](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Alaska Construction Academy Funding
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 9:23:47 AM

Hello,

I am sending this email in support of the Alaska Construction Academy.

I came to know of their program while unemployed and receiving unemployment benefits. Their flyer was on a bulletin board advertising Women in the trades classes and they were offering them at no cost, which was important as my benefits were not even covering my living costs.

These classes opened up a whole new world, that I was vaguely aware of but would never have attempted to be a part of without their encouragement and instruction. I even applied to interview for a telephone apprenticeship and got a score of 86 out of 100.

This has given me confidence that I could make a career of a moment of curiosity while standing in the hall of the midtown job center with dwindling hope of finding a steady, good paying job.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Margaret Bell

From: [Samantha Gray](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Alaska Construction Academy
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 6:48:17 PM

Hi , my name is Samantha Gray. I attend a few of the courses that the academy provided and it help me a lot. One of them being the electrical course and now I'm in the IBEW, this program help me decide what trade I wanted to be a part of and gave me some basic knowledge of the trade before I was accepted as an apprentice in 2010. I think this program was an amazing avenue for myself and others to take.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Joshua Trouy](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: RE: Written comment in support of restoring Youth Court Funding, for inclusion as public testimony on HB 72 before House Finance Committee
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:43:02 PM

Dear Members of House Finance Committee,

I ask you to fully restore the funding for Youth Courts. These programs save the state money by performing state government functions such as juvenile probation services, judicial services, prosecution and victim services, law enforcement investigations and civic education and engagement of Alaskan youth. Not only do Youth Courts perform these functions more efficiently than government agencies, they have done so more effectively. (Youth Court recidivism rates are half those of similarly situated youth that do not go through Youth Court.) Every youth diverted from a future of crime by involvement with Youth Court represents future savings to the state and private sector alike, including the direct damages caused by criminal behavior plus the costs of investigating, prosecuting, defending, judging, sentencing, supervising probation, detaining, incarcerating and rehabilitation of the criminals.

I am very interested in the Youth Court program. I believe that it gives youth offenders across the state a chance to see what they have done wrong in a different light, as well as giving them the opportunity to join Youth Court and help others that made the same mistakes that they did. In addition, even those that haven't offended before can have the opportunity to help the misguided youth to come to the conclusion that they have done wrong and that they must repair the harm that they have done to the community.

For the above reasons, if you are serious about addressing the current budget crisis with actual and sustainable savings, you will restore the Youth Court funding. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joshua Trouy,

Member of the

Mat-su Youth Court

From: [Jerry venegas](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Hi
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 3:42:30 PM

I m tha only person working on my family ,I got 2 kids , denali kid care is that only institution can help me please
don't cut that for that next year please

Sent from my iPhone

March 3, 2015

Dear Legislators,

I am a member of the Alaska Farm Bureau (and I also do their marketing and PR). We have received info that the Governor is proposing \$500,000 in budget cuts to the Division of Agriculture, which would no doubt affect several agriculture programs in our state including the "Farm to School" program which has been so successful in Sitka.

I am sending this email in support of the Division of Agriculture and ask if the Governor hasn't checked already, why not cancel the \$75 million RFP from the Tourism and Marketing department? That seems extravagant to me! :)

<http://www.prweek.com/article/1329462/alaska-puts-75m-tourism-marketing-account-grabs>

Thank you! :)

Wendy

David

Sitka Resident,

Member of Alaska Farm Bureau

<http://www.alaskafb.org>

From: [Barbara Karl](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Operating budget comments
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 11:17:56 AM

I support Medicaid expansion as it is important in providing health care to many more Alaskans and will save us money overall. Early childhood education is extremely important and needs to be funded as it also saves us money in the long run, as does adequate funding for K - 12 education. Also returning the \$20 million to the general fund that previously was allocated for the U-Med Northern Access road is wise and necessary since the road is not necessary and as designed can't be built for that amount.

I recognize that we have a serious fiscal crisis and that wise budgeting is necessary but cuts should not unfairly impact the most needy among us. Although it is only a partial solution, I support re-instituting a state income tax immediately, similar to what we used to have. Not only will it bring in funds but it will make Alaskans more involved in their government since they would be partially paying for it.

Barbara Karl
2400 East 16th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99508

From: [Brian Buma](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Best Beginnings and early childhood educational funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 5:20:40 PM

Dear House Finance Committee,

I'm quite concerned about the cuts to early childhood educational funding which are being considered. While these are quite difficult times financially, cutting education – during the most critical period for education in a child's life – is counterproductive. It seems expedient, certainly, but the effects will linger for far longer than the current budget crisis. The situation is already difficult for parents given the cost of living in Alaska, low availability of childcare, and low-funding to schools. The resources that early childhood educational funding brings about are incredibly important. As Alaska slowly transitions to a less extraction based economy, the importance of education rises dramatically - these kids need these resources to succeed in Alaska.

I'm the father of two kids, one five years old, one seven months. The five year old has been utilizing these funds in the form of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program, which sends a book each month to young kids. You probably know how excited kids get when they get some actual mail – that is directly translated to getting a book, which then becomes a treasure to be read over and over. It's at the point now where my five year old wants us to read his younger brothers books to him, because he's excited the younger one is getting these treats – and that's just one of the programs funded by early childhood programs.

The benefits are disproportional to the costs, and the lingering damage that cutting these programs would do will far outlast the current budget crunch (not to mention the difficulty of reinstating these programs if cut). Please don't cut these programs.

I'm happy to chat more about this, don't hesitate to call.

Brian Buma

Brian Buma, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Forest Ecology
University of Alaska Southeast

Ph: 907-796-6410

brian.buma@uas.alaska.edu

From: [Cheryl Zeeck](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Early Education Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 2:15:11 PM

Hello,

I am a Juneau parent writing in regards to the recent proposed cuts in early education funding. I realize that budgeting for an entire state must be extremely difficult, but I believe there has to be a way to keep funding important programs like PAT, Best Beginnings, and the Dolly Parton Library. These programs help in the social, emotional, and educational development of children, who are the future of Alaska. Today's culture is very different than it has been in the past: with technology growing so quickly, more parents working full time, and people being busier than ever, it is truly a challenge for parents to make the time to help their children develop healthy habits, good communication skills, and a strong knowledge base. These programs that depend on state funding help parents shape future Alaskans into model citizens. I urge you to see the funding as an investment, much like a college savings account. I'm sure the the return the state gain in the future with a strong workforce will outweigh the sacrifice the state may have to make in other budget areas. Thank you for reconsidering these cuts.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Zeeck

From: dgray70@gmail.com
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Preschool Funding
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 8:48:56 AM

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

I know you face very difficult choices in deciding which programs to fund, with limited resources and so many needs.

As your constituent, I am writing to urge you to support state legislation to continue building high-quality preschools, which have proven successful in leveling the academic playing field for low-income children and ensuring that more of our young learners arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.

Not only is this good for children, it is good for our families, communities and the state. Multiple studies show that children who attend high-quality preschool are less like to need costly special education and more likely to perform well in school.

In fact, one study from the National Institute for Early Education Research found that by 4th or 5th grade, children who attended state-funded, quality preschools are, on average, three-quarters of an academic year ahead of students who did not attend a quality preschool. So rather than spending money on remedial education, we should invest it up front to give children a strong educational start.

This year Lake Otis Elementary School received funds to help create a neighborhood preschool program. Through a strong developmentally appropriate program with highly trained staff and on going professional development we can already see the positive results in our young students.

I urge you to continue in advocating for legislation where preschool is recognized as a proactive measure at supporting our youth.

Sincerely,

Douglas Gray

From: [Ellen Naughter Andrews](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Do NOT cut early learning funding!
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 9:13:22 AM

Good morning members of the House Finance Committee,

Please do not cut early learning funding!

I am writing to you as a mother of three children, a former program manager at AWARE, and the current facilitator of both the Healthy Relationships Class for Women and the Beyond Baby Blues support group (the only local support for pregnant and postpartum mothers experiencing depression and/or anxiety). As a social services provider and community member in Juneau, it is clear to me that there are many gaps for parents of young children. The programs that deserve this funding - Imagination Library, Parents as Teachers, Pre-K Programs, and Partnerships for Families & Children - close this gap, dramatically. Each one of these programs are invaluable on their own and together, provide meaningful support, education for the parents and children participating.

The proposed cuts will undoubtedly cost the state of Alaska in the future. If you haven't read the research, please do. Supporting parents and their children from birth to age 5 is tremendously important and will provide lasting returns. Establishing strong, healthy parents who are aware of developmental milestones, nutrition, and early education build accountable and intelligent adults. What can be lacking in any one family can be supported and compensated for with meaningful community programming designed specifically to fill essential gaps. Alaska has many lacking families - isolated, uneducated, traumatized, poverty stricken - these programs target both underserved and in need, as well as high functioning families. The end result is multi-dimensional. In addition to the rich programming, families of all socioeconomic backgrounds share parenting issues, celebrate the development of their children and rely on their role as parent as the bridge to new relationships.

Do not cut this funding, This would have a catastrophic effect on the community of Juneau.

Sincerely,
Ellen and Alex Andrews

From: [Irene Bortnick](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Early Childhood Budget Cuts
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 5:39:49 PM

To whom it may concern:

As a former preschool teacher, 20 year ASD kindergarten teacher, ASD mentor and Early Childhood UAA adjunct professor, I am dismayed at the proposed cuts to Best Beginnings and other early childhood programs. In the Infant and Toddler Development class (birth to 3 years old) that I teach, I stress the importance of early care and education. All the research backs this up. I know that our state is stressed with financial challenges at this time but in the long run it will cost much more if we do not at the very least keep the current level of funding. In fact, we should be increasing access to quality early care and education. From a financial standpoint alone, it makes sense to fund programs that support our youngest citizens and their caregivers; from a social/psychological perspective, it is imperative.

Sincerely,

Irene Bortnick

From: [James Johnson](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: concern
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 10:39:39 AM

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the committee.

My name is Jamie Johnson and I am a special education preschool educator in Bethel. I am writing regarding HB36 and want to make the following points: Preschool and early literacy programs are essential for giving early intervention to our at risk populations.

Our preschool program in Bethel has been funded for quite some time now, and data has shown that our preschool students have had a great deal of success in Kindergarten than before we had the preschool.

I understand that money is tight in these times. I hope you will consider the welfare of our students when looking at future funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

From: [g.fournier](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Fwd: Early Childhood Education and support services are ESSENTIAL!
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 9:53:48 PM

I am a 37 year Alaskan resident, mother of 3 adult children born in Alaska, and provider of earlychildhood and mental health services in Alaska for 37 years. Supports for education and wellbeing of young children and their families are essential for eventual positive outcomes in their lives and our communities. As the ACES research demonstrates, lack of adequate care and education and other challenges in the earliest years negatively impact individuals throughout their lives. Please make funding for early education and support a priority!

Kathleen Rhea
3200 Fritz Cove Road
Juneau, AK 99801

From: [Lesa Thomas](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Please, Something else to consider
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 8:29:35 PM

Attn. House Finance Committee:

Re: Continued Funding of Best Beginnings, for Pre-K, and Parents as Teachers

The task you face, of finding ways to close gaps in the budget, is doubtless a difficult one. As you address your task, please consider, preserving the future. By this I mean, please do not take funds from youth programs. These programs help to guarantee the future of the state, offering a foundation for functioning citizens.

Pre K

Preschool is so big. I am a reading teacher. I will tell you that not every child needs preschool. Some children come from a home with a very high value of reading and education and those children may not need preschool. But some do. Many do. And badly.

Many children do not have special needs, physically, cognitively or behaviorally and they may not need preschool. But some do. Many do.

Many children **need** preschool. They need an opportunity to prepare for kindergarten. They need a foundation on which to build academic and social skills. They may need some structure in their life. They need every opportunity to be successful. So much learning can take place pre-K. Please do not take it away. There is plenty research showing the advantages of preschool. Many will be quoting it to you. Please listen to these people.

The education system needs preschool. Pre-K education is an important foundation for the children who need it. It is an opportunity for focused small groups, necessary interventions and so much more. It is preparation for success. Please do not cut Pre-K funding.

Parents as Teachers

Parents are the first teachers, and Parents as Teachers, provides parents with some wonderful tools. Where Pre-K may not be available in rural settings, guidance to parents to help prepare

their children is the next best thing. Please continue to fund Parents as Teachers.

Best Beginnings

Please consider keeping funding for Best beginnings. My personal experience with best beginnings is my own children receiving Imagination Library books every month. They loved it and looked forward to it from as long as they can remember. They value books and had continued to stay excited about reading.

My professional experience is having seen children who have no access to books before entering public school. Children love books, being read to and simply just turning their way through the pictures. Imagine, though, children without books. Not being able to touch the few books a house has because they are not children's books. They would have not concept of the workings of the machine, let alone print. Did you know children do actually have to learn at some point how to hold a book? They have to learn which direction to turn the pages. That the pictures go with the story you are telling them, and eventually that the glyphs on the page help to tell a story.

Simply having books access to books creates countless opportunities to prepare future readers. Please continue to fund Best Beginnings.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Lesa Thomas

Wasilla, AK

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Melinda Myers](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Testimony in Support of Early Childhood
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:04:57 PM

Dear House Finance Committee,

I am writing to you today as a parent and supporter of young children in hope that you will restore funding for early childhood; specifically for Parents As Teachers, Pre-Kindergarten and Best Beginnings. History has shown that when there are tough times with any budget, programs in support of children and families are usually the first to be cut because they are not seen as a critical component to a strong economy. I want you and our State to think differently and restore those cuts because it does affect our economy.

For every parent that learns strategies to bond with their child and support his/her development through Parents As Teachers, that's one more parent whose child is not in the custody of the Office of Children's Services.

For every child that is able to participate in a State funded Pre-Kindergarten program, that's one more child who has had the foundation to graduate high school and not end up on welfare.

And for communities that have created an early childhood partnership or launched an Imagination Library program through Best Beginnings, that's one more community that has said we value our young children and want them to have a good start, grow up in Alaska, and stay and work in Alaska.

So I ask you as a parent and a lifelong Alaskan - be different and stand strong. Invest in our economy. Invest in early childhood.

Sincerely,
Melinda Myers

From: [panu.lucier](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Public Testimony
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 11:05:42 AM

Thank you to the Chair and Committee members for the opportunity to testify. My name is Panu Lucier and I am writing today as a supporter of young children.

I support restoring funding to Alaska's early care and learning systems and programs. For Alaska's children today and for the state of our economy tomorrow, it is critical that we invest in priorities like:

***Best Beginnings** and their work to increase community engagement around quality early learning and early literacy through programs like Imagination Library.*

***Parents As Teachers** to provide services to families with young children with critical home visiting services.*

***PreK**, an investment in our state in quality early learning to ensure our youngest Alaskan's get a healthy start in their education and enter Kindergarten ready for success.*

Research has demonstrated that investing early on in a child's life helps better prepare children for school, for work and for life. Thank you for your leadership in supporting quality early learning for Alaska families and children.

Panu C.Lucier

5441 Rabbit Creek Rd.

Anchorage, AK 99516

From: [Shannon Seifert](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Parents as Teachers, Best Beginnings, and other Pre-K Programs are Essential
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:45:42 AM

Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am a Juneau parent writing to request that you **reinstate full funding for Pre-K programs, including Parents as Teachers and Best Beginnings. These programs are essential to the well being of Alaskan parents as well as babies and toddlers.**

PAT facilitators are a lifeline to support and resources most parents would otherwise not know about or access on their own. With our first child, I had a very difficult time finding childcare my income could afford. When my baby was 10 months old, I chose to leave my job and become a stay-at-home-mom, which was a very isolating experience. I credit the Parents as Teachers program with helping me through a difficult period of adjustment as well as helping me keep up with my child's milestones. The PAT facilitator helped me find assistance elsewhere when his needs exceeded what the program offered.

With our second child, we are again participating in PAT and regularly attend family nights at the library, evening Turf for Tots events, and PAT family events, all of which bring our family together and give us an opportunity to visit with other families and other children in our community. Both children are benefitting from the Best Beginnings "Dolly Parton's Imagination Library," where age-appropriate books arrive in the mail each month. Our now 3-year-old's enthusiasm for reading is due in part to this program. An exceptional aspect of the Imagination Library is that we have books and stories in common with children in the same age group - a great icebreaker at the playground or at library storytime.

As I begin planning to return to work, I am sincerely hoping AEYC, PAT, and Best Beginnings will be there for us when we search for childcare, follow our new baby's development, foster love of reading, and share the challenges and joys of raising littles with other Juneau families at local AEYC events.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding these essential programs and the benefits they've provided our family and other Alaskan families.

Sincerely,
Shannon Seifert
6742 Sherri St.
Juneau, AK 99801

From: [Shayna Rohwer](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Early Learning Funding Cuts
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 8:39:06 PM

Dear House Finance Committee--

While I'm sure that your job isn't easy, and that you're hearing different things from many people, I'm writing to encourage you to continue funding Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, and other early childhood education programs. The research on the impacts of early interventions and education programs all show that there is no better investment than early learning for children and their communities. I've seen this first hand working with families in Juneau as both a doula and case manager for families in Juneau since 2007.

I'll speak directly about the Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program--because I've been involved with it both as a participant and as a referring provider. The PAT program fills a critical gap in our community--it provides a non-threatening intervention to families with social risk factors--and gives families an outlet to brainstorm ways to deal with difficult parenting situations as well as resources to help them encourage their children to learn and thrive. I often speak to families I work with about the immense amount of time most families spend preparing to give birth (an event which takes 1-2 days at most) whereas in the US, we spend very little time and energy preparing for the very challenging and long-term job of parenting. The PAT program provides guidance and practical parenting skills to the parents who may have had very little education and guidance about child development and nurturing their child's curiosity and interest in learning.

I strongly encourage you to continue to fund these critical early learning programs.

Thank you for your attention.
Best,

Shayna Rohwer, PhD, CD(DONA)
1025 D Street Juneau, AK 99801
shaynarohwer@gmail.com
(907)209-7722

From: [Steve Sue Wing](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Thank you and partnership
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:07:03 PM

Thank you to Co-Chairs Neuman and Thompson for scheduling an evening of public testimony in the House Finance Committee on the State Operating Budget. Thank you to members of the committee for staying late into the evening to hear the voices, needs, and priorities of your constituents.

Tonight I testified for state funding for Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, and restoring the one-time funding for K-12 education that was promised with the passage of legislation last session.

My father was an immigrant to this country and he instilled in me the value of this country and the responsibilities that citizens have to make this democracy work. This is one of my core values as a person and a resident of the that state of Alaska for over 15 years. What I failed to mention in my testimony is that my family makes small monetary donations to both early learning programs and also to as many school causes as we can. Not only do we prioritize donations to these programs in our family finances but we also volunteer to participate in these programs, in school classrooms, and participate in many advocacy and volunteer opportunities throughout the state. We understand that many families in Alaska do not have this capacity but we know that state funds must be leveraged to their full potential and we must contribute when we can. Many Alaskans make these contributions too. Investments in young Alaskans without a vote to cast, a voice to advocate for themselves or an email address to submit their comments must be prioritized in the tough decisions that need to be made. Please prioritize the funding of these investments that will lead to returns beyond measure.

Thank you for your service to the State of Alaska and all of the souls that call it home.

Respectfully,

Stephen SueWing
423 East St.
Juneau, Alaska
907-209-7652

From: [Tom Conley](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Testimony on HB72 before House Finance in Sitka by teleconference 3/5/15
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 8:53:35 PM

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on Education funding. My name is Tom Conley and I am a member of the Sitka School Board. I am also a retired Board Certified Pediatrician with 42 years in practice, 30 of those years in Southeast Alaska. Like others who have or will testify here, I am distressed by the movement to cancel the \$32.4 million one time funds and the \$13 million in specific programmatic cuts proposed by the Finance Subcommittee of House Finance. In particular I am disturbed by the retrogressive move on early childhood learning with the bulk of the pre-Kindergarten programs defunded and most eliminated. I think most of us have always instinctively known that children who receive lots of attention, are read to and included in play and conversation develop and mature more rapidly, speak earlier, and in general seem brighter than their peers who lack this stimulation. Certainly personal observation over many years bore that out. More recently a multitude of studies --medical, sociologic, and educational-- have borne out the validity of the argument that early exposure to learning is amazingly beneficial to children. Indeed this can be accomplished in the home if parents or other caretakers are consistently available and particularly if they are given some training and support. However in 21st century America, the economic realities are such that many, probably most, families need two incomes to survive so both parents, if indeed there are two parents, need to work, limiting the time spent with children. This limitation of support is further aggravated when poverty, single parenthood, parental illness, addiction and incarceration are added to the mix.

