

From: [Pam Van Hoozer](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Date: Saturday, April 25, 2015 6:57:59 AM

I would like to say "thank you" as I have now lost my job due to your decision for budget cuts in the public education. Sure I only worked 3.5 hours per day as a special education para professional. Yes, I worked with 6 students in grades K-3, 3 students in 4-6, and 3 students in grade 10-12. I feel you are making a big mistake here in Alaska. You are forcing those of us who you have so proudly cut to seek employment in the lower 48 states. How can I afford to remain in Alaska when the job I truly love & enjoy has now been eliminated? Besides these special education students are the ones who you are forcing to suffer in their education. While you continue to not care about education.

Do you have any idea as to the things we do for our students? I would like to invite you to visit me in person to watch what I do in just those 3.5 hours per day with students at Nikolaevsk. Yes, I too volunteer many hours so I can be prepared by going into work after hours and on weekends so I can make the copies, get my lessons ready that I need to do for these students. Why do we as educators go above and beyond what I required in our positions? The answer is that we truly love and enjoy what we do besides wanting the best for our students given the fact that many things we purchase from our own funds as we don't have financial help from the school.

I'm thinking as to why you would cut a part time school position that doesn't cost as much as a full time school position. Part time school staff aren't able to have health benefits whereas full time employees do have health benefits. But yet I still have almost \$400.00 per month withdrawn from my once a month pay check. This is for union dues that is required here in Alaska, along with the other that is required by the state/government.

How many on this current board have children in the school system? If you don't have children then I hope that you aren't on this committee. Until you have school age children of your own or a special education child you will never know what we as special education para professionals do.

Even though I don't receive a paycheck for the 2 full weeks that I have to take off during Christmas, the one week for spring break and the 3 months during the summer and not able to have supplemental income like the construction workers or anyone who become laid off. School para professionals don't receive these benefits or are allowed to file for this assistance when we aren't working due to the work schedule. Could you afford this if you were employed as a school employee?

Please think about the students and not the money. Sure money is involved if you want to be in compliance with the special education status. Due to the cuts in special education you are forcing students in their home school to go somewhere else. As these children aren't able to attend due to the budget cuts being made to public education.

Cut the pay of the superintendents, principals, human resource departments, pay teachers at a lower rate bringing all within a certain area of payscale. We as para professionals also have classes to continue so we can do our job just like all the other school employees. If you made all school employees half time, no increase in pay after reaching let's say \$25,000.00 which is more than most para professionals will ever receive. But yet we as paras are able to meet ends

on this pay.

STOP hurting public education with employee cuts please. START cutting employee pay raises or to even cut their present wage so we can continue servicing our students better. It's not you that is being denied, harmed, and told you can't have the same as others in special education or as a student. Since you make big bucks and can purchase what you want, attend college courses as you wish, or to live in your home and to drive those vehicles of your choice. I don't have those things and the reason is that I'm not paid like you as I need to budget so I can have the funds when I'm not being paid for almost 4 months. Or I take funds out of what I could have purchased something that I have wanted but instead I purchase things that the students I work with could learn better with. I have my future in plain sight as I only want what is best for any child. Yes, this is PUBLIC EDUCATION!

Please rethink your decision about the funds in public education and cutting staff. Unless you don't care about our children who are indeed our future.

Thank you and have a nice day.

Sincerely,
Pam Van Hoozer