

From: [Christian Escalante](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Potential CDVSA State Budget Cut
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2015 4:59:55 PM

March 31, 2015

Dear Senate Finance Committee Co-Chairs and Members:

I am Christian Escalante. I am eighteen years old and a senior at Unalaska City High School (UCHS) in Unalaska, AK. Currently, I work at Unalaska's domestic violence and sexual assault shelter program, Unalaskans Against Sexual Assault and Family Violence (USAFV) as the Student Advocate. I have attended the Lead On conference twice, and am a Stand Up! Speak Up! (SUSU) Grantee through Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA).

It has come to my attention that the state is considering cutting 1.5 million dollars from the CDVSA's violence prevention activities budget.

This money provides funds not only for the SUSU grant, which allows students to create and host a myriad of prevention and awareness activities, but also funds for programs such as COMPASS, Lead On, and Alaska Men Choose Respect, programs which have impacted the rates of assault and violence in Alaska greatly.

As a SUSU grantee in 2014, I was able to fund my Island Wide Scavenger Hunt. In the Hunt, teams of teens and adults had to complete items on the list, which included activities such as eating a meal, playing a board game exercising, working on a community service project, identifying community resources, and dancing the Macarena on a sidewalk. The activities simultaneously broke the ice among the teammates and gave them the opportunity to get to know each other in a way they never would have otherwise

My overall goal was to see an increase in the interactions and support between the youth and adults in the community. When evaluating the scavenger hunt, teens reported feeling closer to each other and more supported by adults in the community. Adults also reported that after the scavenger hunt, they felt better understood the teens that participated, and felt more connected to them. It was inspiring to see a true social change happen. Hosting the Island-Wide Scavenger Hunt is one of my proudest accomplishments, because it demonstrated how powerful positive partnerships could be and it allowed me to promote peace rather than violence. It would not have been possible to execute this event without the prevention funds that were made available through CDVSA.

The proposed CDVSA funding cuts will impact many shelters and prevention organizations around the state, which could adversely affect the already high rates of violence in Alaska.

I hope that my thoughts will help you to make a more informed decision on the cuts to the CDVSA budget. Thank you for taking my written testimony regarding the budget and thank you for your service to the state of Alaska.

Sincerely,
Christian Escalante
Unalaska City High School Student
Stand Up Speak Up Grantee 2014 and 2015