Where well structured early education is provided for pre-Kindergarten children the educational and by derivation the economic dividends are quite amazing.- special education costs are reduced, truancy and dropout numbers fall, teenage incarceration goes down and teen pregnancy decreases. Nobel Prize in Economics recipient Dr. James Heckman states: "Investing in early childhood education ... shows a 7% to 10% per year return on investment...for these and many reasons. Thus looking at the idea of cutting just over \$3.5 million dollars from early childhood education programs -- completely eliminating three of the four programs impacted (Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, and Pre-Kindergarten grants). would not seem to make economic much less educational sense in the long run. I would urge you to reexamine the decision to cut these programs. Tom Conley

From: [Ann McCann](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: One time Education funds
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 6:42:19 AM

Please reinstate the one-time education funds that were removed from the budget by the governor. Already committed funds should not be withdrawn.

Ann McCann
Fairbanks

From: [Barbara Haney](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: The Core Mission
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 8:38:00 PM

I am writing in the hopes of encouraging you to continue budget cuts. I know you are hearing from people about programs that are worthy. Indeed, many of them are; but the most worthy program of all is the fiscal integrity of our state.

When you look at programs, please cut those things that are not in the core mission of the agency. Rolling back flat % only goes so far to achieve a sustainable budget because ultimately you are still stuck with program overhead that has to be cut.

Evaluating programs in light of the core mission of an agency may be a more useful concept. There are quite a few programs that sound good, but overlap other services. For example, in the Alaska Department of Education you will notice a project AWARE, which is a new mental health program. DEED has vocational education that serve adults that sound great, but those programs overlap programs that are in the Department of Labor. By keeping these programs within the core mission of the agency, you can reduce duplicate programs and still allow for some services within the core mission of the agencies in which they are housed. Even if duplicate programs do not appear to have a big footprint today, they will in the future when the grant funds run out and the overhead will persist.

Please, cut the budget back more. I think if you look at the core mission of agencies, you will find many duplicate programs

Barbara Haney
North Pole, Alaska

From: [Barbara Thurston](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Education Funding
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 9:57:45 AM

I write as a parent of one child in the Juneau school district, and other who graduated recently. I am also a Juneau School board member.

I want to thank you for the increase in the BSA and the planned multiple-year "one time" funding amounts that were approved by the legislature a year ago. These amounts helped to slow the consistent decrease in inflation-adjusted funding, and corresponding cuts in services to students that school districts have been seeing over the last several years.

I want to urge you to maintain the "one-time" funding amounts that were approved last year. While these amounts aren't enough for us to fully maintain the services we need to provide the best education for children, or restore services that were cut in prior years, they provide a significant help in reducing the amount of cuts we need to impose on the upcoming year(s).

The Juneau school district has cut more than 10% of our budget over the last 5 years, and, like all Alaskan school districts, is facing additional substantial cuts to teachers and other staff for the upcoming year. Without the continuation of the "one-time" funding as approved last year (totalling approximately \$1.1 million for Juneau), these cuts will be even deeper.

Despite these cuts, the Juneau school district has seen significant, measurable, increases in student achievement, including a graduation rate that is among the highest in the state. Unfortunately, we can't expect that this trend will continue and are facing the possibility of being unable to continue these gains. Classes sizes are getting to be extremely large, and we have had to cut much of the support we have been providing to teachers enabling them to work together and tailor their instruction to meet the needs of each of their students.

The education of the children in Alaska is one of the most important things that we do as a state. How well educated our children are will affect their participation in the work force a decade or more from now, and the overall prosperity of our state. Cuts that save a few dollars now will result in significantly larger expenditures later, if our students are not prepared to step into the roles we need for them in adulthood.

I urge you to maintain the level of funding as planned for K-12 schools, even if this means taking a hard look at other financial decisions, including the appropriate use of our state savings accounts, permanent fund, or even the potential of an income tax. Our children, and the future of our state, depend on it.

Thank you.

Barbara Thurston

Juneau

From: [Bjorn Dihle](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: In support of education
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 6:15:02 PM

Hello,

Just a quick note. I've lived in Alaska all my life and I support restoring one time funds for k-12th grade students.

Thank you,

Bjorn Dihle

From: [ElviaTorres](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Fw: HB 278 and HB 72
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:42:35 PM

From: ElviaTorres
Sent: Thursday, March 5, 2015 1:27 PM
To: steve.thompson@akleg.gov
Subject: HB 278 and HB 72
To: House Fiance Committee

My name is Elvia Torres, I am from Sitka, Alaska. I've lived in Alaska since 1975 and have been in the education business as long as I can remember starting with Headstart. I am a grandparent, teacher, parent, volunteer, and community minded individual.

I am imploring that you reconsider the decision to not distribute funding that was promised by last year's Governor! Alaskans take pride in the important values of promoting healthy families and following through on commitments. Please reconsider the decision not to distribute funding from HB278/ HB72 bill.

I am very proud of all the work our representatives have accomplished for the people of Alaska past and present. If we need to reduce the amount of this bill HB278 /HB72, do it. If we need to make changes to that existing piece of legislation do it. However, to completely do away with the funding that jeopardizes valuable programs throughout Alaska's schools this is unconscionable. Please consider a time frame for cuts so that administrators can work with their existing budgets from last year's commitments!!!

Thank you for all that you do and for giving consideration to all the young people this piece of legislation will influence.

3/5/15

To House Finance,

Please view this as a letter of support of retaining the school budget.

As a resident of Litka (since 1976) I've seen the effects of "Healthy Schools" since seeing my children and grandchildren attend all levels of the Litka School district.

Thank you in advance,

Gail Roderick } lourod@gci.net
Lou Roderick } 747-3083

From: [Joe Banta](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: HB 72 Written Testimony
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 9:04:53 PM

The testimony that follows is directed to Members of the Alaska State House Finance Committee:

We are parents of three young men - aged 16, 20 and 23 - who are 4th generation Alaskans. Our youngest is a student in the Anchorage School District; the oldest is now in the workforce after graduating in May from a prestigious college; and our middle son is a sophomore, also attending one of the top colleges in America. I would like you to consider my perspective, shared by so many other Alaskan families, as you deliberate expenditures for education in our state.

We have strong roots in this state and in our community. It has served our family well. Our older boys received excellent educations, which launched them into adulthood well-prepared to give back their career choices, and our youngest (to this point) is looking forward to following his brothers' footsteps by, hopefully, entering a topnotch college.

Here is the gist of our concern: The budget now on the table for Alaska's education - pre-K through post-graduate programs - is sending the message that Alaska is closed to business. The crisis resulting from the decline in oil is real, should be considered with care, but is not a death sentence for our state. What will result in a death sentence for Alaska is giving up on the future because of this first shot across the state budget's bow. My oldest son want to go to medical school, is applying to WWAMI (because he loves Alaska and is committed to the future of our state), and hopes to be a medical researcher some day. Your budget projects zeroing out WWAMI's budget in the near future. How tragically short-sighted!

Our youngest has already experienced multiple years in a row of steadily decreasing educational opportunities in the Anchorage School District - beloved teachers laid off and leaving our community, expanded choices (such as gifted mentorships) that benefitted his brothers now gone, and only the slim promise of two consecutive years with a predictable BSA giving us hope that he'll finish out his public schooling without further losses. Now, your budget takes away the hope of that predictable BSA. Again - this would be a tragically short-sighted decision for all of our school-aged students - the essence hope for the future of Alaska.

Finally, all three of these 4th generation Alaskans love Alaska, and it is our hope as their parents that they will live their lives and raise their families here. But, these are smart boys, who will want only the best for their children - our grandchildren. This requires absolute prioritization of all levels of education, but most importantly, pre-K programs for all Alaskans. This relatively small education for your youngest and most vulnerable citizens, pays off far into the future as we can count on a skilled, prepared workforce. Pre-K education is the best way to ensure that every other dollar we pay on education K-12 and beyond is getting the best out of our investment. Zeroing out pre-K education fund in HB 72 would be a tragically short-sighted decision for our state.

In sum...cut money from capitol projects, but leave education funding alone. Doing so will be a message to all of Alaska, the U.S. and the world, that Alaska is, and will always be, open for

business and will always take care of our future, our youth, who will the business men and women of tomorrow. Sincerely, Janice and Joe Banta

From: [James Gage](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: One Time Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 9:02:54 PM

I'm a parent and Alaskan resident, and I completely support the restoration of one time funds for k-12th grade students. Education is the foundation of our state. We shouldn't sacrifice this state's future.

Jim Gage

From: [Laura Kimmel](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: budget cuts to education
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 2:20:21 PM

Hello,

As a special educator, my job deals with all at-risk students, at the high school level. The budget cuts have greatly impacted my day. So far there have been major cuts that have affected me directly in the classroom.

Anchorage School District, where I work has had to cut graduation support coaches, special education and other clerical staff, multicultural advisors and teacher assistants. We have eliminated important computer teaching programs.

Special educators have the same amount of paperwork every year, plus additional testing dates, common core requirements, new teacher evaluation programs, we are suffering a massive exodus of highly qualified special education and regular ed. teachers. In addition to this we do not have a retirement program for my colleagues, that entices them to stay in Alaska.

Altogether, this is causing me to have a lot of stress at my job.

Please do not do any additional cuts to funds for education.

Thank you,

Laura Kimmel

[laura kimmel](#)
[anchorage, alaska 99517](#)

art2snow@yahoo.com

"Seek the symbol behind the appearance,
the eternal idea beneath the form."

--Gustav Klimt, circa 1903

From: [Mary Janis](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Public Testimony
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 9:43:36 PM

As a long time teacher here in Alaska, I am deeply committed to the success of every student in my classroom, school, and district. I want to say that I support the three year funding plan adopted by the legislature last year. I encourage the legislature to invest in the future of Alaska by investing in our students. They are our states most precious resource.

Sincerely,

Mary M. Janis

From: [Rebecca Poulson](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: School financing
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 5:46:50 PM

My name is Rebecca Poulson, I am a Sitka resident and parent. I am writing to urge you not to take away the funding of HB278. This is vitally needed money for our schools, and was a promise made to Alaska's students.

Without this money, Sitka will have to get rid of teachers.

Students only have one chance at an education.

Putting more kids in a class in elementary school is proven to diminish the rate of graduation.

Losing electives in secondary school reduces students' ability to go to college or get into a trade.

This money has a real impact on the lives of Alaska's students. Reneging on this promise will have real, permanent consequences for our kids.

Thank you,

Rebecca Poulson

From: [Young, Barb \[AK\]](#) on behalf of [Fuhrer, Ron \[AK\]](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: House Finance Testimony
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:29:32 PM
Attachments: [House Finance Testimony.docx](#)



March 5, 2015

My name is Ron Fuhrer, NEA-Alaska President, representing 13,000 education support professionals and teachers.

The rapid decline in oil prices has created a difficult fiscal situation for the state of Alaska, and I don't envy you for the task you have before you. With a projected \$3.5 billion budget deficit, there's no question that Alaska will need to reduce its annual spending.

I write to ask that you make sure that Alaska's students bear as little of the budget-cutting pain as possible. As someone who taught in Alaska's schools for over 30 years, I can tell you that we will never lose when we invest in our students.

Alaska's school districts have already dealt with the reality of four years of budget deficits, program cuts, and layoffs. Last year, after much debate and compromise, you passed a three-year funding plan for education, and I thank you for those efforts. Your leadership gave our school districts the fiscal certainty to plan for lean years in the future.

Cutting education funding just months later hits our school districts twice – once by the loss of state funding, and again by the subsequent lowering of local contribution caps.

We will all feel the pain of the state's budget deficit. There's no doubt about that. This year, Alaska's teachers will be paying a 60 percent increase in certification fees to pay for a portion of the Department of Education and Early Development's budget. That is the reality we face in this fiscal climate, and we understand that.

But as much as possible, we must try to spare our children of the state's budget pain. We don't know what the price of oil will be in a year. As educators, we are ready to be part of the conversation to find a long-term solution to funding education. We welcome an open dialogue with you about how we set Alaska on the path to responsible, predictable, and sustainable spending and revenue in the future.

There are many more hard decisions ahead of us. With that in mind, I ask you to invest in our students. Invest in our future leaders and innovators, who will grow and diversify our economy for years to come.

Sincerely,



Ron Fuhrer
President



Barb Young

4100 Spenard Road

Anchorage, AK 99517

www.neaalaska.org

907-274-0536

From: [Sarah Holmgrain](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: HB72 General Operating Budget
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:58:11 PM
Attachments: [2015 ACSA AASB leg efficiencies final new.pdf](#)

My name is Sarah Holmgrain and my husband and I chose to return to Petersburg nearly 13 years ago to raise our family here. We are community members, parents of a district graduate with another child still in the district, and I am a school board member for over 6 years.

I have had the unique opportunity to be a part of the school board's budget process for several years. Each year we have taken very specific measures to limit spending, work within our means, and downsize when necessary. Teachers have taken on additional roles and duties, programs have been eliminated and conservative spending has been the status quo for many years even prior to my election onto the board.

Even with such conservative spending we have maintained our outstanding schools. We have 3 schools, one with a 5 star and the other two have 4 star ratings. We strive to provide a 21st century learning environment and prepare our students for a future outside our walls.

It will be nearly impossible to continue to educate our children at the current standard if further cuts to our budget are made. Please ask yourself if this is worth it?

There are several current mandates from your fellow legislators that have created both direct additional spending and payroll time. Please seriously consider delaying the implementation of those programs, removing them entirely, or repealing them if you are unable to move forward without cuts. A few I would like to highlight would be the pending bill to require a civics class, health physicals for new students to districts (currently districts must bear the cost), time and money spent on the 70% rule, (AS 14.17.520) the cap on savings in the general fund (currently at 10%-why not bump it to 15 or 20%), the mandated teacher evaluation system, among other ideas presented to the Senate Education Committee on February 20th. AASB's letter is attached.

Petersburg High School recently went through our cycle of accreditation and I am pleased to tell you we passed with flying colors. Teresa Johnson, lead evaluator for AdvanceEd's told us...and I paraphrase, "...don't ask your teachers to do any more than they are already... otherwise your program will suffer...you have an outstanding program here and anyone looking for a model in integrating technology into learning...I would send them to look at your school". Her recorded quote can be obtained from KFSK Radio.

If you continue to cut education funding be prepared for Alaska and our children to suffer the consequences. State and Federal laws continue to pile more and more requirements on districts and their personnel without adequate funding and now proposed cuts will only create more problems not solutions.

I have full confidence in our administrators and teachers here in Petersburg to continue to try and maintain with less. However, when learning suffers and our children begin to slide backwards I will look to you to find solutions-not our local educators. Because in the end you can't educate and prepare students for the future without adequate funds and you hold the power to make the difference.

Sincerely,

Sarah Holmgrain

Petersburg, AK

From: [Sarah Miller](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Proposed Cuts to Dept. of Ed and Early Development
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 5:29:48 PM

My name is Sarah Miller, I am a resident of Nome, Alaska, a teacher by background and a parent as well. I have a child enrolled in Nome Preschool, and the grant that funds the preschool teacher's position is among the proposed legislative budget cuts. I hope to persuade legislators to think twice before cutting funding to a critical service for young children in Nome, one which benefits the entire community in the long run.

Research has shown that teacher turnover rates in preschools typically hovers around 25%, a number higher than nearly every other industry. <http://www.compensationforce.com/2014/02/2013-turnover-rates-by-industry.html>

One of the primary reasons for the high turnover rate in early childhood education is cited as inadequate compensation- salary levels for preschool teachers averaged at around \$30,000 annually, as compared to Kindergarten and Elementary school teachers, at \$52,000-\$55,000. <http://www.naeyc.org/policy/advocacy/ECWorkforceFacts>

The need for having consistency and routine, and the reliable presence of important people in a child's life is invaluable, and is documented by research. <http://www.irle.berkeley.edu/cscce/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ReportFINAL.pdf> Some key findings from this study were:

1. Children thrive on relationships. "Responsive, sensitive, and secure adult-child attachments are developmentally expected and biologically essential. Their absence signals a serious threat to child well-being, particularly during the earliest years, and this absence activates the body's stress response systems."
2. "The consequences of a poorly calibrated stress response system early in life include highly unregulated emotions and behavior, compromised memory, attention, and immune/metabolic systems, and blunted responses to feedback- all essential capacities for early learning."
3. "When combined with other sources of adversity and trauma, such as economic hardship and insecurity, excessive instability in household arrangements, or food insecurity, the negative consequences of unresponsive relationships mount exponentially."
4. "Children form developmentally essential relationships not only with their parents but simultaneously with other regular caregivers, including early childhood teachers. These relationships can buffer children from stress."

Our early childhood centers need to be able to provide consistency for children, especially when this is not available in the home environments of many.

The Nome Preschool Grant has solved this problem for our community- it enables the preschool to place a certified teacher in the position of early childhood educator. The certified teacher has appropriate and adequate training in working with the unique needs of young children, is considered a member of the district's professional community and undergoes ongoing professional development & training, is held to the same level of accountability as all highly qualified teachers are, and is able to earn a livable wage while working with our community's children. Placing a trained professional in the preschool position has ensured a higher probability of employment retention, which will lead to more stability for children, parents and preschool staff, long-term planning for programming, and a higher quality preschool program in the long run. This is a long-term investment in the community that benefits all. When the children of our community have high quality, stable, and consistent early childhood experiences, they are set up to perform better in school later on, ultimately graduating and providing a strong workforce for our community, something we desperately need for our economic stability.

The State of Alaska has done not only the right thing by providing funding for this grant, but has done the necessary and wise thing, which will benefit the entire community of Nome in the long run. Why move backward?

We strongly urge the legislation to reconsider the cuts to Early Childhood and to Nome Preschool in particular. Surely there are other areas in which the budget can be trimmed that won't harm the economic and educational health of Alaska's rural communities.



Sarah D. Miller
PO Box 1209
Nome AK 99762
907-433-9501



Southwest Region School District

P.O. Box 90
574 Kenny Wren Road
Dillingham, AK 99576

(907) 842-5287 • Phone
(907) 842-5428 • Fax

Aleknagik

Clark's Point

Ekwok

Koliganek

Manokotak

New Stuyahok

Portage Creek

Togiak

Twin Hills

Chairs Neuman and Thompson, members of the committee, for the record my name is Steve Noonkesser, Associate Superintendent of the Southwest Region School District.

I am calling to strongly encourage you to reinstate funding for the Alaska Learning Network, or AKLN as it is more commonly known.

I am a lifelong Alaskan, and have been an educator for the past twenty-seven years. I have been deeply involved in efforts over the past twenty-five years to provide distance-learning options to Alaskan students as a member of the boards of a number of distance learning organizations, and currently as chair of the AKLN advisory board.

I want to clear up some misconceptions about AKLN that have recently surfaced and provide you with some pertinent facts.

There has been talk that AKLN is a failed program. This is far from the truth. AKLN is the result of over twenty years of efforts by Alaskan educators to create a program to bring varied, high quality offerings to all Alaskan students regardless of location or individual circumstance.

Pertinent facts include:

- Over 100 courses are now offered by AKLN, the majority of which address Alaska Performance Scholarship requirements.
- Enrollment in courses has risen from 169 seats in 2011-2012 to 736 this year. AKLN is not a failed program it is growing at a dramatic rate.
- Students in 47 of the 54 Alaskan school districts now take courses. AKLN is not just a program serving rural students. Over 100 of the current year's 736 course seats are from Fairbanks alone. The courses offered meet needs across the state, both rural and urban.
- The rate of successful course completion is currently at 78%, a solid number for distance learning courses.

The proposed budget for AKLN comprises less than 1/10th of one percent of the state's education budget and its impact is growing and potential great.

AKLN is worthy of continued funding and we need it as one of our public education options to meet the needs of all of Alaska's students. Distance learning options like those provided by AKLN are critical in establishing educational equity and opportunities for all Alaskan students.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Steve Noonkesser, Associate Superintendent

From: [Terri](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Public testimony- don't cut school funding.
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 6:18:13 PM

Hello Committee,

I urge you to not cut public school finding.

Thank you,

Terri Lynn Draeger
From Anchorage.
(907) 317-0430

From: [Terry Snyder](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Budget testimony
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:03:39 PM

I respectfully submit the following testimony for the consideration of members of House Finance in their budget deliberations.

