

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Name: KEN LANDFIELD

Representing: SELF

Bill No./Subject: BUDGET

Committee: FINANCE

Date of Hearing: 3/31/15

ZERDING OUT PUBLIC BROADCASTING WILL
 RESULT IN PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES. PUBLIC BROAD-
 CASTING IS ONE OF THE BEST INVESTMENTS AVAILABLE.

90 FOR THE ARTS HAS NO IMPACT ON CAPITAL OR
 OPERATING BUDGETS; REMOVING IT SAVES NO MONEY.

IT IS TIME TO STOP CUTTING, AND RAISE REVENUE.
 STATE INCOME TAX WOULD BE THE LEAST HURTFUL
 WAY TO FUND STATE EXPENSES.

To: State of Alaska, Senate Finance Committee

Date: March 31, 2015

Dear Senators of the Finance Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony to the Senate Finance Committee.

I am writing you to ask that you reconsider the elimination of the state's Parents as Teachers funding. Parents as Teachers is a proven early education program that teaches parents how to help their children learn and develop to their full potential. The cost of the program is much lower than many other early education programs, but the outcomes are significant for the families who are able to participate. Through this program, families become involved in their child's education early and become partners and advocates for their child's ongoing education. The benefits of the program continue on even after the family exits services. Please reconsider eliminating this program from the budget, it is such a small amount of money for such an important cause.

Sincerely,

Rachel Schafer
12468 Silver Fox LN
Anchorage, AK 99515

To: Senate Finance Committee

Date: 3/31/2015

Re: Public Testimony

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a Home Visitor/Parent Educator for the Parents as Teachers Program in Anchorage. I work with up to 20 families in Anchorage who do not have access to any other Early Learning Program. Parents as Teachers is open to any and all families in Anchorage with children age prenatal-5 who want to learn ways to teach their children at home. Parents as Teachers helps families to prepare their children for Kindergarten, because when children start ahead in school, they stay ahead throughout. Many of the families that I work with are high-risk, and struggle with many things in their lives that affect their children, including OCS involvement, developmental disabilities, health problems, low income, teen parents, homelessness, and a history of abuse. If Parents as Teachers is eliminated in Anchorage then many of these families will have nowhere to turn for support. I get many referrals from OCS, PIC, and Head Start. These agencies cannot serve my families because they don't qualify for their programs because they are too young or the families don't have transportation to programs. Some of the families that I work with do not have any risk factors, but choose to participate in the program for the extra parenting support and the desire to give their children a Head Start in school. Parents as Teachers focuses on teaching literacy as well as promoting optimal brain development in young children. We also catch any delays early through health and developmental screenings that are done regularly at the home visits, and provide intervention to families and children, so that children can catch up by the time they reach Kindergarten so that they don't need Special Education Services in school. Eliminating this program in Anchorage will put these children in danger of "falling through the cracks" in our educational system later.

Please reconsider the budget cuts that will cause Alaska to lose its Parents as Teachers programs.

Thank You,

Amy George
3314 Woodland Park Dr
Anchorage AK 99517

To: Senate Finance Committee

March 31, 2015

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony.

*For the past 18 months, I have been a parent educator for the **Parents as Teachers program at Kids' Corps in Anchorage.***

***Parents as Teachers** is a program designed for parents from different social levels. Currently many programs are offered only for low-income families or for children with special needs. Our mission is to provide an opportunity to various socio-economic backgrounds. The program enrolls families from the middle class, families referred from the Office of Children's Services, foster families, grandparents, families who speak English as a second language, teen parents, and homeless families. We are also involved locally with different agencies such as; Programs for Infants and Children, Early Intervention ASD, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, Crossroads High School, and the Child in Transition Homeless program at the Anchorage School District.*

Our program works with families who are prenatal or have children from birth to 5 years old and help transition them into a preschool or kindergarten school based on the family's needs. Parent as Teachers has a curriculum that covers areas very important in the development of the children and shows parents how they can support learning through their home environment. We offer free health screenings: vision, hearing, heights and weights, and cognitive screenings. These help prevent and identify developmental delays from an early age. We encourage our families to attend community's events.

