

From: [Kirsten Jorgensen](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Public Testimony for HB72
Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 2:48:34 PM

Dear Finance Committee,

My name is Kirsten Jorgensen, I am a second-year medical student in the WWAMI program. A life-long Alaskan, and proud Alaskan voter, I grew up in Juneau and was inspired to pursue medicine in high school. I would like this to serve as my testimony for HB72.

My interest in medicine in Alaska was a central theme to my undergraduate studies at Harvard, where I wrote my senior honors thesis about healthcare delivery in the state in the 1950s. A core theme I found in my research and my experience growing up in the state is that Alaska has always been an example of going above and beyond to see that each of its residents gets the care they need through innovative delivery systems, a commitment to health, and a determination to rise above obstacles.

The determination that brought healthcare workers by land, sea, and air to remote villages around the state led to the realization of other innovative health care delivery systems such as community health aide programs, nursing programs, and eventually the WWAMI program. Since its inception, WWAMI has enabled young Alaskan students such as myself to pursue their medical education from their home state at in-state resident tuition rates, and assisted them and their families in returning to the state that we all care deeply about.



The opportunity to be medically trained in Alaska is not only something I and the other 19 students in my Alaska WWAMI class treasure, but it is also a central theme among our 200 other classmates from the WWAMI region (Washington, Wyoming, Montana and Idaho).

I would like to voice my strong support for this invaluable program. It would be a shame to see the short-sighted decision of cutting the program win instead of the long-term vision of health for all Alaskans, and opportunities in health care for all Alaskans. This is a vision that began before Alaska was a state, a vision rooted in Alaskan's fierce desire to fight for the health and rights of each resident. WWAMI is a product of that vision. WWAMI provides inspiration to younger students, opportunities in education for high-school, college, and medical students, and a means to return to Alaska for physicians.

Support the vision of a healthier Alaska, treated by Alaska-trained physicians, and Alaska-born physicians. Support the WWAMI program.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Jorgensen