House Finance Committee;

The past few years have been incredibly difficult for our public schools. Every mechanism of schools in our state have been under scrutiny and none more than amount of state funding they receive. The base student formula set in place that has been the guide of what schools utilize as their baseline revenue from the state has been on a roller coaster ride taking school districts with it. Imagine trying to set your own kitchen table budget not knowing from year to year what your financial expectations are with a family to house and feed.

The state's failure to meet the needs of every child means students are in schools that have cut programs, teachers and student services that are suppose to prepare every child for college, careers, life and only damages the economics of the whole state. Underfunding is bordering on leaving a generation of students in schools without access to the sound basic education which is their constitutional right.

The money added to last year's budget and promised for this year made a difference, but it was not adequate and failed to even keep up with inflation. That minimal increase is now on the chopping block. To abandon that promise to our schools and stop fulfilling the constitutional mandate to provide "sound basic education" to our children is a travesty and could lead to expensive state litigation once more. To not recognize the data that tells us that every dollar invested in early childhood development provides 7 to 10 percent per annum return on investment is reckless and a failure of stewardship of state funds.

Please prioritize and fund our schools first. Consider the savings that will be realized by adopting a more adequate, predictable, stable, and sustainable funding mechanism that will in the long run be good for our state's children. Perhaps reinstating a minimal school tax to supplement funds will assist in meeting that goal. I look to you our elected officials to continue to work on new more creative pathways to meet our state constitutional obligation to fund schools. But please don't start that discussion that in the long run could benefit future students by sacrificing the education of students now enrolled in our public schools.

We are a state of great resources. The most important one is our children. Let's not forget that.

Thank you for your service and consideration of my views,

Terry Snyder
Palmer, Alaska 1

From: [Brittany](#)
To: [House Finance: governor@alaska.gov](mailto:governor@alaska.gov)
Subject: Education Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:09:02 PM

Dear Finance Committee & Governor Walker,

Public education is the foundation of our democracy. Alaska's Constitution guarantees that a public education will be available for every child. How can we educate the children of Alaska with inadequate funding? In the past, Alaska has chosen to flat fund education. The reality of this decision is that our schools are already underfunded. Departments and programs have been broken apart by not forward funding education and teacher cuts. If we choose to not keep our promise to the children of Alaska by cutting the funding promised by the Legislature last year we will deplete our school systems ability to function effectively.

When I began teaching in Alaska I was impressed with the educational system. I had taught in Portland where there were large class sizes (32 1st graders) and little support such as not having Librarians. I have spoken to teachers in Montana who teach a 4 day school week due to lack of funding. We need to think hard about what kind of education we offer Alaska students. I see these stories as a cautionary tale.

Social services are going to be declining due to budget cuts. Schools are going to take the brunt of these cuts by having to deal with students who are increasing violent, mentally ill, hunger and in need of intensive interventions. Past cuts have created larger class sizes, fewer counselors, and less support for students and teachers.

Schools are working hard to educate, cloth, feed, and support the children of Alaska. Please fund our schools. It will make all the difference.

Thanks for your time. Feel free to contact me with questions or feedback.

Sincerely,

Brittany Bauman
K-1 Teacher
Anchorage, Alaska
907-230-0847

Sent from my iPhone

From: [bo](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Don't cut funding for the Farm to School Program!!!
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 6:44:15 PM

My name is Daniel Varsano. I'm a small farmer in the community of Petersburg.

I am against the elimination of funding for the Farm to School Program.

In a state that prides itself in self-reliance, consider these striking facts:

1. Alaskans spend \$1.5 BILLION on imported food each year.
2. Only 5-10% of food consumed is produced or harvested in state, but great swaths of arable land remain uncultivated.
3. Alaskans spend about \$450 million on treating medical conditions related to overweight/obesity – i.e., diet-related diseases.
4. We have a population that is largely disconnected from their food system – most kids can't tell you what lies beneath the frilly green of a carrot top coming out of the soil.

These figures highlight the immense opportunity that we have to become healthier, wealthier, and more food secure. What if we spent that \$1.5 billion on Alaska Grown products and kept that money in local economies? What if we produced more healthy foods in quantities that could meet the demands of our school cafeterias? What if we provided our children with the tools and knowledge necessary to make healthy food choices and avoid joining the two-thirds of the population that is overweight or obese?

We already have a key mechanism to achieving these goals – it's the Farm to School Program. The Farm to School Program helps to prioritize getting locally produced, healthy goods into cafeterias; raise a generation of food leaders and consumers; and create a large, reliable market for increased in-state food production.

In three short years, the number of Alaska School Districts involved in Farm to School has grown from zero to 68%! There's been an 11% increase in school gardens state-wide. 100% of the school districts are now serving at least one local food item in their meal programs and there's still tremendous room for growth. In 5 years, the program has leveraged over \$1 million from partner agencies. This is just the shortlist of accomplishments.

All of this and more has been achieved with an annual budget of about \$190,000. Talk about bang for your buck! If you eliminate or cut funding to the Farm to School Program, you aren't cutting the fat out of the budget. You are cutting the carrots, the potatoes, the greens, and even the local fish out of your children's lunches, and you're cutting the supports necessary to expand in-state production.

I implore you not to eliminate or reduce the funding for our Farm to School Program. It is an incredibly efficient use of a small amount of funds that has proven itself over the past 5 years

and is one of the shining pillars of a state food system that is becoming stronger, more sustainable, and more resilient. Please don't undo our current progress, and don't stand in the way of what more can be done.

Thanks,

Daniel Varsano

PO BOX 1714

Petersburg, AK 99833

From: Hkraven88@aol.com
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Farm to School Program
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:01:08 PM

Good afternoon,

My name is Helen Hayes. I'm the mother of a local food producer in the communities of Juneau and Douglas .

I am against the elimination of funding for the Farm to School Program.

In a state that prides itself in self-reliance, consider these striking facts:

1. Alaskans spend \$1.5 BILLION dollars on imported food each year.
2. Only 5-10% of food consumed is produced or harvested in state, but great swaths of arable land remain uncultivated.
3. Alaskans spend about \$450 million dollars on treating medical conditions related to overweight/obesity – i.e., diet-related diseases.
4. We have a population that is largely disconnected from their food system – most kids can't tell you what lies beneath the frilly green of a carrot top coming out of the soil.

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I implore you not to eliminate or reduce the funding for our Farm to School Program. It is an incredibly efficient use of a small amount of funds that has proven itself over the past 5 years and is one of the shining pillars of a state food system that is becoming stronger, more sustainable, and more resilient. Please don't undo our current progress, and don't stand in the way of what more can be done.

Thank you!

Helen Hayes

541.870.1847

From: [Jenny Spurgin](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Farm to School Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 2:19:18 PM

Hello,

My name is Jenny Spurgin and I am the sister of a local food producer in Juneau, as well as a new mother. I am against the elimination of funding for the Farm to School Program.

Programs like this are of tremendous importance to the local economy, local jobs, local parents and local children. In addition, they are vital to addressing global climate and environmental challenges.

Every dollar spent on locally-produced food supports jobs, parents and families within the state and ensures this money stays in the Alaskan economy. This funding supports public health and environmental goals so crucial to the sustainability of our state.

I ask that you consider the impact this funding has in the short- and long-term for Alaskans and act to ensure it is maintained.

Sincerely,

Jenny Spurgin
jen.spurgin@gmail.com

From: [Farragut Farm](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Fwd: I support the Farm to School Program
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 6:55:21 PM

Hello,

My name is Marja Smets. I'm a small-scale, organic, mixed vegetable farmer in the community of Petersburg.

I am against the elimination of funding for the Farm to School Program.

In a state that prides itself in self-reliance, consider these striking facts:

1. Alaskans spend \$1.5 BILLION on imported food each year.
2. Only 5-10% of food consumed is produced or harvested in state, but great swaths of arable land remain uncultivated.
3. Alaskans spend about \$450 million on treating medical conditions related to overweight/obesity – i.e., diet-related diseases.
4. We have a population that is largely disconnected from their food system – most kids can't tell you what lies beneath the frilly green of a carrot top coming out of the soil.

These figures highlight the immense opportunity that we have to become healthier, wealthier, and more food secure. What if we spent that \$1.5 billion on Alaska Grown products and kept that money in local economies? What if we produced more healthy foods in quantities that could meet the demands of our school cafeterias? What if we provided our children with the tools and knowledge necessary to make healthy food choices and avoid joining the two-thirds of the population that is overweight or obese?

We already have a key mechanism to achieving these goals – it's the Farm to School Program. The Farm to School Program helps to prioritize getting locally produced, healthy goods into cafeterias; raise a generation of food leaders and consumers; and create a large, reliable market for increased in-state food production.

In three short years, the number of Alaska School Districts involved in Farm to School has grown from zero to 68%! There's been an 11% increase in school gardens state-wide. 100% of the school districts are now serving at least one local food item in their meal programs and there's still tremendous room for growth. In 5 years, the program has leveraged over \$1 million from partner agencies. This is just the shortlist of accomplishments.

All of this and more has been achieved with an annual budget of about \$190,000. Talk about bang for your buck! If you eliminate or cut funding to the Farm to School Program, you aren't cutting the fat out of the budget. You are cutting the carrots, the potatoes, the greens,

and even the local fish out of your children's lunches, and you're cutting the supports necessary to expand in-state production.

I implore you not to eliminate or reduce the funding for our Farm to School Program. It is an incredibly efficient use of a small amount of funds that has proven itself over the past 5 years and is one of the shining pillars of a state food system that is becoming stronger, more sustainable, and more resilient. Please don't undo our current progress, and don't stand in the way of what more can be done.

Thank you for your consideration,

Marja Smets

PO BOX 1714

Petersburg, AK 99833

From: [Matthew Kern](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Farm to School Program
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 5:39:45 PM

Good afternoon,

My name is Matthew Kern. I am a food producer in the community of Juneau.

I am against the elimination of funding for the Farm to School Program.

I started a small business last year to provide local food in our community. My first sales of wild picked blueberries were sold to the Juneau School District. I was excited to provide highly nutritious berries to the school lunch program as a way of connecting youth to the diverse bounty of our backyards. By serving delicious meals with local ingredients we can inspire students to go out and pick their own berries, or try their hand at gardening. Increasing young people's awareness of local foods helps improve our regions self sufficiency, and encourages a healthy lifestyle with outdoor activity and exercise.

As a future food producer in this community, I want my bounty to be shared with as many user groups as possible. It is especially important to provide healthy, delicious foods to those who may not be able to afford it, or feel comfortable preparing it at home. I see the Farm to School Program as a great opportunity to provide high quality food to youth and inspire a culture of appreciation and knowledge relating to agriculture and the environment.

Here in Alaska we like to catch our own fish, and hunt our own meat, and consider ourselves self reliant. However, most the food we buy is produced somewhere else. Our state relies on a long chain of transactions and many miles of road and water to bring us our daily bread. This money spent on food is currently leaving our local economies and we can begin keeping more of it local. We have the capacity to create a vibrant local food economy that would keep money circulating and create jobs throughout the state.

I strongly urge you to promote and preserve all programs like Farm to Schools that are working toward stronger, more sustainable, and resilient communities in Alaska as their cumulative benefit will far outweigh their costs.

Sincerely,

Matthew Kern

Alaska Farmers Union

12501 Marsh Rd

Palmer, AK 99645

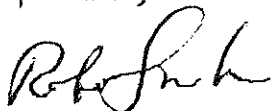
To whom it may concern: House Finance, Senate Finance, ER Legislative Delegation, as well as the Mat-Su Legislative Delegation,

Thank you for a moment of your time. AFU has always been a supporter of the various agricultural programs in this state. Now more than ever we see the continued need for training and opportunities in the area of agriculture. This letter targets support for three such programs. We consider these programs to promote a positive return to the state. First, "AFU supports the continuation of the Farm to School program and the full funding thereof". Without a doubt this program has had a positive impact on our state budget motivating many individuals to expand. A direct correlation to growth.

The second program is the Future Farmers of America (FFA) program. Recent university funding targeted FFA and other programs in Cooperative Extension, this has caused an upshift in attitude, attendance, and participation. These are programs that need to be funded. Besides being the president of the Alaska Farmers Union I am also a board member of the cooperative extension service. At a time of declining oil valuations there is a demand surge for these services. Now is not the time to cut.

Last, for as long as I can remember the Division of Agriculture has been funded enough to "keep it breathing". Now is not the time to underfund but a time to "pump the money" into the tank. Agriculture may not be the answer for all the problems but the timing is right for development to happen. A child taking its first steps often falls down. The Delta and Pt Mac were stumbles. Just look at the value of Pt Mac now. We at the Alaska Farmers Union ask you to please support these programs.

Respectfully



Robert Shumaker, President of the Alaska Farmers Union

907-745-2807

Good afternoon,

My name is Patricia Phillips. I'm a ^{Local}~~food~~ producer (insert: parent, concerned community member, teacher, food service, health professional, local food producer, fish processor, etc.) in the community of _____.

I am against the elimination of funding for the Farm to School Program.

In a state that prides itself in self-reliance, consider these striking facts:

1. Alaskans spend \$1.5 BILLION dollars on imported food each year.
2. Only 5-10% of food consumed is produced or harvested in state, but great swaths of arable land remain uncultivated.
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4. We have a population that is largely disconnected from their food system – most kids can't tell you what lies beneath the frilly green of a carrot top coming out of the soil.

These figures highlight the immense opportunity that we have to become healthier, wealthier, and more food secure. What if we spent that \$1.5 billion on Alaska Grown products and kept that money in local economies? What if we produced more healthy foods in quantities that could meet the demands of our school cafeterias? What if we provided our children with the tools and knowledge necessary to make healthy food choices and avoid joining the two-thirds of the population that is overweight or obese?

We already have a key mechanism to achieving these goals – it's the Farm to School Program. The Farm to School Program helps to prioritize getting locally produced, healthy goods into cafeterias; raise a generation of food leaders and consumers; and create a large, reliable market for increased in-state food production.

In three short years, the number of Alaska School Districts involved in Farm to School has grown from zero to 68%! There's been an 11% increase in school gardens state-wide. 100% of the school districts are now serving at least one local food item in their meal programs and there's still tremendous room for growth. In 5 years, the program has leveraged over \$1 million dollars from partner agencies. This is just the shortlist of accomplishments.

All of this and more has been achieved with an annual budget of about \$190,000 dollars. Talk about bang for your buck! If you eliminate or cut funding to the Farm to School Program, you aren't cutting the fat out of the budget. You are cutting the carrots, the potatoes, the greens, and even the local fish out of your children's lunches, and you're cutting the supports necessary to expand in-state production.

I implore you not to eliminate or reduce the funding for our Farm to School Program. It is an incredibly efficient use of a small amount of funds that has proven itself over the past 5 years and is one of the shining pillars of a state food system that is becoming stronger, more sustainable, and more resilient. Please don't undo our current progress, and don't stand in the way of what more can be done.

Patricia Phillips
PO Box 109
Pelican, AK 99832

March 5, 2015

8750 North Douglas Hwy
Juneau, AK 99801

Representative Mark Neuman, Co-Chairman
Representative Steve Thompson, Co-Chairman
House Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Juneau AK 99801

RE: Operating Budget - Division of Forestry

Dear Chairmen Neuman & Thompson, and Committee Members,

I am writing in alarm at the proposed cuts to the Division of Forestry and the closure of all three timber sale offices in Southeast. I understand the need for serious cuts in many aspects of state government, but urge you to *cut but don't kill* programs that are important to the state's economy and environmental quality.

I currently serve in the commercial fishing industry seat on the Alaska Board of Forestry, and am aware of many projects to utilize local wood biomass to heat public buildings to reduce the dependency on costly diesel, in Southeast and statewide. I have toured projects in Craig and Tok and am aware of many more. I fear that without a forestry office in Southeast and with other proposed reductions statewide, the small state timber sales that provide the biomass for these projects is in jeopardy – setting us back a decade in dependency on diesel in many communities.

In my perspective from the Board of Forestry, the training of private landowners is an essential requirement for the effectiveness of the state's Forest Resources and Practices Act. Practices to ensure minimal effect on water quality and fish habitat are included in trainings, while some protections have been implemented as guidelines and best practices "in the purple book" to be covered in trainings rather than in statutes regulations. If the trainings are no longer feasible due to elimination of offices and staff, it is inevitable that best practices for protection of salmon habitat will not be well known or practiced, damage will be done to salmon habitat, and enforcement is unlikely. It is far cheaper to prevent habitat degradation than to repair it.

I am concerned that a complete elimination of state forestry presence in Southeast will open a new era with rogue nonprofessional timber harvesters facing no oversight or responsibility. By closing all three Southeast offices you are sending a message to them that "you can do whatever you want and expect to get away with it". Theft of timber from private lands is already a problem, and is likely to get worse without forestry presence.

On a personal note, I am also an artist using high grade local woods from small mills for musical instruments and picture frames for my paintings, which I sell through our artists' cooperative. I fear that the proposed reductions would stop state timber sales in Southeast, concurrent with a long era of virtually no federal sales. I fear that I will no longer be able to buy quality Alaska spruce and cedar wood which is the main selling point in these value-added products. My fear is that we would be expected to obtain wood from Outside, but for my purposes the wood that is

available at national chain stores is simply not comparable in quality to local woods and is completely inadequate for my work.

Please restore at least some of the proposed Division of Forestry funding cuts, and retain at least one division office in Southeast Alaska.

Sincerely,



Mark Vinsel
Juneau

Some of my work:



Left to right – yellow cedar uketar, Sitka Spruce uke, red cedar uketar.

From: [Mary Ver Hoef](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Fund the future
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 5:22:18 PM

Dear Alaska Legislators:

I know we face hard choices for budget cuts, but I want to ask you to think of our children and fund a healthy future for Alaskans.

There are many great programs in the Department of Agriculture in peril with the \$500,000 cut. The one with most impact on Alaska's future is the Farm To School program. This low-cost program impacts both Alaska children's nutrition as well as Alaska's future food security. The professional report on Alaska's food security recommends all Alaska's kids learn about growing their own food, and the Farm To School program is already contributing to this goal. Alaska is now a national leader in this important program. Please keep this in the budget!!

Thinking of Alaska's future you must also reduce proposed drastic cuts to the University. These students are our future professionals, our future economy. The research at the University supports our management and growing state agriculture. It deserves more funding, but I realize that's not possible now. But please keep cuts as small as possible, 10% at most. We have to tighten our belts, but we must not damage our children or our future. People, safety and health are priorities; food security and education at all levels are essential.

Thank you,

Mary Ver Hoef
3767 Studio Rd,
Fairbanks, 99709

From: [Beau Ward](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: support for continued funding for the Healthy Living Grant, Bill HB72
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:39:06 PM

This letter is in support of continued funding for the Healthy Living Grant because of the positive impacts it has made in my community.

The primary effect of the Healthy Living Grant has been to increase a culture of health in the schools and from there to the community as a whole. Overall healthy lifestyles, instead of campaigns against specific problem areas, create a positive culture among the staff and students that trickles out into the community.

The purchase of water bottles for all the students and staff and the installation of new water fountains with bottle fillers have aligned community goals of encouraging the consumption of water over sugary drinks and the reduction of waste from consumable water bottles. The result in the middle school is a daily crowd at the water fountain as students fill their bottles before going to class. A water bottle in class is no longer an inconvenience for students, but a convenience they have along with their peers.

School staff health goals such as Fitness Thursdays and the Staff Wellness Challenge increased not only staff exercise but also informal discussions about fitness, shared participation, and began family exercise routines that are continued past the challenge itself. This is the case specifically for my family, but also for others I have talked to.

These are just a couple of specific examples of how the Healthy Living Grant has changed the school culture that I witness daily.

Thank you for your consideration,

Beau Ward

From: [Bridget Wittstock](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: HB72
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:54:08 PM

Dear Legislatures,

The Health Living Grant supports students, our school district personnel, and our community in a multitude of ways. It amazes me that Ginger Evens, the grant coordinator, has been able to make so much change in only the first year and a half of this grant. She is the most efficient, organized, and dedicated staff member and is devoted to the healthy outcomes of this grant opportunity. Some of the ways that have impacted us so far are:

1. New filtered water fountains in the schools and community gym. These have made a real impact on our kids, as well as reducing the amount of plastic waste. The kids use the water fountain to fill their water bottles, which the Grant also provided.
2. Physical activity events and challenges. Ginger has done a phenomenal job coordinating weekly events for staff. She communicates with us via email as well as a bi-monthly newsletter about events and challenges. She also has coordinated incentives with local businesses to reward participation. All this in an effort to increase movement and create healthy changes in our lives.
3. Coordinated efforts with our food service program to provide healthy snacks on a daily basis. Recent purchase of equipment (VitaMix) to increase healthy options, such as fruit and vegetable smoothies, for kids.

