

From: [Benjamin Fortson](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Why you should not cut WWAMI
Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 8:10:59 PM

Dear Finance Committee,

I want this to serve as my testimony for HB72 and specifically with regard to the WWAMI budget.

You should not cut WWAMI and here is why:

- 1. WWAMI takes 20 Alaskans and turns them into doctors each year.**
2. WWAMI has been making Alaskan doctors for almost half a century. WWAMI is neither the cause of this current "budget crisis" nor is cutting it a rational solution by any means.
3. The cost of WWAMI is less than one tenth of a percent of the state revenue.
4. For every 100 students entering the program, 84 WWAMI graduates will return to practice in Alaska. Graduates who do not return to Alaska must pay back the state subsidy.
5. Alaska has a shortage of primary care doctors and 61% of WWAMI graduates choose to work in primary care.
6. If you cut WWAMI, you will make Alaska the only state without a physician training program.
7. Doctors are good for the economy.

These points demonstrate that WWAMI is both an effective and efficient program. WWAMI costs very little but provides tremendous benefit to the community. If you have to make cuts, at least cut a program that is not working well.

Cutting WWAMI will not affect me as a current student but will compromise the future of young motivated Alaskans who aspire to a career in medicine as well as the thousands of patients that would be served by them. I want others to have the fantastic opportunity I had.

Please fully consider the repercussions that cutting WWAMI may have on the future of our communities.

Please visit campus and speak with current students, faculty, patients, and community members so that you can make an informed and responsible decision.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter,

Ben Fortson

Second year WWAMI student