I have seen families grow together and become strong, and families who have learned to enjoy their children and play. I have seen families learn that education at an early age is important. I have worked with families who have learned to provide stable home routines and seen their children do much better as a result. I have worked with families who only needed support to achieve their goals and improve their lives. I see in every visit: incredible kids and families who experience less frustration and positive parenting. I believe as an Educator "The foundation of society is the family, if we have stable families will have a stable society with more opportunities and less delinquency". Please let us continue with our mission.

Erika Espinosa

Anchorage, AK

Phone: 907 339- 0154

To the Senate Financial Committee,

March 31, 2015

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Please reconsider cutting the PAT funding. PAT works with parents so that they have knowledge of working with their children. PAT home visitor are getting the children ready for kindergarten/preschool and at the same time help the parents feel comfortable with helping their children learn. PAT is a program that connects parents and children to the community and to other parents in the program. PAT is a program that help the children learn and when they go to kindergarten/preschool they are knowledgeable and will not be behind in their learning. With the help of the PAT program, the children have an opportunity to learn.

Thank You.

La Chang

Anchorage, AK

March 30, 2015

To Senate Finance Committee

I am Omima Adam; I have two young kids Malack 4 years old and Khaled 12 months. I enrolled my kids in the Kids' Corps Parent as Teachers Program because I did not qualify for some programs in early education because my income was too high. I felt very frustrated when I realized my situation. To me and my husband is very important have a good education and same for our kids. This program gives the opportunity to teach my own kids and learn together. They make me a good parent and help me raise my children in a healthy and positive environment where our kids and parents build a strong relationships. Please consider the point of view for families who may not qualify for other programs because of our economic status.

Parent Name: Omima Adam

Child's Name: Malack & Khaled Adam

370 Bragaw St. apt # 8

907 884-6882

Angela de la Cruz

941 East 20th Avenue- Anchorage, Ak

907-310 0577

To: Senate Finance Committee

March 31, 2015

My name is **Angela De La Cruz** and I am the mother of four kids. My son is 3 years old and has been in the Parents as Teachers program since last year. His name is **Jonathan Fajardo** and I can tell you that this program supports us a lot. As a mother I know now how to encourage my son to deal with his emotions and how to teach him with patience. With all the materials that they give us he has been learning a lot and I am learning a lot too about how to teach my kids. I really appreciate to the program and to the people who work for it!

03/30/2015

To Senate Finance Committee;

My children and I are living testimonies to how wonderful KCI – Parents as Teacher program has impacted our lives. It has impacted my children's fine motor skills, which the activities they teach our children enhance. They have taught my children activities like been able to read and understanding what is been read to them. My children always look forward to seeing their Parent Educator every week. The teachers of the PAT program are welled trained and they are very good at doing what they do.

I will like to use the opportunity to ask that this program remains available for the sake of our children, who wake up every morning and looking forward to seeing their teacher. It will be heart breaking for me to look in the faces of my children to tell them that the program they so enjoy is been taking away from them. Please help our children stay focused by not taking away this program.

Yours sincerely

Parent Name: Adaamaka Ogbechie
Child's Name: Daniel,Dereck , and Derrion Anene
6236 Spruce Meadows Dr.

adaamakaogbechie@yahoo.com

907 884-6882

Dicelina Vargas

March 30, 2015- Anchorage Alaska

To Senate Finance Committee;

My name is Diocelina Vargas, I just want said Thank you for this opportunity to submit my testimony to Senate Finance Committee. My family participates in KCI - Parents as Teacher program in Anchorage for one year; this program made a huge difference in my daughter Isabella who is 3 years old. Parents as Teachers impact my family and our young kids in a positive way. They support me and give me many tools and ideas to encourage my child in the learning process before she goes to Kindergarten. I am learning how I can interact with my kids & be a good parent.