These are just a few examples of the ways the HLG has impacted our students, our staff and our community in the past 18 months. Continued funding support for the grant's life would enable the grant coordinator to implement the programs and finish tasks in motion. Please consider refunding this incredible grant. It has the potential to make positive, sustainable changes in our students, our staff and our community. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Bridget Wittstock

On Mon, Mar 2, 2015 at 8:47 PM, Ginger Evens <gevens@pcsd.us> wrote:

Happy March!

I hope everyone had a chance to enjoy the beautiful weather over the weekend getting some much deserved vitamin D. My family and I enjoyed a great hike up Raven's Roost to the alpine meadow and were able to find a little snow.

This morning I received news that the Obesity Prevention and Control Grants, of which the Healthy Living Grant is one, are on the cutting block in the current budget for the State of Alaska. The OPCP Grants would be an additional \$1.5 million cut to schools across Alaska, as there are 10 schools who are the grantees. For Petersburg this would mean that the current functions of the Healthy Living Grant would end on June 30th. As we know with other education budget cuts, there is a little bit of hope that some money will be put back into the budget. If that happens we can hope that the HLG is funded at some level so I can continue with the work I have begun.

In short, I need your help. I will be testifying at the LIO in the next week and need information from you to help support what I am doing with the HLG in Petersburg. So could you please take a moment of your time to write down 1-3 components of the grant that you think are beneficial to our students, our school district, and/or our community and email them to me. Your help is much appreciated.

Thank you again in your help in keeping the Healthy Living Grant alive in Petersburg, as well as the OPCP going across the state.

--

Ginger Evens
World History Teacher
Healthy Living Grant Coordinator
Petersburg School District
gevens@pcsd.us
[907-772-3861](tel:907-772-3861) - H.S. Office
[907-772-4069](tel:907-772-4069) - Program Office
[907-518-0943](tel:907-518-0943) - Cell

--

Bridget Wittstock
Special Education Coordinator/DTC

PLEASE NOTE: This communication, including any attachment, contains information that may be confidential or privileged, and is intended solely for the entity or individual to whom it is addressed and contents may be subject to terms of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). If you are not the intended recipient, you should delete this message and are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, or distribution of this message is strictly prohibited.

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Bridget Wittstock
Special Education Coordinator/DTC

PLEASE NOTE: This communication, including any attachment, contains information that may be confidential or privileged, and is intended solely for the entity or individual to whom it is addressed and contents may be subject to terms of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). If you are not the intended recipient, you should delete this message and are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, or distribution of this message is strictly prohibited.

From: kenailake@arctic.net
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [Bob Baldwin](#)
Subject: Hb 72 Operating Budget DCED AEA REF Controversial Grant Opposition
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 8:21:53 PM

Dear House Finance Committee Members:

The Kenai River Watershed Foundation, the Friends of Cooper Landing, and the Quartz Creek Homeowners Association are very strongly opposed to the Alaska Energy Authority Renewable Energy Fund \$358,000 grant recommended for Kenai Hydro LLC, and the Grant Lake and Creek Hydroelectric Project near Moose Pass. This invasive proposal has repeatedly been discredited, but continues to threaten the integrity of the Kenai River and its Watershed. AEA gave this grant a low priority, of only number 38 out of 40. The Kenai River is one of southcentral Alaska's most valuable assets. Placing its ecology at risk is unacceptable.

I regret being unable to testify in person. Please do not support this grant.

Thank you,

Robert L. (Bob) Baldwin, President
Kenai River Watershed Foundation, Inc.
Friends of Cooper Landing, Inc.
Quartz Creek Homeowners' Association, Inc.
c) 907.250.3913

From: [julene](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Library services funding
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 10:45:45 AM

I am writing to encourage you to find a way to restore the OWL and LiveHomework Help funding. I or my daughters have used both of these services from Skagway.

It's pretty phenomenal what OWL has done to increase internet access quality across our state. Though we are not using the OWL contracted ISP for internet services at our public library, I believe the OWL project was the catalyst that got our local ISP to increase the speed of internet service for Skagway and other SE communities that it serves. OWL did provide our public library with equipment which was leveraged for additional grant monies to provide a digital microform reader for viewing our local newspapers and land records as well as State photograph holdings. It also provides the library the means to offer programs such as meeting and learning about the polar bears of the Alaska Zoo, and to learn about new Alaska publications from professional reviewers. OWL also provided training to local library staff on use of the equipment and connecting patrons to these resources. We need to continue funding OWL so the program continues to strive to keep Alaska from being hobbled by internet services that are inferior to what is being used by the rest of the country and the world.

LiveHomework Help needs to be retained for our students. My daughters used it during high school when I was unable to help them. This past Monday I was on the ferry with several students who were on their way to tournaments in Sitka (and had to travel Juneau to Skagway and then to Sitka). This reminded me of all of the time my daughters spent traveling for school activities and I was glad that Homework Help was available to them while away from their teachers.

Thank you for your time. Julene Brown

From: [Frances Mallory](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Legislative information office in Cordova
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:50:50 PM

Our local Legislative Office workers in Cordova, AK, have brought Cordova out of the 'dark ages', so to speak, re: what's going on in state capitol, Juneau. It is wonderful to feel like a well informed citizen who can follow what our lawmakers are doing in Alaska, and have some input. I appreciate the fact that budgets cuts will have to be made, but please think twice on this one. Thank you.

Frances A. Mallory
P.O. Box 1383
Cordova, AK 99574
Phone: 1-907-424-3506

From: [audreyheehee](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Proposed Budget Cuts to Alaska Marine Highway System and Public Radio
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 10:30:22 AM

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to comment on the proposed budget cuts to the marine highway system and the public radio system.

We in Haines, Alaska depend on the ferry system to get in and out of Haines and Alaska. There are small planes making the trip to Juneau, but they cannot be counted on as the weather often keeps them from flying. And there is a very long road which goes into Canada and during the winter months, can be very dangerous. We need the ferry system. And, would hope that you would keep this in mind. It is a necessity.

The public broadcasting system and KHNS is our main source of news, music and a source of communication with each other, as well as the world. To cut their budget would mean cutting our connection with each other and the world outside. Please keep in mind that a cut here would hurt all of us in Haines.

Thank you for your attention to my comments.

Sincerely,

Audrey L. Smith
P O Box 776
Haines, AK
907-766-2540



COPPER RIVER SEAFOODS

Main Administrative Office

1118 East 5th Avenue • Anchorage, AK 99501

Phone: (907)522-7806 • (888)622-1197 • Fax: (907)274-0348

www.CopperRiverSeafoods.com

lhscfin@akleg.gov

Cuts to Alaska Marine Highway System service between Cordova and Whittier would be catastrophic for our operations.

Copper River Seafoods uses the ferry to move millions of pounds of fresh from Cordova to Anchorage from May through October. Not only does this support fishermen of the region, it keeps our Anchorage plant running 7 days per week. Our Anchorage operations create 250 seasonal and 100 year-round Alaskan jobs. Ferry service helps keep costs low which in turn gives more consumers opportunity to eat Alaska salmon. It also allows us to continue to invest and grow in Alaska.

In 2014, we spent approximately \$1,000,000 on Alaska Marine Highway System services:

- ✓ To transport fresh fish from Cordova to Whittier
- ✓ To transport groceries, processing supplies, materials, and equipment are transported daily via ferry to keep the Cordova plant operational.
- ✓ To transport employees to and from Cordova

There is a severe shortage of airfreight capacity out of Cordova, and we rely heavily on the connection to Anchorage.

Copper River Seafoods wishes to express our willingness to work with the State of Alaska as it deals with its current budgeting process, and is sensitive to the critical nature of the issues being dealt with. While we understand that hard choices are necessary, we hope you can work with Alaska's seafood industry to smooth out this issue and not damage our ability to return the highest value for the fish. If these issues cannot be dealt with, we will be forced to freeze fish that would have been worth more in a fresh state, depressing the value returned to the fishermen and the State.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cassandra Squibb

Chief Business Development Officer

Copper River Seafoods

CORDOVA PLANT

P.O. Box 158 / 300 Cannery Row • Cordova, AK 99574

Phone: (907)424-3721 • (888)622-1197

ANCHORAGE PLANT

1400 East 1st Avenue • Anchorage, AK 99501

KENAI PLANT

810 Childs Avenue • Kenai, AK 99611

COPPER RIVER SALES

7195 Wagner Way, Suite 102 • Gig Harbor, WA 98335

Phone: (253)851-1164 • (888)622-1197

From: [Tina Smith](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Alaska Marine Highway System Budget Cuts
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:37:08 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing as a citizen of Haines, a community in Southeast Alaska that depends heavily on the access to the Alaska Marine Highway System. Growing up in Haines as direct descendent to one of the purchasers of Fort William H. Seward and friend to the initiator of the Marine Highway System, Steve Homer, I believe that the state is debating the suffocation of a public service that has met an explicit need of the Southeast Alaska region for over 50 years.

The ferry system carted me to basketball games, music fest tournaments, track competitions and now, as an adult, home for summer and winter holidays. It has always provided the only dependable transportation service for my entire lifetime, despite that my dad is a small airline pilot.

The National Highway Traffic Association reported that in 2013, the nation lost 32,719 people in motor vehicle traffic crashes and an additional 2.3 million people were injured. An estimated 66,000 pedestrians were injured in traffic crashes in 2013. As a student, traveling to competitions in Southeast on the ferry system was significantly safer than bussing between competing towns, as I experienced during my 9th grade year in Tennessee.

AMHS also serves as a substantial contributor to the economy of Haines. According to a McDowell 2012 study on Tourism in Haines, the Alaska Marine Highway System served 60,000 visitors on the inbound and outbound ferries. I cater to the tourism industry each summer and a majority of the tourists I meet are on the circle tour between Haines –Skagway and the north of Alaska and the Yukon. Haines only sees an approximate of 30,000 visitors from cruise ships, each season based on capacity levels of ships.

By cutting the AMHS budget and removing service for the Lynn Canal corridor, you, our legislative representatives, are effectively killing the 3rd largest economic resource for Haines AND a reliable, safe highway service between Haines and the communities of Southeast.

Please reconsider a blanket budget cut of the Alaska Marine Highway System and instead investigate how it can be better promoted to be a viable income source for the State.

Thank you for your respected evaluation of my input to the Alaska State budget.

Christina Baskaya
Haines, Alaska

From: [Dawn Walker](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Ferry Service
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 11:54:46 AM

Finance Committee:

For the rural town of Gustavus the Alaska Marine Highway has become a life line. We rely heavily on the regular service provided between Juneau and Gustavus for our day to day living needs. The affordability and reliability of service is vital to the health of our town. The inclement weather of Southeast Alaska has always been a stress for the residents traveling especially in winter months. I personally have lived in Gustavus for over 25 years and have become deathly afraid of flying, but love my lifestyle, home and community. Ferry service has taken this stress away and made it affordable for my family to continue to live rural. I strongly feel that at the very bare minimum, Gustavus needs ferry service twice a week every other week. Residents need to be able to take their vehicle to Juneau, make medical appointments, shop and return in the same week. We can plan our regular visits around the ferry but it needs to be twice in a week so that we are not stuck in Juneau for a whole week or more.

Thank you for taking my comments into consideration.

Dawn Walker
Gustavus Resident

--

Dawn Walker
Secretary
Gustavus School
(907)697-2248

From: [Lynne Jensen](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Funding for Alaska ferry system
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:38:26 PM

Dear members of the House Finance Committee;

Please accept my written testimony tonight as you consider cuts to the operating budget during this difficult economic time. I urge you to take into account the importance of the AK ferry system to the economy, well-being, tourism and general transportation for the communities of SE Alaska and other parts of coastal AK who rely on the ferry system.

Our community of Gustavus relies heavily on the ferry -- it is our source for freight, getting to medical appointments, traveling to and from other communities or to the lower 48. Our school relies on the ferry to get the students to educational and sports activities. Nearby Glacier Bay National Park and the local businesses who support visitors to our area rely on the ferry system for customers, supplies, moving vehicles & boats, etc.

Can you imagine cutting off or severely restricting access to the road system in the rest of Alaska? The AK ferry IS our road system in SE and coastal Alaska.

Especially for this summer, businesses, tourists, fishermen and residents have already made travel/shipping plans on the ferry.

Please consider the importance of all these vital transportation links as you work on the operating budget this session.

Thank you for your consideration to our concerns as you make these difficult decisions.

Sincerely,
George Jensen
Gustavus, AK

From: [Jeff Hendrickson](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Alaska Marine Highway System
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 9:12:04 PM

Good Evening,

I am writing this in regards to the legislatures potential removal of part of our highway from southeast Alaska. I am a 49 year resident of Ketchikan Alaska. I take a family vacation out of Alaska almost every year, and the only way this is possible is on the Ferry to Prince Rupert or Bellingham. You are looking at potentially removing part of Southeast's only road system when you look at removing ferries from the run. This is not just a tourist industry it is a highway and road system that all of us in southeast rely on very heavily. How would you like it if you could only use the road between Anchorage and Homer or Anchorage and Wasilla one to two days per week, and when you did you had to pay a toll of several hundred dollars to drive it? This is what we have to deal with already and you want to cut the service even more? Seriously?? What are you thinking? This is the most absurd thing I've ever heard come from the legislature. Well, right along side want to do away with daylight savings time and leave us two hours behind Seattle. I don't need daylight at 2 am in the summer and dark at 9 pm Just because you in the northern part of the state have 24 hour daylight in the summer doesn't mean the rest of us do. Put Ketchikan back on Pacific time and you can all do what you want with your time in Anchorage.

Thanks for listening,

--

Thanks,
Jeff Hendrickson

From: black@gustavus.ak.us
To: governor@alaska.gov; [House Finance](#)
Cc: [Rep. Sam Kito](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Sen. Dennis Egan](#)
Subject: AMHS testimony from John and Lois Nixon Gustavus
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:39:28 PM

Dear fellow-Alaskans serving in our State Government,

We are 32 year residents of Gustavus and have owned and operated multiple businesses during most of this time.

We were extremely grateful when only three plus years ago our community became connected to the Alaska Marine Highway System. We can attest that this highly valued service makes a huge and positive difference not only for us personally and in conducting our electrical contracting business, but in every related aspect of the health and safety of our community such as freight, tourism, small business viability, personal needs, and on and on.

We urge you to find a way to maintain viable ferry service to Gustavus throughout the year including the critical two weekly trips in winter months.

We also suggest potentially reducing AMHS expenses by combining some Gustavus and Hoonah AMHS trips. We believe our two communities share many connections and would welcome the access resulting in combining trips. While we wholeheartedly appreciate the modest AMHS fares locally in SEAK, would raising rates a few dollars not off-set the pending budget short-fall?

Thank you for considering our thoughts and comments.

Sincerely,
John and Lois Nixon
Salmon River Electric

From: [Glacier Bay Construction](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Ferry Budget
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 11:28:49 AM

Honorable members:

I would yield to ferry service cuts in northern southeast as long as the road between the Palmer/Wasilla area to Anchorage becomes a toll road the same day.

It is time to have a serious debate about a state sales tax. Alaskans must start paying their own way. Sen. Stevens, rest his soul, is gone. The gravy train is off the tracks. We need to grow up.

Thanks for your service to our State. We were great once, we can be again.

Kenneth J Marchbanks
Gustavus, AK

From: [Jerry Nancy Ridgley](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Alaska Marine Highway
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:05:21 PM

Dear Legislature

Please reconsider the hardship that constituents will have to do any of their business within Southeast and beyond. This highway (and as a highway) should be maintained as any other highway within the state of Alaska. It provides endless support for the school systems, small communities and even the tourist business. To continuously cut services makes it difficult to attend to medical business, state business, school sports, and many other things. Please reconsider cutting these services and maintain the current level of services. Thank you.

Nancy Ridgley
74 Garland Ct
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901
907-617-2913

From: [Patricia Phillips](#)
To: [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Dan Saddler](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Lynn Gattis](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Lance Pruitt](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#); [Rep. Scott Kawasaki](#); [House Finance](#)
Cc: [Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins](#); [Senator Bert Stedman@legis.state.ak.us](#); [Governor Bill Walker](#)
Subject: AMHS
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 8:20:06 AM

March 6, 2015

Dear House Finance Committee,

I am very concerned about the debilitating reductions in funding being proposed for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). As Mayor for the City of Pelican, I am a strong advocate for continued ferry service to Pelican. I am a strong supporter of the adequate funding for AMHS ferry service.

I am very concerned about portions of the recommended operating budget recently submitted by the House Finance Subcommittee on the Department of Transportation, to reduce the budget for the Alaska Marine Highway System. The magnitude of proposed reductions will have significant adverse economic impacts and debilitate the economies of coastal communities across the State.

Please reinstate cuts proposed by the House Finance Subcommittee on the Department of Transportation to minimize operational disruptions to communities served by the AMHS.

Thank you for your service,

Patricia Phillips

Mayor, City of Pelican

PO Box 737

Pelican, Alaska 99832

907-735-2202

PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

(Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Sammy Parker Circle one: Support ☒ Opposed ☐
REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): Self - WATERFRONT BED & BREAKFAST
BILL #: HB 72 Subject: DOT-AMHS - REDUCED SERVICE
COMMITTEE NAME: House Finance Committee HEARING DATE: 3-5-15

80% or more of my business comes to Petersburg via the Alaska Marine Highway System. The proposed reductions will be devastating.

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely,

Sammy Parker SAM@GCI.NET

(Updated 4/9/2013)

From: [alaskdude](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Ferry to Gustavus
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 5:45:44 AM

Dear Committee

I may be a lil late on this but I wanted to squawk my piece,!

Here in Gustavus, we depend upon the Ferry System not only for travel but a LIFLINE of getting our food and staples for living. We only have 2 small stores (grocery type) and rely on the Ferry to bring the items for stocking the shelves!

We have no roads to drive here unlike larger cities such as Juneau, Skagway connected to mainland. The big barges such as Alaska Marine Lines don't or can't come here which would be very nice so

Please keep the ferry coming here! Check out the usage by the small community of Gustavus and I believe per capita we do more that say Hoonah, Pelican, Elfin cve etc.

As an example ive been on ferry many times to Juneau stopping in at Hoonah. Many times only a handfull of folks got off & on there. I asked what was going on? I was told the Ferry system was required to accommodate this town. I sure couldn't see and money being made around there.

I urge you to look at the "ridership" to & from Gustavus and consider us as a small place that at least isn't a loosing trip!

Thank you for being here and your fine ships.... Sincelely Steven Sellards,
Gustavus,Ak.

From: [Joe Williams](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Proposed Southeast Alaska Ferry Schedule Decrease
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 9:15:38 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

As a Southeast Alaska resident (Saxman) I am concerned about the legislatures proposal to decrease ferry service to our region of the state. I am wondering if those legislators who do not live in Southeast realize that the ferry system is our road system. It is how we get around Southeast especially if we have the need to bring our vehicle on our trip. If you are concerned about saving money why don't we close the Richardson or Seward Highways for all but one day a week. Those who need to travel on those roads can do it in that one day and then we could charge them a toll say \$500 for using the road for one trip. That is what you are proposing for us, so don't you think it is fair that you treat the rest of the state the way you want to treat us.

It would also put a great hardship on our students who travel for sports competitions, musical festivals and other school sponsored events. It is hard enough now to raise the funds to allow our students to travel to other towns to participate. If there is a decrease in the ferry schedules fewer if any students would be able to afford to participate in these events because to do so would necessitate more expensive air travel.

A third consideration would be the Alaskans you would be putting out of work because of the decrease in ferry traffic. Many of these workers live in Southeast and understand how vital continued ferry service to our Southeast communities is.

Please consider these things when making your decision and how many lives would be affected if you decide to decrease the ferry schedule.

Sincerely,
Suzanne Williams

From: [Tresham Gregg](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: proposed budget cuts
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 1:05:30 AM

To Whom it may Concern;

Please do not make the severe budget cuts proposed for the Alaska Marine Highway and Public Broadcasting. These are some of the most important elements in our small town Alaska lives. The ferries reliably take us where we need to go in a timely fashion, so we can count on being where we need to go when we need to be there. They also bring the majority of visitors in the summer to our small towns where cruise ships do not abound. They keep a high standard of communication and transportation in times of crisis as well as providing enjoyable and safe passage for visitors and locals at any time. The state needs to accommodate tourists as it's best source of income for all manner of small businesses throughout the state. If the ferries were promoted better, they could be more financially sound and the same time increasing business throughout the state.

