

From: [Karen Maskarinec](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Budget: PLease keep WWAMI funded.
Date: Thursday, March 26, 2015 8:28:10 AM

Dear Alaska State Senators serving on the Finance Committee,

I'm writing to you today regarding the budget. Specifically, I plead for the continuation of the WWAMI program. This well-established, well-functioning program helps Alaska in many ways: it inspires students of all ages to aim for the best education possible; it fast-tracks 20 Alaskans to matriculate at UW School of Medicine (ranked FIRST in the nation in both Family Medicine and Rural Medicine) each year; and it results in many excellent doctors returning here to practice and to live.

It would be virtually impossible for this number of Alaskans to attend this premier medical school, and it's unlikely that they'd get into medical school at all, given the high cost of applying. Further, there would be much less reason to come back to Alaska: not only the financial incentive that WWAMI provides, but also the ties established through our future doctors doing some of their rotations, and even residency here in Alaska.

WWAMI was established to fill a real need. If WWAMI goes away, the need will return, and it's much harder to start a great program from scratch than it is to keep a great program going. In short, anybody who has ever, or will ever, see a doctor in Alaska benefits from the WWAMI program.

My personal stake in this is small at this point. I volunteer as a compassionate end-of-life companion at Providence, and am very proud of the excellent medical care provided there. My daughter Gwenyth Crabtree got her MD through WWAMI, and can hardly wait to come HOME to practice when she completes her residency in (horrid) New Jersey in two more years. I don't have anyone else applying to medical school in the foreseeable future, but it is an extremely narrow view to think that only those who attend WWAMI benefit from WWAMI.

I know Alaska needs to save money NOW, but still resist the notion that EVERYTHING must go. I subscribe to a general philosophy of abundance rather than of scarcity. I hope you share a long-term view of fiscal conservatism, which has room for both saving for the future, and spending for the future. Let WWAMI keep sowing seeds for Alaska's future.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,
Karen Maskarinec