In my personal experiences I have a son 7 years old, and he didn't have this wonderful opportunity. When he started kindergarten it was very difficult for him to learn letters and the numbers. I feel very frustrated, now I can tell you how big is the differences between my daughter and son. She's doing much better in comparison with my son. Her development is great and I understand how important is give our kids a quality time. As soon as she started stared in the Parents as Teachers program in Anchorage I see her progress. Please support the Parents as Teachers progra.

Sincerely,

Mother: Diocelina Vargas

Daughter: Isabella Vargas

2115 Stockdale Circle- Anchorage, AK

To: Senate Finance Committee
March 31, 2015

RE: Parents as Teacher Program;

Parents as Teacher Program has helped my daughter Farrah Hooper so much. The Doctors said that Farrah would never walk or talk. Farrah has had been in Parents as Teachers since she was 6 month old.

Farrah learned how to use sign language. Parents as Teacher Helped Farrah with her kinetic skills, they also taught me how to take care of my daughter.

Farrah is 4 ½ yrs. old now. Farrah can walk and talk. She is learning how to read, can count up to 60, and knows her ABC's. Farrah can write her name. P.A.T. helped so much .One day I do not have money after paying insurance and tax, all utilities, etc. They gave the kids really nice Christmas gift that meant a lot to her and helped us have a wonderful Christmas. Please do not close this program.

P.A.T. has great teachers as well who know about the development of the child's mind. This program deserves respect and I recommend other families to enter the program as well.

Thank

You, Esther L. Hooper

Esther L. Hooper
1200 W Dimond Blvd. Spc. 1124
Anchorage, AK 99515-1547

Resolution in Support of Education and Early Development
by Anchorage Human and Social Services Executive Directors
March, 2015

Funding for early learning and K-12 education is vitally important to the people we serve and to our community. We strongly urge the legislature to hold harmless, to the maximum extent possible, early learning and K-12 education from funding cuts.

Our organizations are dedicated to helping children, youth, and adults thrive. We provide support and assistance to people, sometimes in small ways, often in big ones. The people we serve are individuals and families of all colors, backgrounds, countries of origin, education, and socio-economic status. Our work allows us to see things that aren't necessarily obvious to others.

We see first-hand how people's life circumstances are influenced by their education and childhood experiences. We see first-hand that many of the problems people have as adults could have been prevented – at far lower cost.

Consider these facts:

- Fewer than half of Alaska's young children start school with all the skills that experts say they need to succeed.
- Children who have trouble reading in first grade are unlikely to be proficient readers in fourth grade.
- 85% of the brain's core structure is developed by age 4. Yet less than 4% of public investments in education and development go to that age group.
- Early preventive intervention is more efficient and produces better outcomes than remediation later in life. An often-used statistic is that every dollar invested in early childhood has a return of \$7 to \$10.
- According to national statistics, high school dropouts earn approximately 30% less than those who graduate, and are 72% more likely to be unemployed. High school dropouts comprise over 80% of the incarcerated population.

Young children who are not prepared to succeed often become disconnected youth who fail to learn and drop out altogether. They become adults likely to drain community resources rather than build safe and economically vibrant communities. Alaska needs citizens who can build, not deplete, our state.

The road to high school graduation and a productive adult life starts at birth and continues through the school years with engaged parents, a supportive community, and adequate resources. We urge you to provide necessary funding for both K-12 and early childhood programs. Do not allow the current fiscal challenge to unhinge the hope and promise of our state, which resides in our children. We must equip them well educationally, at every step along the way.