Public Broadcasting is also an essential element in our lives, as it is the way we know what is going on in our community and our state and nation, and even the world. It is an important part of our emergency system with the installation and upkeep of the Emergency Broadcast System. It is without a doubt a crucial part of our lives and sense of well being providing us with the background to our daily lives in remote parts of Alaska. It is also our venue for speaking our concerns and connecting with others. It even gives valuable training and experience for young people who might not otherwise have the chance to be on the air and learning to operate broadcasting equipment. Many people throughout the state have given countless hours of volunteer time to directing and helping to operate our marvelous network of Public Stations. Isn't it time to stand by your citizens in Alaska and help maintain the things that help keep them in Alaska as productive individuals and businesses? When cuts to current infrastructures are too severe, serious damage is done to the future of many Alaskans and these institutions that they rely on, and they are not easily restored.

Perhaps the current oil price crisis will pass in the near future, and life will return to normal. But if we disable our Ferry System and Public Broadcasting System, we will suffer from these actions for a long time.

I am a life long Alaskan residing in Fort Seward since 1947, am an artist entertaining visitors in my shops, and have been the longest member of Lynn Canal Broadcasting Board of Directors. I trust you can see that my opinion on these matters is brought to you with some considerable background and understanding.

Sincerely yours, Tresham Gregg
9 Fort Seward Dr, Haines, AK 99827 907 314 9826.

From: [Elizabeth Ripley](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [Robin Minard](#)
Subject: HB 72 and 73
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:34:41 PM

Reps. Neuman and Thompson, Members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in writing.

In a Mat-Su Community Health Needs Assessment published in 2013, Mat-Su residents—in 24 community forums—voted that the top health issues in Mat-Su were 1) alcohol and substance abuse; 2) child and youth abuse and violence; 3) access to mental health care; 4) depression and suicide; and 5) domestic violence and sexual assault. ***Mat-Su residents said that the TOP FIVE health issues for Mat-Su were all behavioral health related.*** They also told us in these forums that their friends, family and neighbors were waiting 90 to 120 days to get an appointment for a mental health or substance abuse issue. We heard this over and over again.

In response to the community vote, the Mat-Su Health Foundation Board commissioned a Behavioral Health Environmental Scan (BHES) to determine why the needs were so great in this arena. The first BHES report on the behavioral health crisis response system was published last fall: <http://www.healthymatsu.org/focus-areas/BHES>. It found that **\$23 million dollars in charges** occurred in 2013 for behavioral health visits to the Mat-Su Regional Emergency Department, not including doctor costs, EMS costs or police costs. It found that people presenting with a behavioral health need have higher hospital charges, more frequent visits and longer stays. It clearly showed that people are cycling through the Mat-Su Regional Emergency Department because they cannot access services in the community.

This report documented that the Mat-Su Regional Medical Center Emergency Department sees ***five times*** the number of people presenting with behavioral health issues than our community mental health center—and Mat-Su Regional does not provide behavioral health services! From 2000 to today, the Mat-Su population has nearly doubled from 50,000 people to 98,000 people. During all that time, our community mental health center funding from Department of Behavioral Health grants stayed flat. So instead of getting care in a timely way from our community mental health center, most people in Mat-Su went to the Emergency Department. This is not a good use of public funds.

We know it's a budget crisis. But we can spend our State's healthcare dollars in a more productive way. We can actually ensure that the behavioral health budget stays intact or increases in order to reduce hospital visits and admissions. We have the data to prove it. We don't think Mat-Su is an exception. We believe our data on the prevalence of behavioral health issues in Mat-Su is not very different from the rest of the state. We believe the overreliance on emergency departments ***IS by default*** our system of behavioral health care in

AK. Let's turn that around and invest wisely by maintaining or dare we say increasing the State's mental health budget.

The Mat-Su Health Foundation is a 501c3 that owns part of the Mat-Su Regional Medical Center. We invest revenues from our local hospital into grants to make measurable improvements in the health status of Mat-Su residents. The Foundation's "way of working in the world" and decision making takes into perspective: 1) the will and readiness of Mat-Su residents to address a given issue; and 2) an epidemiological approach where valid and reliable data on the Mat-Su population informs and course-corrects our work.

The Mat-Su Health Foundation Board of Directors asks that you seriously consider this factual data and community perspective and eliminate cuts to HB 72 and 73. If you care to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Elizabeth Ripley, Executive Director

Mat-Su Health Foundation

950 E. Bogard Road, Ste. 218

Wasilla, AK 99654

(907) 352-2863

(907) 352-2865 fax

eripley@healthymatsu.org

From: [Melody Magnuson-Strick](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: McGrath DNR
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:34:14 PM

My name is Melody Magnuson-Strick from McGrath Alaska.

I am asking the Legislature to please put funding back in the budget for the DNR camp in McGrath.

I am also asking you to please take a look at the 16 local jobs that are scheduled to be cut with the passage of the budget on page 63 of the State of Alaska Office and Management budget dated February 17, 2015 which will cause a negative impact in the economy of our town.

It states on the bottom of page 62 of the State of Alaska Office and Management Budget. Amendments as of February 17, 2015 that this adjustment will save \$776.4 in the annual operating budget. It does go on to say, in the fine print on the bottom, that during fire seasons that impact the McGrath area actual fire activity suppression costs will be higher due to additional emergency hires.

To cut that many essential jobs from the only Southwest area Forestry Fire camp would put the villages in our protection area and other valuable resources in danger of forest fires that could possibly not be stopped in time if there is not any of the essential personnel employed in the Southwest Area McGrath DNR camp.

Logistically it seems to me that it would not save any money or time if resources have to be ordered from an area that is 300-400 or more miles away- Instead of personnel that are already at the McGrath DNR camp. It states that it will be more costly when there are fires in the Southwest area. It could also have the possibility of bigger fires (which means more cost) instead of catching them when they are small if the Southwest Area does not have a fully functioning station.

In conclusion, the McGrath DNR camp is much needed in the Southwest area for fighting fires, training and prepositioning for helping other areas in the State.

Thank you for your time and consideration to this letter.

Sincerely,

Melody Magnuson-Strick
Concerned McGrath community member



Alaska NOW
P.O. Box 871525
Wasilla, AK 99687
alaskanow@gmail.com
907-373-6977

March 4, 2015

The following Medicaid expansion testimony is emailed as hearing time ran out for attendee on 2/28/15 and 3/3/15.

Good afternoon members of the House Finance Subcommittee. My name is Barbara McDaniel. I am here on behalf of Alaska NOW, to urge Alaska's legislature to take action to fully adopt Medicaid expansion during this session.

The will of the voters was established last November when the majority elected a new Governor who ran his campaign based on expanding Medicaid. The will of the voters was also demonstrated at last Saturday's packed Anchorage Caucus meeting. The great majority of citizen testimony strongly supported Medicaid expansion and almost all people in the audience stood up at one point when called to show their support. Alaskans are testifying again today, demonstrating the will of the voters: Take action to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act this session because:

- It will save the state millions of dollars every year.
- It will improve health and, by extension, healthy living for our 41,000, most vulnerable Alaskans.
- It will lower health care costs to all Alaskans.
- It will prompt improvements in our Medicaid processes.
- It will attract more medical care providers to the state.
- It will create more jobs for Alaskans.

Unfortunately, last week, the House Finance Subcommittee voted, 8 to 3, to strip all items related to Medicaid Expansion from Gov. Walker's budget, while offering no substantive reason for that action. The following reasons given to justify that delaying action are very weak or make no sense:

1. **We need more information.** One representative indicated he has seen three studies that did not come up with matching benefit projections and so, needs more information. To say, "Yes it will benefit the state, but projected benefits in three studies did not match, so we should delay or possibly refuse a federal grant of millions of dollars annually," does not make sense, especially considering our critical need to generate income now.
2. **We are afraid the US Government will not keep its promise to give us the funds.** Alaskans are famous for trusting the federal government and accepting grants of millions of dollars for all sorts of things, such as bridges across the inlet, and we've always jumped on the money. No proof of special risk and need to single out Medicaid expansion funds for refusal was presented in the committee hearing.

3. **One representative declared there is “no out” if the Feds do not give us the funds.** The Supreme Court [acknowledged](#) in *NFIB v. Sebelius* that “states always have the ability to end their participation in federal grant programs.” And the Governor has included a provision for an immediate way “out” if funding for the program shrinks substantially or ends.
4. **We need the Governor to submit a separate bill from the budget so we can get more expert information from his administration and properly vet the issue through the process.** We have paid for expensive, delaying studies; we have had a lot of departmental testimony. Medicaid expansion has already been tested by other states that publicly report outstanding, positive [results](#). We’ve had enough vetting. We’ve needlessly lost enough valuable time and health care coverage for unfortunate Alaskans and savings for all Alaskans. In addition, the Governor does not need to submit a separate bill because, while it is apparently ignored, a bill was submitted in January 2015, HB 18. Also, the legislature does not necessarily need the Governor to submit a bill in order to access more administrative expertise because the Governor’s experts routinely provide that service to the legislature upon request.
5. **We want Alaska’s Medicaid System fixed before we increase its load.** This raises the questions: If our system is so bad, why has this not been addressed until now? Did former Gov. Parnell or former DHHS Comm. Streur the problem unimportant? Regardless, this excuse is a Red Herring and it is not a valid barrier as Governor Walker has established provisions for corrective action in Alaska’s established Medicaid system.

While the Alaska House Finance Committee’s majority caucus members have tried, they are apparently unable to present a substantive argument against expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act this year. We expect that is because no substantive argument exists. Medicaid expansion is pure and simply good for Alaskans. Alaska needs smart lawmakers who will do the obviously right thing: to stop the delays and restore all related expansion elements to the Governor’s budget or begin moving SB18 through committees now, and ultimately accept Medicaid Expansion to benefit all Alaskans before the end of this session. Thank you for your time.

#####

From: [CRIS WASTE](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Medicaid expansion - a moral and fiscal imperative
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:01:07 PM

Please support Medicaid expansion.

Yes, Alaska must contribute its share toward the expansion, state spending is greatly offset by federal dollars. A recent analysis from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that for every dollar a state spends on Medicaid expansion, it receives [\\$13.41 in federal funding](#). Those federal dollars, in turn, create jobs and boost state economies. A White House report from July estimated that states that have already expanded Medicaid will create “[a total of 356,000 job through 2017](#)”.

This is an opportunity to incorporate new ideas, including work incentives and preventive care to our most needy residents. Providing health care to the poor lowers health costs for everyone.

CRIS WASTE RN, BSN, PHN
(907) 723-6124

From: [Joan Clover](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: medicaid expansion
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 9:08:46 PM

Hello: I tuned in too late to testify so I am writing here. I feel compelled to speak for the working poor, because that is who we are talking about when we talk about medicaid expansion. If any of you have ever faced the terror of a serious medical issue I challenge you to think back to that time, and then consider how you would have felt if you had no medical insurance. To me it is a matter of humanity, to care for the least of those among us. All Alaskans need the security of health insurance. Thank you, Joan Clover

From: [PATRICK M CUNNINGHAM](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Medicaid Expansion
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 11:02:09 AM

Those of you on the Finance Committee who oppose the expansion of Medicaid must identify the source of your opposition being political, and that you are being compensated by such groups as Americans for Prosperity, American Legislative Exchange Council, and Foundation for Government Accountability. It is a violation of ethics for you not to do so. Those of you in favor need to point this out to the residents of Alaska so that they are fully informed.

Sincerely, Patrick M Cunningham

From: [Adam Weber](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Obesity Prevention and Wellness Grant
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 3:52:46 PM

Good Afternoon,

My name is Adam Weber. I am a state licensed Education Para-Professional working with the SpEd Department at Nunamiut School in the village of Anaktuvuk Pass, North Slope Borough School District. It recently has come to my attention that the State of Alaska is considering the option to drop funding for the Obesity Prevention and Wellness Grant.

Please, continue to fund that grant.

I administer a program at my school called the Healthy Futures Challenge. It is funded through the Obesity Prevention and Wellness Grant. I have facilitated this program at my school for many years, and with high levels of success. The Healthy Futures Challenge has been a great benefit to my community and my students. It is an incentive based program, wherein students earn prizes for creating a fitness chart that tracks their after school activities for a one month period (the program runs for three consecutive months, each semester). I have utilized this program with my Elementary to motivate their activity and fitness after school.

I have had huge amounts of success with this program.

You have probably seen the Healthy Futures promotional clips in commercials while watching television. They also provide informational posters that I hang around the school. My students have had a very positive response to the information and the program. They understand that the posters are fact-based, and utilize that information when making their snack and drink choices. The incentives are activity based prizes (jump rope, hacky-sack, frisbee, mini-football, etc). All prizes inspire physical activity and endorse physical fitness.

I want to congratulate my students at this time: last semester they won the state-wide competition for their high level of participation. As a result we were awarded \$600 for fitness resources (going towards our PE hockey program).

At the beginning of each month, Elementary students are first to ask about the new months challenge and the prize associated with it. These kids do a huge amount of work, for what is ultimately a minimal (almost intrinsic) reward. It is just enough to get them excited about staying fit.

I realize that budget reviews may lead towards a decision to cancel the Obesity Prevention and Wellness Grant. I have seen high levels of success utilizing this funding source. Please keep these programs alive, for our kids.

Thank You,

Adam Weber

Adam W. Weber

EDPA AAS

NCLB HQ

www.linkedin.com/in/adamwweber/en

adam.weber@nsbsd.org

From: [Ashley Lohr](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Reinstating funding for the Obesity Prevention Grants in HB 72
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 3:01:03 PM

To whom this may concern,

I'm writing in support of the *Healthy Living Grant* for Petersburg. The work that has begun here in the school, for the students and the community has been driven by Ginger Evens and her work is not done.

Some of the notable achievements with the grant have been the *School and Community Garden*. Tools, maintenance and instruction has been possible because of the HLG grant.

The some of the new *Physical Education equipment* have been purchased through the HLG grant. The most beneficial equipment in my eyes, is the physical fitness testing stations where students' sit-ups, push-ups and stretches can be monitored more accurately. The equipment actually counts how many times they completed a sit-up, a push-up and how far they've stretched.

Another feature I'd like to mention that was supported by the HLG are the *Water Fountains*. Students are filling up their water bottles more and quicker while keeping the water filtered. The community benefits from the fountains also because they visit the school with school events. I know I've been enjoying them.

Thanks for listening and sincerely Ashley Lohr,

Art educator, 6th grade PE educator and 9th grade Health educator within the Petersburg School District.

--

Ashley Lohr
Art Educator
Petersburg City School District
ALohr@pcsd.us

From: [Virginia Evens](#)
To: [House Finance](#); [Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins](#); [Sen. Bert Stedman](#)
Subject: budget cuts HB 72 and HB 278
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 6:01:17 PM

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, for the record my name is Ginger Evens, a lifelong Alaskan of 43 years, representing Petersburg School District, where I have been employed for 20 years. I am writing in opposition to cuts to HB 72, as well as HB 278 and want to make the following points:

1. Please reinstate the Obesity Prevention Grants to the DHSS budget. The Healthy Living Grant as Petersburg School District calls the grant, is vital link in educating students and community members on the importance of living a healthy lifestyle, which includes a nutritional information and being physically active.
2. Cutting Obesity Prevention Grants is an additional \$150,000 cut that Petersburg School District will be faced with in the 2015-2016 and again in the 2016-2017 to school for a total of \$300,000 over two years, along with the cuts proposed in HB 278.
3. School districts that receive the Obesity Prevention Grants are working towards reducing obesity rates of kids ages 5-18, which in turn will save the state millions of dollars in healthcare related costs in the future. Obesity-related costs in Alaska are projected to be over \$600 million annually by 2030, if obesity rates are not decreased. This is why the Obesity Prevention Grants are important.
4. When we, as Petersburg School District, made our plan for our Obesity Prevention Grant we made a four year action plan. The action plan is to build upon itself in each of the 4 years, so that when the grant funding source, that was giving to us for 4 years ended, we would have completed all items in our action plan. With the Obesity Prevention Grant money being cut, components of the grant that are just beginning in the second year, will not be finished. Thus affecting the effectiveness of the Obesity Prevention Grants and its ability to be effective as a prevention program.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

From: [ellie werbe](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Funding for OWL and Live Homework Help
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 6:27:46 PM

I am writing to you to urge you to support funding for the Owl program and Live Homework Help. We can made great strides in the past few years in closing the digital divide in our state,. The OWL program provides many communities with access to broadband service which have allowed residents to take part in distance education,as well as e-commerce. Live Homework Help is a valuable resource to all age students. Students who are in need of assistance with their assignments can be tutored via the Internet. This is a resource that should not be taken away. Please when you make your considerations, remember your constituents who depend on these services. Especially those in our rural communities.

Than you for your time.

Eleanor Werbe
Youth Services
Kodiak Public Library

From: [Karen K](#)
To: [House Finance](#); [Sen. Lyman Hoffman](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#)
Subject: State funding for OWL Grant
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 8:10:15 AM

Dear House Finance Committee, Senator Hoffman, and Representative Edgmon,

My name is Karen Kresh, and I am the Librarian at the Unalaska Public Library.

I am writing you today about why funding for the OWL project, or Online with Libraries, is important to our community. On our remote Aleutian island, internet is expensive and tightly capped. In fact, home internet is so costly and unreliable that many residents do not have it, and they use the library as their main connection to the outside world.

Unalaska also has a large population of fishermen, fish processors, and coast guard folks, and you can imagine how important the library internet connection is to them. They use it to keep in touch with families, apply for jobs, and take university classes. When arriving in Unalaska, the library is often their first stop so they can check in with their families. A processor once said to me when he walked in the door, "this is like a slice of civilization!"

Funding from the OWL program has allowed the library to offer high-speed internet to the community. Without this funding, our internet connection will be much slower and more expensive, which will mean sacrificing other library programs and collections. In the coming year, we are hoping to share a connection with the public school for increased bandwidth, and the OWL project allowed us to contribute enough to make this partnership beneficial for both school and library.

OWL also gives us videoconferencing opportunities. Through our videoconference equipment and support, our community maintains a connection with the larger world. Elementary students are able to virtually visit the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and ask why our beloved Alaskan dog Balto is held there and not here in Alaska. Middle schoolers can get personalized writing instruction and advice from award winning authors. High school students are able to connect with skilled apprenticeship programs without spending \$1200 on a plane ticket to Anchorage. And community members and businesses are able to perform job interviews without flying candidates all the way to our island.

This program is essential to Unalaska. It keeps us connected to the rest of the state, the country, and the world. Without it, we will be taking a huge step backwards.

Thank you for this opportunity for my voice to be heard.

Karen Kresh

From: [Patricia Brown](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [Rep. Sam Kito](#)
Subject: Restore funding for the Alaska OWL project
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 10:47:37 AM

Dear House Finance Committee Members:

I am writing again to request your reconsideration of funding for the Alaska OWL project. OWL provides broadband subsidies for Alaska's small and remote public libraries, a videoconferencing network for all Alaskans, and Internet technology assistance to Alaska public libraries. Because of the prohibitive costs of internet access in remote areas, libraries are often the only provider of free internet access to their communities.

Without OWL, Alaskan libraries will lose:

- Affordable and high speed Internet connections necessary for 21st century tasks and competencies
- Videoconferencing capabilities which has allowed for student participation in classes not available in their own communities, local Board trainings, personal legal advice, healthcare advocacy, and shared programs and trainings between libraries.
- Access to information and resources and online library catalogs available only through consistent and high speed internet connections.

Since connecting with OWL, public internet use in Haines has risen by 54%. We've participated in 84 videoconference programs with a total local attendance of over 400 and we've had several students at the high school, college, and graduate school level able to participate in classes or complete course work that would have been impossible prior to OWL. **The total value for our community's use is calculated at \$461,460 per year.**

Continuing State support of the OWL project will benefit us all, allowing us to remain in the 21st century of Internet connectivity, making us competitive in our digital competencies with other states in the nation.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Patricia Brown

Director, Haines Borough Public Library

President, Alaska Library Association

From: [Patricia Brown](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: Sam.Kito@akleg.gov
Subject: Testimony: Alaska OWL project and Live Homework Help program
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:41:22 PM

March 5, 2015

To: House Finance Committee

RE: Alaska OWL Project and Live Homework Help program

I am writing to urge your reconsideration of funding and support of Alaska OWL and Live Homework Help. As the library director of the Haines Borough Public Library, I am able to see the benefits first-hand of reliable and affordable Internet connections for our community.

