

March 31, 2015

Senate Finance Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

You are charged with creating a spending plan that stays within our means but does not cripple our economy or short-change our future.

It concerns me greatly that many of the budget cuts would in fact short-change our future, such as eliminating funding to early learning programs like Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers. Education starts at birth, and too many of our children are simply not ready when they arrive at school. Effective early learning programs provide significant returns on investment over the life of the child.

Thank you for keeping the Human Services Community Matching Grant at the funding level approved by the House. It will reach approximately half of the identified need, based on applications submitted by community non-profit organizations.

I recognize that reductions are necessary and belt-tightening must happen. We also face a revenue problem. We rely too heavily on oil revenues. In part of your effort to increase revenue, do not discount the financial responsibility of Alaskan citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cheryl K.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cheryl Keepers

PO Box 74898

Fairbanks AK 99707

markandcheryl@ak.net