SIGNATORIES:

| Organization | Name | Position |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Access Alaska | Jim Beck | Executive Director |
| AK Child and Family | Denis McCarville | President and CEO |
| Alaska Baptist Family Services | Lorie Morris | CEO |
| Alaska Injury Prevention Center | Marcia Howell | Executive Director |
| Alaska Institute for Justice | Robin Bronen | Executive Director |
| Alaska Literacy Program | Pauline Smith | Executive Director |
| American Diabetes Association | Michelle Cassano | Executive Director |
| Anchorage Community Mental Health Services | Jerry Jenkins | Executive Director |
| Anchorage Youth Court | Rebecca Koford | Executive Director |
| AYDC | Deborah Williams | Director |
| Best Beginnings | Lorie Morris | Board, Vice Chair |
| Best Beginnings | Abbe Hensley | Executive Director |
| Big Brothers Big Sisters | Taber Rehbaum | CEO |
| Boys and Girls Club of South Central Alaska | Alana Humphrey | CEO |
| Camp Fire Alaska | Barb Dubovich | Chief Executive Officer |
| Catholic Social Services | Lisa Aquino | Executive Director |
| CCS Early Learning | Mark Lackey | Executive Director |
| Covenant House | Alison Kear | Chief Executive Officer |
| Habitat for Humanity | Normand Lagasse | Executive Director |
| Kids Corps Inc. | Dirk Shumaker | Executive Director |
| Money Management International | Larry Snider | Director |
| Nine Star Education & Employment Services | David Alexander | President |
| Program for Infants and Children | Amy Simpson | Executive Director |
| Rural Alaska Community Action Program Inc. | David Hardenbergh | Executive Director |
| Spirit of Youth | Karen Zeman | Executive Director |
| Thread | Stephanie Berglund | CEO |
| United Way of Anchorage | Michele Brown | President |
| Victims for Justice | Susan Sullivan | Executive Director |
| Volunteers of America, Alaska | Elaine Dahlgren | President |
| YWCA Alaska | Hilary Morgan | CEO |

STATEMENT PREPARATION FOR THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
RESTORE TOURISM FUNDING

GOOD MORNING. I COME TODAY AS A CITIZEN OF OUR GREAT STATE OF ALASKA. A CONCERNED CITIZEN ON THE IMPACTS THAT COULD HAPPEN IF THE CURRENT REDUCTIONS IN THE STATE TOURISM BUDGET PASSES.

I ARRIVED IN ALASKA IN 1987 AND ONE OF MY FIRST JOBS WAS A BUS DRIVER FOR PRINCESS TOURS SHARING OUR AMAZING HOME WITH TOURISTS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE. DURING MY TOUR, MY PASSENGERS WOULD WRITE A MESSAGE IN MY JOURNAL AND SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON THEIR TRIP. THEIR REMARKS WERE AMAZING.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MARKETING ALASKA DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY IS VITAL TO THE STATE AND ITS CITIZENS. I KNOW THAT IT'S IMPERATIVE WE FUND SCHOOLS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND MEDICINE.

HOWEVER, MARKETING OUR STATE DOES, IN AN IN-DIRECT WAY, HELP FUND THOSE PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE TAXES WE COLLECT FROM OUR VISITORS. AND THE MONIES SPENT HERE BY VISITORS HELP EACH LOCAL ECONOMIES THRIVE. FROM THE HOT DOG VENDORS OUTSIDE THESE OFFICES TO THE LOCAL MERCHANT AND RESTAURANT ~~FROM~~ ACROSS THE STATE.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, MARKETING TO ATTRACT ^{VISITORS} VISITORS OFTEN TIMES HELPS RECRUIT NEW CITIZENS TO OUR STATE. THEY BECOME TEACHERS, MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS, ENGINEERS, STUDENTS, AND EVEN PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY PLAYERS. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, NEW MEDICAL CENTERS LIKE THE SAMEUEL SIMMONDS MEMORIAL CENTER IN BARROW, THE SERVICE INDUSTRY AND OTHER COMPANIES HAVE A TALENT POOL OF CANDIDATES TO DRAW FROM; THEY HELP OUR ECONOMY GROW AND MAINTAIN A LOW UNEMPLOYMENT LEVEL WHILE ADDING NEW SERVICES.