It is through the OWL network that we have been able to offer students a place to connect with distance learning classes; local non-profits the ability to participate in board trainings that were previously unaffordable and logistically impossible; and locals and visitors the opportunity to maintain family connections, search the web for resources, file federal tax returns as well as for Permanent Fund Dividends.

The Haines Borough Public Library is the primary source for internet connection for many individuals in our community. With the reliable, affordable internet connection offered through the OWL network, **our internet use jumped from 22,461 sessions annually in FY12 to 34,616 sessions in FY14.** Videoconferencing capabilities brought us opportunities in training, classes, and shared programs throughout the state and beyond. The use in our community continues to grow as we are able to offer what other communities have come to assume in connectivity.

Please consider restoring funding for the Alaska OWL Project and the Live Homework Help Programs. The first allows us to work collaboratively towards affordable and sustainable 21st century connectivity. The second assists our students in maintaining the competitive edge so needed in education today.

Thank you for consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Patricia Brown

Director

Haines Borough Public Library

907-766-2545

director@haineslibrary.org

From: [Florita Chung](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:32:30 PM

I'm emailing a testimonial letter concerning the state funding for Parents as teachers program. I am a grandparent for my two grandchildren who receive help from this program and would like to say that this program has been ever so helpful for them. We enjoy the home visits , the outings to the science center the weekly or biweekly meetings with other families , the imagination library as well as the books we receive in the mail. Please continue to fund this program because it has benefitted myself as well as my grandchildren.

Sincerely , Florita Chung , Nevaeh and Adrianna

Saelee

From: [Shana Kim](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Funding for Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, and the Alaska PreK Program
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 2:34:49 PM

Dear House Finance Committee,

I am an early childhood education advocate, and I am writing to ask that the members of the Committee reconsider eliminating the funding for early education programs. We cannot continue to postpone properly investing in Alaska's children. There have been many studies conducted that demonstrate the long-term positive gains attained by children who participate in early education programs such as reduced crime rates and increased high school graduation rates.

As members of the vulnerable population, children do not get to vote or collectively voice their needs. It is grossly unjust that funding for their future is at risk. If we do not invest in their social and educational opportunities now, we are robbing them of the chance to build a foundation for future success.

There will never be a perfect opportunity to spend money on early childhood development, but why has this particular sector been underfunded and largely ignored by the state government regardless of the economic climate? If your main concern is purely financial, then please consider how prevention in medicine can save more lives and save money in contrast to waiting until a preventable chronic disease develops and then treat the problem. If we do not invest in children now, then what will be the financial cost of addressing equity, social, and workforce development issues later? For many families that will be adversely affected by these funding cuts, this is more than a budget issue. You all have the ability to improve or set back the lives of many young children and their families, and the consequences of such actions will be realized for everyone to witness. I urgently request that the members of the House Finance Committee to reconsider the early education funding cuts. Thank you for the consideration.

Sincerely,
Shana Kim

From: [LIO Anchorage](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: FW: Testimony on HB 72 Operating Budget
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 8:16:31 AM

From: Snider, Larry [mailto:Larry.Snider@MONEYMANAGEMENT.ORG]
Sent: Thursday, March 05, 2015 2:15 PM
To: LIO Anchorage
Subject: Testimony on HB 72 Operating Budget

I am Director of Money Management International (MMI for short), formerly Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Alaska.

I'm writing today in support of the Partners for Progress request for the Partners Reentry Center. Studies show that second to the incarceration record barrier, is Poor Credit. Poor Credit can be a barrier to housing rental and employment, two necessities to participate in productive life.

For the last year, MMI has been able to provide Tri-Merge Credit report reviews for returning citizens, early in their intake process to empower them to address the information that a perspective landlord or employer is going to see. Convenient to the returning citizen, the Reentry Center and MMI are in the same building at 4th and Barrow, within walking distance of the half way houses and at a People Mover stop.

In the credit report review, we verify the accuracy of the information and start the process to correct any mis-information; prioritize their options when employed and in stable housing. When they leave the appointment, they know what is actually there and in most cases is less than they expected, and what they have to do to address it. They can look at an employer and prepare them that they have past due child support and Children's Services will be garnishing their pay. Knowing this is the process, eliminates a shock later. Or they have unpaid bills but they have met with a credit counselor and know what they have to do to start paying those off. They leave the review knowing the facts, what their financial responsibilities and priorities are and that there is help when they get an income.

To measure the outcome of this review, we capture their credit score and total debt in the first review and 6 months later, pull a report to compare changes.

On the average, these returning citizens have improved their credit scores by 42 points and reduced debt by over \$2,200.00.

Past due child support is a common debt with this population. In addition to the financial benefit of reducing recidivism, **the state benefits when the returning citizen has earnings and is paying their post due child support.**

I ask that you recognize the returns this program produces which is dependent on State Funding to continue into FY 2016

Larry Snider, Director
West Region-Education

Improving Lives Through Financial Education

Money Management International

417 Barrow Street

Anchorage, AK 99501

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From: [Amy Hayes](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Keep state funding for preK!!
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:49:50 PM

As a preschool teacher and a concerned community member I am writing to express my belief in the importance of preschool for the children in Alaska. Without this much needed learning and practice with early life skills — social and emotional skills — these children are at a serious disadvantage when they enter kindergarten, and as they progress through their elementary school years.

Please reconsider this cut in funding for the state funded preschool program.

Thank you,

Amy Hayes

From: [vonBirgelen_Jane](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Preschool
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 2:09:59 PM

I would like to give a thumbs up to the Preschool program that is happening here at Lake Otis. I am amazed at how these little ones are learning so many important social and educational skills. My fifth graders are weekly helpers with the class. My kids LOVE being the big kids. Our "job" once a week is to assist with their coats, talk with them, play with them, be a helper at a center, and be a role model. My students BEG to be a weekly helpers. I am not sure who is gaining more from the experience...the littles or the bigs! Either way the preschool program is wonderful. I encourage you to come visit!

Jane vonBirgelen
5th Grade
Lake Otis Elementary

From: [Johnson, Jeremy J \(DOA\)](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Budget Discussion
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 5:06:26 PM

Greetings.

My name is Jeremy Johnson, and I am a single co-parent of a pre-school aged son. This year I've made it a point to be involved with the school system, the reasons of my son attending Riverbend Pre-school, and wanting to support the community in every way possible. I'm not from Alaska, but my son is. I take pride in saying that my son is from here. It is an honor to be a part of such a great community of people.

It is incredibly important to me that promises made by leadership, in this case in the form of a budget appropriation for education, be kept if they were moral and well-intended in the appropriation. Making budget decisions is always a tough process. We know that everyone is really trying to do what's right for the population, and we really appreciate that effort. Some cuts are necessary, but prioritizing education is paramount, if not the pinnacle of being responsible long-term. The state has a specific need for IT professionals, Doctors, nurses, as well as the fine men and women of the trades. Every statistic I've seen, related to the success of learners and educators, are directly impacted by the k-12 educational experience.

For me, that was having functioning computers in the computer lab, teachers that cared enough to host after school programs for advanced learners, while missing out on time with their own families, and having well-educated teachers that took the time to really teach to the student. That meant much more to me when I got out of k-12 and moved into the workforce. But not everyone has had the same exposure in public schools, as I've had. Not every child had the opportunity to be in a pre-K program, like my son. Education is without a doubt, the most meaningful investment in the modern age.

If I'd not been exposed to these kinds of programs, through my public school education, then I wouldn't have become a Computer Science lab instructor by the age of 19. I wouldn't have been a Fortune 500 Network Engineer by the age of 22. I wouldn't have had the motivation to volunteer with local public schools and the local Economic Development Council initiatives. If it weren't for my mom placing my education above her own tireless efforts, holding sometimes 3 jobs, I wouldn't be the man I am today. I thank her for her sacrifices, and every chance I get to thank a teacher or administrator, I take it.

I strongly urge you, the policy and decision makers, to also place education in your top tier. Having an uneducated and unmotivated youth, results in an uneducated and unmotivated work force. Having such a workforce, results in outsourcing of mission critical priorities across sectors, which often leads to those funds finding their way out of the fine State of Alaska, or even the country as a whole.

Thank you for your time.

-jjj

Jeremy Johnson
Analyst/Programmer III
State of Alaska
Department of Administration
Division of Retirement & Benefits
Information Technology Services
Phone: +1 (907) 465 - 4528
jeremy.johnson2@alaska.gov

From: [Jayne Hanna](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Public Broadcasting Budget Cut Comment
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 11:43:54 AM

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

My name is Jayne Hanna, and I am a high school sophomore from Mekoyuk. I am participating in the Lower Kuskokwim School District's Multimedia Journalism class this year. As journalists, we cover several main events that happen in Bethel and we appreciate KYUK's mentorship and support.

I understand that there are some difficult choices that need to be made concerning the State's fiscal situation and public broadcasting budget cuts. I am concerned about the potential 59% cut to KYUK. KYUK serves many villages, and the people that use its services would be greatly affected if this \$139,000 budget cut is approved. KYUK is one of the main sources that people in the Kuskokwim area get weather updates, river condition updates and flood warnings.

KYUK also covers a variety of events so that people who can't be there in person can still participate. Some of the events that KYUK covers are the Kuskokwim 300 sled dog race, the Camai dance festival, and high school sports. Support to KYUK is high, which is proven by the \$30,000 in donations that it received in 2014 alone.

Please consider these points when deciding whether to cut the budget of this organization that makes the lives of so many people more enjoyable.

From: [Andy Varner](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [Austin Roof](#)
Subject: Finance testimony
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 3:20:55 PM

Good afternoon,

I would like to provide testimony regarding the proposed cuts to public broadcasting in the operating budget. I recognize that cuts need to be made this year due to an unprecedented budget shortfall, but a proposed public broadcasting cut of 59% seems rather disproportionate. In the community that I work for, Sand Point, the KSDP public radio station provides a wealth of civic, cultural, and education information to Alaska Peninsula residents, not to mention programming and entertainment. I know that is also the case with KDLG in Bristol Bay, KMXT in Kodiak, KUCB in Unalaska, and KUHB in the Pribilofs. As you can see, I am quite familiar with the value of public broadcasting in Southwest Alaska, but I also consume a lot of public broadcasting from KSKA and KAKM in Anchorage as well.

I know that making cuts is never easy; education, transportation, public safety, and a whole host of public services are all important to the state of Alaska. I just ask that you consider making the public broadcasting cuts less severe to avoid service reductions across Alaska.

Sincerely,

Andy Varner

From: [Catherine Kowalski](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: public radio funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 3:41:06 PM

To Whom this May Concern:

We have heard that public radio is proposed to be cut 59% from State funding. We recognize the State's financial issues, but this type of cut to communication in small rural areas of Alaska could be extremely devastating in times of emergency situations. This type of cut seems extreme and could do more damage than good. If cuts have to be made, make sure they are in ALL areas of government and never so drastic that recovery is impossible. Public radio is important in these communities and needs to be considered carefully in this budgeting process.

Sincerely,

Catherine Kowalski
Petersburg Alaska

From: [Chelsea Tremblay](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Protect public media, look at bigger picture
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 11:11:08 AM

My name's Chelsea Tremblay, I'm a resident of Petersburg, Alaska. Making huge cuts to services like public radio would be a disaster state-wide, as people rely on a healthy public radio to get news and information across remote areas. We aren't going to cut our way out of this budget crisis, it's time to look at the big picture of how unhealthy our reliance on oil revenue was, and come to terms with how we are going to replace it in the future. Creating a state-wide income tax is one possibility that would prevent people from making money off of our natural resources and then taking it out of state, rather than supporting the state that makes their livelihood possible. Protect our public radio, protect our schools, and start asking the bigger questions that will need to be answered before this is through.

Thank you,
Chelsea Tremblay
Petersburg, Alaska

From: [Deborah Hurley](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: public radio cuts
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:53:20 AM

Please reconsider drastic cuts to Alaska's Public Radio. I live in Petersburg Alaska and count on our radio station, KFSK, daily as do most people in our community. This is evident by the support that the community gives to the radio station. We depend on our station for local news, broadcast of borough meetings, emergency broadcasts, community announcements, social events, and fostering a community of volunteers. I appreciate cuts are necessary but would ask that they be phased in as to not destroy the operation.

Craig Olson
Deb Hurley
lot 13
Kupreanof
Alaska
907-772-3064

From: [emil tucker](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Public Broadcasting Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:39:29 AM

Hello.

My name is Emil Tucker and I live in Petersburg. I am commenting on the public broadcasting funding in the State's FY16 budget. Public Broadcasting plays a very important role in Petersburg and other rural communities throughout the state. State funding for public broadcasting makes up approximately a third of our local radio station budget, and while we may wish that this weren't the case, a cut to this funding will have a dramatic effect on the ability of our station to function. This means cuts to employees and cuts to our ability to deliver state and local news and other programming. In rural Alaska we rely on public broadcasting for access to many things directly relating to the management of our state. We learn about legislative affairs, hear debates during election seasons, and keep up with local and statewide issues.

I realize that budget cuts are a reality, however please consider that public broadcasting plays a distinct role that is different from capital projects. Let the potholes go unfilled for a year, but leave the public broadcasting budget intact. If cuts must be made across the board, I hope they can be shared across different programs rather than disproportionately affecting individual items.

Regards.

Emil Tucker.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Ketchikan_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

50 Front St., Suite 203
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901Phone: (907) 225-9675
Fax: (907) 225-8546**WRITTEN TESTIMONY**NAME: Terri-Lee GouldREPRESENTING: KRBD Radio / SelfBILL# or SUBJECT: KRBD RadioCOMMITTEE AND
HEARING DATE: march 3, 2015 / House Finance Committee

Please do not cut funding to KRBD radio station. KRBD is an integral part of Southern Southeast Alaska. KRBD provides important news, weather and overall reporting for Southern Southeast Alaska, plus a wide variety of music programs, and not having KRBD would be awful! I have been a member and volunteer for more than 30 years. KRBD is a great source of news, weather, music and various programs and not having KRBD on the air would adversely impact all of Southern Southeast Alaska.

GWANDAK PUBLIC BROADCASTING, INC.

KZPA – 900 AM

P.O. Box 50

Fort Yukon, AK 99740

Phone: 907-662-6356

Fax: 907-662-2915

March 5, 2015

House of Finance Committee

Written Testimony objecting proposed 59% cut to public broadcasting

Email: lhscfin@akleg.gov

Dear House of Finance Committee,

We appreciate the difficult circumstances and decisions facing the legislature. But the 59% cuts are disproportionate/excessive and will cause serious financial harm to our radio station. Need to preserve system funding. Stations have become increasingly more reliant upon each other for services and support over the years. It is clear that more integration will be required going forward. The urban service providers need to be strong too. The proposed cut of 59% will mean cut back of staff or workforce reductions and reduction of local service. Our local radio station is very critical and important to our community and the listening audience in the surrounding villages for emergency alert system, individuals missing while traveling, flood watches and warning, weather warnings, etc.

Respectfully,

Gratton Solomon
Signature

Gratton Solomon
Print name and title

c.c. file
KZPA Board of Directors

Fort Yukon resident

this is a safety
issue, very very
important

From: [Jim Steffen](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Proposed cuts to community radio stations
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 2:25:03 PM

Dear House members;

I was advised today of the 59% proposed cut to the state public broadcasting budget.

I am co-founder and 30+ year board member of KCAW public radio in Sitka. I am intimate with the dedication of the staff and volunteers of this organization.

Over the years our consortium of Southeast stations, known as Coast Alaska, have developed cost savings that have allowed us to continue to be the essential service to a number of Alaska Communities during times of flat funding.

The proposed cut is disproportionate, and will result in the loss of services to all of our listener communities.

I understand the dilemma that the State is presently facing, and that we all need to pull together to survive the loss of oil revenue.

But again, the proposed cut is disproportionate, will cost jobs and will rob communities of essential services such as weather reports for fisherman, state and local news, a communication link for remote communities, and emergency warnings.

Please reconsider this draconian cut to public broadcasting.

Jim

--

Jim Steffen, AMS, CMI
Norcoast Marine Surveyors, Inc.
(907) 747-5394
www.marinesurveyor.com/norcoast/

From: [Joann Lott](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: House Finance Operating Budget
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:57:02 PM

Hello,

My name is Joann Lott. I am a 30 year resident of Juneau. I am a KTOO supporter both financially and as a volunteer on the KTOO Community Advisory Board.

I am writing to ask you **NOT** to make drastic reductions in funding to Public Broadcasting and specifically KTOO.

Through my 30 years in Juneau, I have seen the immense contribution and impact of KTOO to the community of Juneau, the region of Southeast and the State of Alaska. We are a large diverse state and yet a small community. We can accomplish a lot together if we know each other, understand each other and recognize we are connected. KTOO connects us. I learn about the people of my state, my community and our world via KTOO news and programming.

Gavel to Gavel is an outstanding service to the residents of our state, that must be continued. We should always have this kind of access to the activities of our senate and representatives.

Please reconsider the extent of the reductions and make them more realistic. 10% is a more sustainable reduction in funding.

Public Broadcasting is vital. Please fund it at or close to current levels of funding.

Thank you for considering this input.

Joann Lott

Principal Architect, LEED AP

JENSEN YORBA LOTT, INC.

Architecture Interior Design Construction Management

522 West Tenth Street | Juneau, AK 99801

D 907-789-4522 | O 907-586-1070 | F 907-586-3959

www.jensenyorbalott.com

[Click here](#) to upload files.

GWANDAK PUBLIC BROADCASTING, INC.

KZPA – 900 AM

P.O. Box 50

Fort Yukon, AK 99740

Phone: 907-662-6356

Fax: 907-662-2915

March 5, 2015

House of Finance Committee

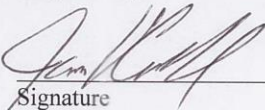
Written Testimony objecting proposed 59% cut to public broadcasting

Email: lhscfin@akleg.gov

Dear House of Finance Committee,

We appreciate the difficult circumstances and decisions facing the legislature. But the 59% cuts are disproportionate/excessive and will cause serious financial harm to our radio station. Need to preserve system funding. Stations have become increasingly more reliant upon each other for services and support over the years. It is clear that more integration will be required going forward. The urban service providers need to be strong too. The proposed cut of 59% will mean cut back of staff or workforce reductions and reduction of local service. Our local radio station is very critical and important to our community and the listening audience in the surrounding villages for emergency alert system, individuals missing while traveling, flood watches and warning, weather warnings, etc.

Respectfully,



Signature

James P. Carroll resident of Fort Yukon, AK

Print name and title

c.c. file
KZPA Board of Directors

From: [Kaylen Jones](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: KYUK budget cuts
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:32:35 PM

Dear people,

My name is Kaylen Jones from Quinhagak, and I am a freshman.

KYUK is very important because people from many villages listen to this station. KYUK is very helpful in many ways. They broadcast from events when people aren't able to come and watch live. Most people have radios, and they can listen in. What happens in Bethel or anywhere at all, everyone wants to know. Also, because it's been around for a long while. People would wonder why they would stop making great stories, and the station would fade away.

Please do not cut KYUK's budget.

Sincerely, Kaylen Jones.

From: [Liz Cabrera](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: funding for public broadcasting
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 3:05:07 PM

We know the state is in a difficult fiscal situation and cuts to state spending are necessary, but a 59% cut to public radio and a 59% cut to public television is disproportionate.

Cuts to public broadcasting will not only result in reduced local services, but the cuts will also reduce the amount of federal dollars our stations receive each year.

Public broadcasting represents a good value for the services provided in Alaska
- emergency notifications, public notices, weather warnings, etc.

I encourage you to restore funding for public broadcasting.

Thank you,

Liz Cabrera
PO Box 157
Petersburg, AK 99833

From: [Mandy Evans](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Public radio
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 8:25:30 PM

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing today as a proud supporter and user of public radio and television. Throughout my adult life - from Dallas, Texas to Sitka, I have relied upon public radio to connect me to my community and to keep me up to date regarding local, regional and state news and events, weather reports, emergencies, and national and international affairs.

As a resident of Southeast Alaska for 25 years, I know that public radio is a lifeline within Alaskan communities--it's what keeps us informed and entertained. Even in regions of the state where commercial stations are available, public radio is unique in its commitment to meeting the needs of the community in all its diversity.

I do appreciate that as a whole, Alaska is in the midst of a difficult financial situation. However, a 59% cut to public radio is disproportionate and excessive. It will mean workforce reductions and significant cutbacks in local service--service that keeps Alaskans connected to one another. The effect of this cut would be devastating to individual stations, would further weaken our economy with loss of jobs and service, and would likely decrease matching dollars from federal and local sources. Most importantly it would mean the loss of an invaluable part of our unique identity as Alaskan communities.

Thank you for your service. Regards,

Mandy Evans
Sitka, Alaska

From: [Marion K Nelson](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Public radio cuts
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 3:16:08 PM

We know they are coming but please don't devastate our stations. A reasonable cut can be tolerated or made up but not most of the budget. This is our main source of worthy news and local information as well as public participation opportunities for all ages. A participant, volunteer and voter for decades.

Marion K Nelson
marionknelsonak090@gmail.com

From: [Molly Shavings](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Public broadcasting budget cuts
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:28:10 PM

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

My name is Molly Shavings I am from Mekoryuk Alaska. I am a junior in High School and I am participating in this year's multimedia journalism.

KYUK has covered and is covering stories that interest people in the YK-Delta. The KYUK team is very important to this region, keeping people updated with stories that take place no matter what condition they may be in. Continuing on with this budget cut would be devastating for both the KYUK crew and their supporters.

Please reconsider cutting KYUK's budget. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Molly Shavings

PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: petersburg.lio@akleg.gov
907-772-3741/ phone/ 907-772-3779/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
(Please Write Clearly and Legibly)

YOUR FULL NAME: Suzanne Paulsen Circle one: Support Opposed

REPRESENTING (ORGANIZATION OR SELF): _____

BILL #: HB 72 Subject: DOA Reductions in Public Communications/Services

COMMITTEE NAME: HFIN HEARING DATE: 3/5/15

Please consider choosing the governor's suggestion of the lower percentage cut than the 59% suggested now to appropriations for public radio. Public radio is the net of communication that holds the community together. Please give us more time to adjust to larger cuts.

In addition, please consider reinstituting the state income tax. Alaskans & workers that come here should help pay for services.

Thank you for submitting my written comments to the record.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Paulsen

From: [Richard](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Public radio funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:19:07 PM

Hello,

I have lived in Alaska for most all of my life and run a small business which operates in several small communities in Southeast. It has been my experience as both a resident and business owner that public media plays an invaluable role in connecting Alaska's communities. The ability of public broadcasting to fulfill it's role in providing news and information as well as cultural bonds throughout the wide spread regions of our state is threatened by the massive cuts that have been proposed.

I have enjoyed and relied upon public broadcasting in the various Alaskan communities in which I've lived and worked and now have the honor of serving on the KTOO Board of Directors as well as the Coast Alaska board. That involvement has given me further insight into the resources necessary to provide this service which plays such a key role in connecting our communities.

Recognizing that we as a state are having to adjust to a drastically changed financial climate, I urge you to reassess the value of this particular service and to reduce the extent of the proposed cuts.

Thank you for your time.

Richard Cole
Fjord Flying Service
KTOO and Coast Alaska Board of Directors

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Robert Hattle](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Community Radio
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:27:09 AM

Alaska Legislators

Alaska State Finance Committee

Greetings,

As a Board Member of Raven Radio, KCAW in Sitka I writing to you with concern regarding a matter soon before you. I am gravely concerned of a possible fifty nine percent reduction in funding for community radio. Our community radio not only serves the community of Sitka but several very rural communities here in Southwest Alaska. We provide not only news services, local and national, musical entertainment but essential community services, such as regional weather and emergency disaster notification.

As the operational board we pride ourselves on heavily investing in emergency preparedness for our communities, mobile broadcasting, back up generators and automatic transfer of our broadcast system during a disaster. As an RN working in our local community's emergency department and with overview of the hospital's Emergency Operational Plan much of our disaster planning is dependent on having the local community radio station, KCAW, operational for crucial communication.

I appreciate the current budgetary status of Alaska is requiring serous reduction in our state spending. I also appreciate that many are at the table with deep concerns about the impact of such budget reductions. I want assure you as a board member of our local community radio we are planning for a decreases in funding but our request is that we receive an equitable amount of decrease. A fifty nine percent reduction would greatly impact our vital service to the community of Sitka and our service to the regional villages.

I am available to you as needed for any further information I can provide.

Sincerely,

Rev. Robert J Hattle, RN
PO Box 2676
Sitka, Alaska 99835
Phone: 907-738-2230
Kneel and pray for peace,

standup and demand justice!

From: [Sheila Finkenbinder](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Public Radio Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:46:39 AM

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing today to encourage you to increase the proposed funding level for public radio. I recognize the reality of the financial position the state is in right now, and I appreciate the difficult job with which you all are faced.

That being said, a cut of almost 60% to public radio could have a devastating impact on one of the major methods of communication for many people in this state. In Sitka, our local public radio station, KCAW, provides far more than entertainment to the citizens of several, isolated, small towns in Southeast, including: Angoon, Elfin Cove, Kake, Pelican, Port Alexander, Tenakee Springs and Yakutat, as well as Sitka. KCAW is a major source of local, statewide, national and international news - for some, the only source of that news. It is the voice that provides us with emergency information, and helps us to understand the issues that are important to our daily lives.

Southeast is not unlike other rural areas of the state that depend on public radio to know what's happening in the rest of the state, the country, and the world. A decrease of 59% of their funding from the state will greatly affect local stations' ability to bring in matching federal or local funds. Given the small size of the staff at these stations, staying on the air at all hours will be extremely difficult.

I urge you to take another look at the budget to see if a bit more funding can be found to help keep our public radio stations on the air.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sheila Finkenbinder
Retired
Sitka, Alaska
907-738-3098

From: [Sigurd Mathisen](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Funding for public radio,tv
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 6:36:12 PM

Hello, my name is Sigurd Mathisen, and I am a 68 year old Alaska resident since birth. I rely on public radio and public television. These are priceless resources that keep me in touch with the legislature, the governor, and the pulse of our state government from my rural community in Southeast Alaska. I understand the need to rein in the budget in the face of low revenues. I also understand rural as well as urban need to stay tuned to what is going on in our state. The legislators in Southeast rely almost solely on this medium to communicate with their constituents. It is something the constituents rely on as well. Our capital of government is remote for most people, but is brought to every household in the state via public radio and television. If this thread is compromised by severely cutting their budgets, public communication will suffer. A ninety day session is only possible with communication, and I sorely hope you will find a way to keep our public radio and television viable through this difficult time. I hope you will find a way not to cut the ferry system to a point it will not function as necessary for our citizens. This system is literally a lifeline for small communities with no birthing centers to bring pregnant women to urban cities that have primary care service. It also provides affordable affordable, dependable transportation for residents and visitors to Southeast Alaska. This system is necessary for the economic well being of all of Southeast Alaska. If tourism is not able to utilize this economical means of transportation, the economic well being of Southeast Alaska, and the state as a whole will suffer much more than the proposed cuts to the system could possibly help the state.

Sigurd Mathisen
907-772-3056
Box 1460
Petersburg, Alaska 99833

From: [Margaret Alexie](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Fighting for KYUK
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:21:35 PM

Dear House Finance Comity,

This is Margaret from Atmautluak, I am a Junior in high school. I'm in a Multimedia Journalism class.

Every morning, my family and I wake up early and listen to the morning news. Waking up early in the morning and listening to KYUK is a tradition. And I'm sure other families wake up and look forward to listening to KYUK. If elders hear that KYUK is going to have a budget cut I'm pretty sure that they will be disappointed, because EVERY elder looks forward to hearing KYUK. KYUK is the most popular station in the region and to the people. Why cut the budget when the radio station is so important to the people around the region?

PLEASE reconsider budget cuts to KYUK thank you.

.
Margaret Alexie
Atmautluak, AK
Joann. A. Alexie Memorial School
P.O. Box 6608

P.O. Box 189
NAKNEK, ALASKA 99633
www.bristolbayboroughak.us



TELEPHONE
(907) 246-4224
FAX
(907) 246-6633

Bristol Bay Borough

March 5, 2015

Dear House Finance Committee Co-Chairs and Committee Members:

The Bristol Bay Borough would like to go on record in support of the Southwest Alaska Vocational and Education Center (SAVEC) receiving funds in the Unrestricted General Fund (UGF) in the amount of \$175,000.

The Bristol Bay Borough helped in the initial formation of SAVEC and is a founding member. Our employees and residents of the Borough have participated in many trainings that help them either upgrade existing skills or attain new ones. We are very appreciative that the training is here at home in the Borough and in the region.

We continue to partner with SAVEC in many ways, we contribute funding annually, we provide in-kind services, and we collaborate on training and workforce development. SAVEC needs to continue training the workforce so that our residents will have jobs locally, regionally and statewide.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Fulton", is written over a faint circular stamp.

John Fulton, Manager
Bristol Bay Borough

cc: SAVEC

From: [Bruce Service](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Please stop funding the Susitna dam
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:43:16 AM

Dear Committee Members,

As you tackle the enormous challenges of our budget deficit, I would urge the House Finance committee to withdraw any remaining state funds for the Susitna dam project, and reassign them to one of many other programs that need and deserve support in our state.

As an Alaskan I am appalled by the continued investment in the proposed Susitna dam, despite widespread opposition. To date Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) has spent over \$190 million on studies pursuing a dam license, yet they have noted that they need at least \$100 million more to get this project to permitting. Despite this need, AEA also told Senate Finance that they have over \$30 million in the bank. They noted that they did not need additional state funds this year and could continue studies with the funds they have.

I believe it is absurd to even consider spending tens of millions more on a mega dam project as we lay off teachers, cut oil spill response, and cut service to the Alaska Marine Highway. There are far more responsible ways for the State of Alaska to spend \$33.5 million than studying a dam that will never be built.

The House Finance committee should withdraw those funds from AEA for the Susitna dam project and shut it down completely. The Susitna dam does not make sense for Alaska and further spending on this project would be a waste. Please stop the spending now and refocus funds on higher priority funding issues facing the State.

Sincerely,

Bruce Service
11250 Snowline Dr
Anchorage, AK 99507

From: [Forrest Leo](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Please stop funding the Susitna dam
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:25:02 PM

Dear Committee Members,

As you tackle the enormous challenges of our budget deficit, I would urge the House Finance committee to withdraw any remaining state funds for the Susitna dam project, and reassign them to one of many other programs that need and deserve support in our state.

As an Alaskan I am appalled by the continued investment in the proposed Susitna dam, despite widespread opposition. To date Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) has spent over \$190 million on studies pursuing a dam license, yet they have noted that they need at least \$100 million more to get this project to permitting. Despite this need, AEA also told Senate Finance that they have over \$30 million in the bank. They noted that they did not need additional state funds this year and could continue studies with the funds they have.

I believe it is absurd to even consider spending tens of millions more on a mega dam project as we lay off teachers, cut oil spill response, and cut service to the Alaska Marine Highway. There are far more responsible ways for the State of Alaska to spend \$33.5 million than studying a dam that will never be built.

The House Finance committee should withdraw those funds from AEA for the Susitna dam project and shut it down completely. The Susitna dam does not make sense for Alaska and further spending on this project would be a waste. Please stop the spending now and refocus funds on higher priority funding issues facing the State.

Sincerely,

Forrest Leo
PO Box 13227
Trapper Creek, AK 99683

From: [Jean Maynard](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Please stop funding the Susitna dam
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 9:47:19 PM

Dear Committee Members,

As you tackle the enormous challenges of our budget deficit, I would urge the House Finance committee to withdraw any remaining state funds for the Susitna dam project, and reassign them to one of many other programs that need and deserve support in our state.

As an Alaskan I am appalled by the continued investment in the proposed Susitna dam, despite widespread opposition. To date Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) has spent over \$190 million on studies pursuing a dam license, yet they have noted that they need at least \$100 million more to get this project to permitting. Despite this need, AEA also told Senate Finance that they have over \$30 million in the bank. They noted that they did not need additional state funds this year and could continue studies with the funds they have.

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Sincerely,

Jean Maynard
5411 Mockingbird Dr Apt. 105
Anchorage, AK 99507

From: [J Cram](#)
To: [House Finance](#); [Rep. Scott Kawasaki](#); Steve.Thompson@akleg.gov; Tammie.Wilson@akleg.gov
Subject: No Susitna dam, yes human and social services
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 9:51:09 PM

Please stop funding the Susitna dam. We have more important things to fund such as the Human Services Community Matching Grant program.

I am a registered voter in Anchorage, and I do vote in every election.

Thank-you,
Jennifer Cram

From: [Paulette Wille](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Please stop funding the Susitna dam
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:01:07 PM

Dear Committee Members,

I request that the House Finance committee withdraw funds from the Alaska Energy Authority for the Susitna dam project and shut it down completely. I understand that AEA has \$30+ million reserved for the project that can be reallocated to offset other truly critical shortfalls facing the FY16 state budget.

Hydro power created through smaller, cheaper, targeted projects is a realistic and far less damaging alternative for Alaska's human and wild populations.

The Rampart dam pipe dream was wisely abandoned decades ago. We need only to look at big hydro elsewhere (Colorado, Columbia Rivers, 3 Gorges Dam in China, the vanished Aral Sea in former USSR) to see the extensive environmental and human costs that nobody considered at the beginning and that are proving to be hugely expensive to undo, if undoing is even possible. No need to repeat those mistakes in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Paulette Wille
1220 Chena Ridge Rd
Fairbanks, AK 99709

From: [Tom Johnson](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Please stop funding the Susitna dam
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:28:38 PM

Dear Committee Members,

As you tackle the enormous challenges of our budget deficit, I would urge the House Finance committee to withdraw any remaining state funds for the Susitna dam project, and reassign them to one of many other programs that need and deserve support in our state.

As an Alaskan I am appalled by the continued investment in the proposed Susitna dam, despite widespread opposition. To date Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) has spent over \$190 million on studies pursuing a dam license, yet they have noted that they need at least \$100 million more to get this project to permitting. Despite this need, AEA also told Senate Finance that they have over \$30 million in the bank. They noted that they did not need additional state funds this year and could continue studies with the funds they have.

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Sincerely,

Tom Johnson
31805 Eagle River Rd
Eagle River, AK 99577

From: [Vicki Jorgensen](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Please stop funding the Susitna dam
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:03:32 PM

Dear Committee Members,

As you tackle the enormous challenges of our budget deficit, I would urge the House Finance committee to withdraw any remaining state funds for the Susitna dam project, and reassign them to one of many other programs that need and deserve support in our state.

As an Alaskan I am appalled by the continued investment in the proposed Susitna dam, despite widespread opposition. To date Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) has spent over \$190 million on studies pursuing a dam license, yet they have noted that they need at least \$100 million more to get this project to permitting. Despite this need, AEA also told Senate Finance that they have over \$30 million in the bank. They noted that they did not need additional state funds this year and could continue studies with the funds they have.

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Sincerely,

Vicki Jorgensen
11641 Thoreau Circle
Anchorage, AK 99515



Cordova Family Resource Center
P.O. Box 863, Cordova AK 99574
907-424-5674 FAX 907-424-5673
cfrc@ctcak.net

March 4, 2015

Honorable Mark Neuman, Operating Budget Chair
House Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room 519
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: HB 72 – Operating Budget Testimony

Dear Representative Neuman:

Cordova Family Resource Center is a victim services program funded by the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Our mission is to promote healthy individual and family throughout the community by providing education, advocacy, and crisis response.

We would like to thank you for supporting victims of domestic violence and sexual assault by accepting the Department of Public Safety's recommendation to fund \$367,200 to avoid a decrement to victim services in FY 16. With this funding for victim services, we will be able to continue providing core services to victims in Cordova.

We also appreciate continued support of prevention activities that is showing results in our community. Acceptance of the \$1.5 million to continue funding those activities will allow us to continue our work on a number of different prevention strategies that we are implementing in Cordova (Green Dot, Alaska-Cordova Men Choose Respect, Coaching boys into Men, 4th R curriculum and Compass). We know that these are tough budget times and difficult decisions had to be made and we are very grateful for your support.

Given that hundreds of Alaskans signed up to testify before the House Finance Committee, we wanted to be respectful of the committee's time and submit written comments. Please add our comments to the gill file for HB 72 – the Operating Budget.

Again, thank your supporting our program which is an integral part of public safety in our community.

Sincerely,

Nicole Songer, Executive Director



Cordova Family Resource Center
P.O. Box 863, Cordova AK 99574
907-424-5674 FAX 907-424-5673
cfrc@ctcak.net

March 4, 2015

Honorable Mark Neuman, Operating Budget Chair
House Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room 519
Juneau, AK 99801

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Again, thank your supporting our program which is an integral part of public safety in our community.

Sincerely,

Peter Hoepfner, Board President

From: [Sakkinen, Tera D](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Closure of Vital Statistics
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:41:06 PM

I'm writing in concern for the closure of Vital Statistics. I want to voice the importance that the Fairbanks office is to our community and surrounding areas. Families need these resources for sick children requiring their birth certificates, and death certifications for spouses. It's completely unfortunate to close an office where immediate needs were being met. It's concerning to be losing this office in times of a crisis. Many times village member travel to Fairbanks to get their needs met, it would be too bad if we couldn't offer this to them. Every time I have entered into the Vital Statistics they have always had numerous customers needing to be waited on. Where will these customers go? It's not a slow office, in fact it is very busy and brings in a lot of business. I hope you reconsider before you decide to close a very important and vital business for our community.

Thank you,

Tera Sakkinen BSN, RN

Fairbanks Memorial Hospital.

From: [Brandy Myslivec](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Defunding Anchorage Youth Court
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 8:47:28 PM

My name is Brandy Myslivec. I served in Anchorage Youth Court for 4 years as a prosecutor and defense attorney. This program has helped me immensely in so many ways. My public speaking skills have improved greatly. Youth Court assisted me in making my decision to pursue law as my career choice. Currently, I am attending school at the University of Alaska Anchorage, which is the first step towards earning my law degree. Youth Court gave me so much confidence in my abilities and what I can achieve. Anchorage Youth Court was such an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Please do not defund Anchorage Youth Court!!!! It is an excellent and necessary program.

Signed,

Brandy Myslivec

From: [Schmiege, Bret](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Youth court funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:44:36 PM

Dear committee members:

I work at Juneau Douglas High School, right next to the Youth Court office in the library, and have witnessed what a valuable program it is for our kids. I hope it is possible to retain some measure of funding for it.

Thanks for your consideration, Bret Schmiege

From: [Chantel Eckland](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Give Youth a Chance!
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:43:09 PM

Dear Finance Committee members:

I am a Juneau Youth Court volunteer and I want you to restore full funding to the Youth Court programs. These programs are important to the teens who volunteer and to the teens who must go through the the programs when they have broken the law. Youth Courts not only save money by working with teen volunteers, but also provide a more appropriate and meaningful option for teens who have gotten into trouble with the law for the first time. Youth Courts give these teens a second chance and the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Chantel Eckland

From: [Corbin Mitchell](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: youth court grant funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:30:21 PM

Dear Finance Committee members:

I am a Juneau Youth Court volunteer and I want you to restore full funding to the Youth Court programs. These programs are important to the teens who volunteer and to the teens who must go through the the programs when they have broken the law. Youth Courts not only save money by working with teen volunteers, but also provide a more appropriate and meaningful option for teens who have gotten into trouble with the law for the first time. Youth Courts give these teens a second chance and the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Corbin Mitchell

From: [Esme Crossett](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Youth Court Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:38:38 PM

Dear Finance Committee members:

I am a Juneau Youth Court volunteer and I want you to restore full funding to the Youth Court programs. These programs are important to the teens who volunteer and to the teens who must go through the the programs when they have broken the law. Youth Courts not only save money by working with teen volunteers, but also provide a more appropriate and meaningful option for teens who have gotten into trouble with the law for the first time. Youth Courts give these teens a second chance and the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Esmé Crossett

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Gabriel Cohen](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Youth Court Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:31:02 PM

Dear Finance Committee members:

I am a Juneau Youth Court volunteer and I want you to restore full funding to the Youth Court programs. These programs are important to the teens who volunteer and to the teens who must go through the the programs when they have broken the law. Youth Courts not only save money by working with teen volunteers, but also provide a more appropriate and meaningful option for teens who have gotten into trouble with the law for the first time. Youth Courts give these teens a second chance and the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Gabe Cohen

Sent from my iPhone

From: [gaby hebert](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Youth Court Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:57:52 PM

Dear Finance Committee members:

I am a Juneau Youth Court volunteer and I want you to restore full funding to the Youth Court programs. These programs are important to the teens who volunteer and to the teens who must go through the the programs when they have broken the law. Youth Courts not only save money by working with teen volunteers, but also provide a more appropriate and meaningful option for teens who have gotten into trouble with the law for the first time. Youth Courts give these teens a second chance and the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

*Thank you for considering my request.
Sincerely,*

Gabriella Hebert, Youth Court member

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [Ginny Espenshade](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: HB 72 Please restore Youth Court Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:53:21 PM
Attachments: [YC FINAL Bulleted List 2015-0302-1.pdf](#)

You have heard from all over the state how much impact Youth Courts have on communities as diverse as Nome and Anchorage.