I KNOW THAT MARKETING CAN BE AN EASY TARGET TO REDUCE AND CUT. I'VE BEEN IN MARKETING FOR MORE THAN 25 YEARS. DURING EVERY DOWNTOWN, COMPANIES ARE FIRST TO USE THE KNIFE ON MARKETING. HOWEVER, THE IMPACT THAT FOLLOWS WHEN RETRACTION HAPPENS CAN NEVER BE REPLACE. WE WILL LOSE MARKET SHARE FOR ALL THAT WE HAVE WORKED SO HARD TO GAIN.

MARKETING IS THE BACKBONE TO AN ECONOMY
I AM ASKING TODAY THAT ~~THE LEGISLATURE RECONSIDER THE CUTS AND ADD BACK TO THE BUDGET THE EFFORTS TO CONTINUE MARKETING OUR STATE.~~ ^{To restore the \$ million}

This committee to believe the \$3 million to tourism marketing.
WE ARE A BUCKET LIST DESTINATION AND IT'S OUR JOB TO TELL THE WORLD ALASKA STILL IS A GOLD RUSH OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT.

~~LAST YEAR, ANCHORAGE ITSELF COLLECTED A RECORD 25.2 MILLION DOLLARS FROM LOCAL BED TAXES. THAT MONEY HAS HELPED BUILD A NEW CONVENTION CENTER AND MAINTAIN THE SUSTAINABILITY OF BOTH CONVENTION CENTERS AND HELP DRAW MORE VISITORS TO ANCHORAGE WITHOUT ANY ASSISTANCE FROM REVENUE SHARING FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE OR THE STATE~~

Thank you
GEORGE SAMOUEZ
(907) 230-8098.

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March, 2015

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| Volunteers of America, Alaska | Elaine Dahlgren | President |
| YWCA Alaska | Hilary Morgan | CEO |

Good morning, my name is Gideon Garcia and I am the Chief Operating Officer of CIRI Alaska Tourism Corporation. I am here today to speak about the proposed budget reductions in the tourism marketing budget and ask that \$3 million be restored to this budget. We operate the Alaska Heritage Tours, a tour packaging sales company, Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge, Seward Windsong Lodge, Kenai Fjords Tours, a whale watching boat company, and the exclusive Kenai Fjords Wilderness Lodge located on Fox Island. At our peak, we have nearly 500 employees of which more than 50 are full time, year round staff.

Our company markets aggressively, enticing and welcoming guests to experience Alaska with our products and our people. We work closely with other visitor industry partners, like the Alaska Railroad, building tour packages that combine our products and theirs to give guests more options to visit Alaska. While the visitor industry has seen growth since the recession, we are still in a very competitive marketplace. Many worldwide destinations have aspects of what Alaska offers, but by no means are they true replacements. However, well-funded marketing campaigns from those destinations provide a threat by substitution, to Alaska. Many of these places may take less time to get to than Alaska and may be less expensive. Consumers have many choices and we need to ensure that Alaska is a viable and welcoming destination.

Since our company's start in 1997, it has grown into one of the largest Alaskan based and Native owned tour companies. We have provide a consistent return on investment to our 8,500 CIRI shareholders, helping to contribute to their annual dividends. Our companies contribute to their respective communities through sales, property, and bed taxes as well as Seward port fees.

I humbly encourage you to take into consideration the power of funding Alaska's marketing efforts. We have taken advantage of numerous programs offered through past state tourism marketing budgets. From the visitor planner guidebook and travel planning website, to overseas sales trips, these marketing efforts have helped our company reach a broader, global market. The data collected by the Alaska Visitor Statistics Program have helped us make successful marketing decisions.

I realize the tough choices you face with next year's budget. Tourism marketing does provide a positive return on investment for our company, our employees, our shareholders and our state.

Thank you for your service and this time today to speak with you.