You have heard from the Chair of the Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee as to the importance and value of Youth Courts as the state strives to meet mandates concerning alternatives to incarceration and disproportionate minority contact.

The Division of Juvenile Justice, the agency with which Youth Courts work most closely has provided clear and real time statistics. If you read nothing else regarding Youth Courts, please review the attached FACT SHEET, provided by the Division of Juvenile Justice. This comprehensive data is made possible by the statewide Youth Court information database, developed 3 years ago by DJJ in close partnership with the Youth Court programs. Youth Courts have made standardized data collection and standardized evaluation tools a statewide priority in the past few years, in order to quantify and qualify the impact we are having on Alaskan youth. Youth Courts have embraced the challenge of Results Based Accountability. Will you?

Thank you for your consideration. Please offer or support an amendment to HB 72 which fully restores Youth Court funding.

Ginny Espenshade
Executive Director, Kenai Peninsula Youth Court Director

From: [James](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Youth court funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:41:19 PM

Dear Finance Committee members:

I am a Juneau Youth Court volunteer and I want you to restore full funding to the Youth Court programs. These programs are important to the teens who volunteer and to the teens who must go through the the programs when they have broken the law. Youth Courts not only save money by working with teen volunteers, but also provide a more appropriate and meaningful option for teens who have gotten into trouble with the law for the first time. Youth Courts give these teens a second chance and the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

-James

From: pjahnsen@aol.com
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Youth Court Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 2:12:01 PM

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to you today in support of fully funding the Youth Court system in Alaska. This organization does a great service to many communities across the state and to the youth of a Alaska. I am cognizant of the decreased revenue situation that our state faces this year and that there will be many organizations writing to you for your continued support of each social service that currently exists. I am also aware that the price per barrel of oil continues to rebound from the low that was recently reported in December through February. As you are aware the legislature was able to provide funding for the Youth Court system during the 2008-2009 year when oil was between \$50-\$60 a barrel.

With that said the Youth Court system in the state of Alaska has been a cost saving program for the state for many years. These programs save the state money by performing state government functions such as juvenile probation services, judicial services, prosecution and victim services, law enforcement investigations and civic education and engagement of Alaskan youth. Not only do Youth Courts perform these functions more efficiently than government agencies, they have done so more effectively. (Youth Court recidivism rates are half those of similarly situated youth that do not go through Youth Court.) Every youth diverted from a future of crime by involvement with Youth Court represents future savings to the state and private sector alike, including the direct damages caused by criminal behavior plus the costs of investigating, prosecuting, defending, judging, sentencing, supervising probation, detaining, incarcerating and rehabilitation of the criminals.

My daughter has been involved with the Anchorage Youth Court system for over four years. Through this organization she has met many youths who through a variety of circumstances found themselves involved in a legal dilemma. My daughter's experience with Anchorage Youth Court has been very positive with her improved self-confidence and an appreciation to public service/advocacy.

Reinstatement of \$530,000 to the Youth Court organization is money that the great State of Alaska can afford.

Sincerely,

Janet Jahnsen

From: [Katherine Kane](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Juneau Youth Court funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:39:46 PM

Dear Finance Committee members:

I am a Juneau Youth Court volunteer and I want you to restore full funding to the Youth Court programs. These programs are important to the teens who volunteer and to the teens who must go through the the programs when they have broken the law. Youth Courts not only save money by working with teen volunteers, but also provide a more appropriate and meaningful option for teens who have gotten into trouble with the law for the first time. Youth Courts give these teens a second chance and the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely, Katherine Kane

From: [Kodiak Teen Court](#)
To: [House Finance](#); [Rep. Dan Saddler](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Lynn Gattis](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Lance Pruitt](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#); [Rep. Scott Kawasaki](#)
Cc: [Ginny Espenshade](#)
Subject: Written comment in support of restoring Youth Court Funding, for inclusion as public testimony on HB 72 before House Finance Committee
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:29:26 PM

To The House Finance Committee: Representative Saddler (Eagle River), Representative Neuman (Big Lake), Representative Thompson (Frbks), Representative Edgmon (Dillingham), Representative Gattis (Wasilla), Representative Munoz (Juneau), Representative Pruitt (Anchorage), Representative Wilson (North Pole), Representative Gara (Anchorage), Representative Guttenberg (Frbks) and Representative Kawasaki (Frbks).

RE: Written comment in support of restoring Youth Court Funding, for inclusion as public testimony on HB 72 before House Finance Committee

Dear Members of House Finance Committee,

I ask you to fully restore the funding for Youth Courts. These programs save the state money by performing state government functions such as juvenile probation services, judicial services, prosecution and victim services, law enforcement investigations and civic education and engagement of Alaskan youth. Not only do Youth Courts perform these functions more efficiently than government agencies, they have done so more effectively. (Youth Court recidivism rates are half those of similarly situated youth that do not go through Youth Court.) Every youth diverted from a future of crime by involvement with Youth Court represents future savings to the state and private sector alike, including the direct damages caused by criminal behavior plus the costs of investigating, prosecuting, defending, judging, sentencing, supervising probation, detaining, incarcerating and rehabilitation of the criminals.

Kodiak Teen Court has served as a non-profit in Kodiak since 1995. We have had 325 youth volunteers go through the law class and become attorneys. Eighty (80) have gone on to become judges in the program. The youth and adults they have volunteered over 10,000 hours of service to this community.

We have accepted over 470 cases and changed the lives of the clients and their families, the victims of the crimes and the community for the better. This program offers so much and costs so little please consider carefully your decision to cut this most valuable program.

I have found our youth volunteers to be an excellent advocates for their clients in the role of defense attorney. They are also able to embrace the position of prosecution attorney and investigate and represent the facts of the case along with the background necessary to apply the principles of restorative justice to the court.

Our Senior Attorneys and Judges mentored new youth attorneys, and assisted them in case preparation and presentation. I have found our youth to be a people who is able to listen to all sides of an argument before making a decision and use the restorative justice model in fashioning a sentence that is appropriate to the offender, the victim and our community.

Each year 16 of our youth volunteers are elected to the Board of Directors. They embrace the responsibility of Board Member. Three of the four executive board are youth. They insure their voices are heard when discussing issues related to the program or budget are held. They are responsible for assisting with the planning of the Statewide United Youth Courts of Alaska Conference in Kodiak (March 2015) and many will act as forum leader/instructors

The youth volunteers service to the community of Kodiak through their association with Kodiak Teen Court can't be measured in just the innumerable hours they have put into the program, but by the countless lives they has affected for the better. These are truly young people of vision, compassion and have a true sense of justice.

For the above reasons, if you are serious about addressing the current budget crisis with actual and sustainable savings, you will restore the Youth Court funding. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Darlene Turner

Program Manager

Kodiak Teen Court

610 Mill Bay Road

Kodiak, AK 99615

907-486-3550

907-486-3541 fax

From: [Lesa Thomas](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Please consider my request
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 8:25:07 PM

Attn House Finance Committee:

Re: Continued Funding of Youth Court

The task you face, of finding ways to close gaps in the budget, is doubtless a difficult one. As you address your task, please consider, “not taking candy from babies.” By this I mean, please do not take funds from youth programs. These programs help to guarantee the future of the state, offering a foundation for functioning citizens.

Please do not cut funding from the Youth Court program. Imagine the impact of turning a single youth around, and the potential savings to the state of **not** housing yet another inmate in the Jail system. Instead, consider keeping a program that gives juveniles an opportunity to change their path early enough to make a difference.

Story time:

My niece got herself into some trouble at a Mat-Su Valley high school four years ago. She refused to turn someone in, and was being questioned and accused as to her own involvement in alcohol at school. No doubt, she was making bad choices, befriending and protecting the wrong people. She was not going in a good direction. So, I sent her a flyer about youth court and told her she needed to start volunteering and becoming involved on the right side, before she ended up as a defendant.

She did. She took training, volunteered, gave up weekends and found an interest in law. She took on a variety of rolls in youth court, including prosecutor, clerk and judge. She found enough interest that she will be pursuing a career in the law.

She is graduating from a Wasilla High School this spring, will go to basic training for the United States Army this summer, and attend specialized court clerk training for the Army this fall. She found an interest, a program and path in life. ***Thanks to Youth Court***, she turned around. There are moments in life when you can decide what path to take, and youth court has given her and many others that moment.

For participants, Youth Court offers a chance to participate in an adult system, to affect change, to learn, grow and help the community. They have a chance to get outside of the small social bubble in which a teenager can live, and see a bigger picture of the world. They can make a difference. They can find a path.

For juvenile offenders, Youth Court gives juveniles an opportunity correct their mistakes, keep a clean record, and provide positive service to the community. Further, thanks to youth court, the state can save in court costs, juvenile detention, or prisoner costs because there is a program to guide, teach and inspire youth. Before you remove that program, and consider the future cost of its absence.

As you consider ways to reduce gaps in the budget, I implore you to keep Youth Court funding intact.

Thank you,

Lesa Thomas

Wasilla, AK

Dear, Alaska Legislators,

I am currently a 16 year old sophomore at Wasilla High School. I am extremely busy! I play hockey for the school and with a competitive team as well. On some nights I have gotten home at around 5:00pm just to have to leave for a meeting or pictures at 6:00pm at a different place. I have trouble sometimes keeping my above average GPA (all A's and B's with an AP class) during the season.

I have been a member of Mat-Su Youth court for one and half years. I am a first chair attorney, the highest rank of attorney, for defense and prosecution. I am currently working on becoming an associate judge. I am also the Secretary of the Mat-Su Youth court. I take minutes at all the meetings as well as take part in Executive Board meetings where we plan for our bar-meetings among other things.

I really enjoy youth court more than any other community service! It's very easy to fit into my busy schedule. If I am having a particularly light week I can sign up for court and get some good community service hours. It is also extremely fun and educating. My father is a lawyer, and I was really curious to learn more about what he does. Since I started youth court my knowledge in law has been steadily increasing, and it even helps me keep up with current events that are law related. Also half a social studies credit is given to members who complete 94 hours of community service. Overall it is just a great opportunity for me.

Sincerely, Russell Harren

1240 E. Lakeshore Ave., Wasilla, Ak

From: [Manon Paul](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Youth Court
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:45:17 PM

Dear Finance Committee members:

I am a Juneau Youth Court volunteer and I want you to restore full funding to the Youth Court programs. These programs are important to the teens who volunteer and to the teens who must go through the the programs when they have broken the law. Youth Courts not only save money by working with teen volunteers, but also provide a more appropriate and meaningful option for teens who have gotten into trouble with the law for the first time. Youth Courts give these teens a second chance and the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Manon Paul

From: [didi.ryall](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Youth Court funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 1:33:45 PM

Please restore the funding for youth courts across the state of Alaska. These programs are a vital component of the juvenile justice system and help young people get on a straight path thus avoiding repeat offenses. Mary P. Ryall

From: [Mike Illg](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: public testimony regarding HB 72 (Operating Budget)
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 10:53:40 AM

To: House Finance Committee

Please include this written comment as public testimony regarding HB 72 (Operating Budget):

I support restoring the Youth Court funding because:

1. Youth Courts save the state money by reducing time spent on minor juvenile offenses by Probation officers, Law Enforcement, prosecutors and Court officials and staff;
2. Youth Courts reduce the harm to the private sector caused by juvenile crime by ordering and monitoring restitution and by reducing repeat offenses;
3. Youth Courts teach and engage youth in civic participation by training them about the legal system and rights and by providing opportunities for youth to help their peers and their communities;
4. With less than half the recidivism rate of similar cases not diverted to Youth Courts, Youth Court programs are cost effective in reducing crime.
5. We must do ALL that we can reduce, minimize and prevent youth crimes in Alaska to curtail potential criminal activity as adults. Youth Court does this and saves many, many lives.
6. We Alaskans simply cannot afford not to fund this program.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Michael Illg, MS, CPRP

Recreation Manager

Homer, Alaska

From: [Mariah Thornsley](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Budget cut for Youth Court
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 5:57:21 PM

Hi, my name is Mariah Thornsley and I am student that volunteers for Mat-Su Youth Court. Although I have not been with them for long I have noticed that in the few cases that i have been in the students that come through are program take it seriously and are very grateful for it because they would most likely not be able to get in to the college that they want to and carry on with there future if it was not for it. I fear that with this budget cut that we would have to cut back on our volunteers and eventually it would be shut down and not as many people would be able to experience it either because their case was not allowed t go through Youth Court or because they could not join. So please if you could rethink about the budget cut and not just completely wipe it it out that would be great. Thank you for taking the time to read this email and i hope you do rethink this decision.

Sincerely,
Mariah Thornsley

From: [Olivia Fletcher](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Youth court
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:32:39 PM

Dear Finance Committee members:

I am a Juneau Youth Court volunteer and I want you to restore full funding to the Youth Court programs. These programs are important to the teens who volunteer and to the teens who must go through the the programs when they have broken the law. Youth Courts not only save money by working with teen volunteers, but also provide a more appropriate and meaningful option for teens who have gotten into trouble with the law for the first time. Youth Courts give these teens a second chance and the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Olivia Fletcher

From: [Sinead Scholl](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Grant money for Juneau Youth Court
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 4:13:20 PM

Dear Finance Committee members:

I am a Juneau Youth Court volunteer as a prosecution attorney. I request that you to restore full funding to the Youth Court programs. These programs are important to the teens who volunteer and to the teens who must go through the the programs when they have broken the law. Youth Courts not only save money by working with teen volunteers who are not payed for their time, but also provide a more appropriate and meaningful option for teens who have gotten into trouble with the law for the first time. Youth Courts give these teens a second chance and the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. I see first hand the positive affects youth court has on underage first time offenders. By sentencing them with a jury of their peers, we can assure their sentence is beneficial to the community, their families and themselves.

*Thank you for considering my request.
Sincerely,*

Sinead Scholl
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Meranda Frenzel](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 12:39:17 PM

Dear Finance Committee members:

I am a Juneau Youth Court volunteer and I want you to restore full funding to the Youth Court programs. These programs are important to the teens who volunteer and to the teens who must go through the the programs when they have broken the law. Youth Courts not only save money by working with teen volunteers, but also provide a more appropriate and meaningful option for teens who have gotten into trouble with the law for the first time. Youth Courts give these teens a second chance and the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Meranda Frenzel

From: [Annelise Burgess](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Anchorage Youth Court Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 11:39:04 PM

"This world demands the qualities of youth: not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease." - Robert Kennedy.

Our youthful volunteers and defendants at Anchorage Youth Court are the exact picture of these qualities painted by Mr. Kennedy. I have had the great experience of working with the non profit Anchorage Youth Court for the past five years of my life. Undoubtedly, Anchorage Youth Court has shown me the beauty of my generation. My generation is powerful. And I am here to remind you what an impact our youth can have through Anchorage Youth Court. We should not be underestimated, undermined, and we should have hope for a future.

The power of our youth should never be underestimated. As an attorney, I meet with student defendants and discuss the students' difficult circumstances. As a student myself, I am able to speak to them on a peer to peer basis. This foundation helps me to relate to the defendant and help them understand the consequences of their crime. I am also able to help them determine a new path. They are able to see the path they are going down and understand the consequences of this. Anchorage Youth Court not only gives me the chance to gain valuable interpersonal communication skills, but it gives youth the chance to impact our youth for the better.

The power of our youth should not be undermined. At Anchorage Youth Court, we have had a loss of funding from the very people we are trying to help. By helping our youth, we are in turn saving the government both time and money. By defunding youth courts, you minimize the power of our youth. And I would go as far to say you belittle our youth. Is our job not important enough? I can not express how important Anchorage Youth Court is to those who come through our program. They are given a future that would have previously been taken away from them. The power of our youth should be given a future.

When a student comes through Anchorage Youth Court and completes their sentence, they are not convicted of their crime. They are able to put on any and every application that they have never been convicted of a crime. This is huge for students who will be applying for jobs and colleges when they graduate. By helping Anchorage Youth Court, you give our youth a future. Sometimes I look at my generation's future and, honestly, it's bleak. But when I am at Anchorage Youth Court, and I see the wonderful students who come through, and I see hope.

And I ask you to see hope with me. Anchorage Youth court does not underestimate or undermine the power of our youth. At Anchorage Youth Court, It's not about the judges, attorneys, or even the sentences, It's about the future we give our youth. I ask you to consider the future of our youth in this decision. Thank You for your time.

From a concerned but hopeful Alaskan,

Annelise Burgess

From: [Young, Dakota](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 11:05:31 AM

Dear Members of House Finance Committee,

I ask you to fully restore the funding for Youth Courts. These programs save the state money by performing state government functions such as juvenile probation services, judicial services, prosecution and victim services, law enforcement investigations and civic education and engagement of Alaskan youth. Not only do Youth Courts perform these functions more efficiently than government agencies, they have done so more effectively. (Youth Court recidivism rates are half those of similarly situated youth that do not go through Youth Court.) Every youth diverted from a future of crime by involvement with Youth Court represents future savings to the state and private sector alike, including the direct damages caused by criminal behavior plus the costs of investigating, prosecuting, defending, judging, sentencing, supervising probation, detaining, incarcerating and rehabilitation of the criminals.

(You could add your personal experience with Youth Courts here)

For the above reasons, if you are serious about addressing the current budget crisis with actual and sustainable savings, you will restore the Youth Court funding. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dakota R. Young

From: [Katherine Townsend](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: State Budget Cuts -DOJ- Youth Courts
Date: Friday, March 06, 2015 6:09:22 AM

March 6, 2015

Dear Sirs and Madams

I currently reside in NC, but please do not disregard my comments and concerns. I lived and work in the Behavioral Health/Substance Abuse Field in Homer, AK for 2 years. I hope to retire back to Homer. I was very impressed with the local and state network of Youth Courts. The benefits for the community with the minimal cost of Director's salary/benefits and operating costs of small office are so far reaching.

- Positive impact on young offenders and their families.
- Less youth in penal system/prisons to be housed, fed, & monitored resulting in decreased cost to state.
- Young Offenders better hear and respect consequences handed down by peers.
- Consequences are pertinent to the offenses, aiding rehabilitation vs. confinement/punishment.
- The lessons for the participants of Youth Court are exceptional ~ Critical Thinking ~ Law ~ Respect ~ Reasonable and Pertinent Consequences ~ Community Impact of Crime ~ Teamwork ~ Community Networking ~ Civics ~ Role Modeling ~ Peer Support ~ Career Preferences/Choices. These lessons are experiential and life long.
- Community Networking and Education are priceless for all aged members of the community

The cost to the state to be able to afford their communities and constituents all these services and lessons through other programs, departments and/or development of new programs would cost so much more that continuing to support the current Programs. In dollars & cents it, makes sense to continue to fund DOJ Youth Courts. I am also aware that your Youth Court programs are looked to as model programs, showing AK's commitment to its youth and best practices for dealing with youth offenders. Why would the state want to loose that type of representation?

Thank you so much for hearing and considering my thoughts and observations.

Most respectfully

Katherine Townsend

Katherine Townsend

528 Lake Royale, Louisburg, NC 27549

townsendkatherine@hotmail.com

From: [chris & pat moss](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Fw: Youth Court Funding
Date: Thursday, March 05, 2015 10:27:56 PM

To Whom it May Concern: I believe I sent this earlier today from the wrong account – Homer Dog Trainers. To make sure that you receive this and from the correct email address, I am resending it.

Pat Moss

Youth Court prepares students for life:

- * Teaches about the judicial process and our government's system of checks and balances.
- * Helps give our children a moral compass.
- * Empowers teens and makes them believe in and feel that they are contributing to the greater good.
- * Builds people who care about our government and who will go on to actually vote.
- * Builds leaders.
- * Provides a fair and balanced system to deal with juvenile offenders.
- * Truly gives juvenile offenders a jury of their peers.
- * Reduces the case load of an already overburdened judicial system.

Youth Court deserves to be funded.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Moss
Box 1115
1285 Jeffery Ave.
Homer, AK 99603