

HB 57
OPPERATING BUDGET
SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTS
March 3, 2017

#23

Richard H. Bishop

Fairbanks, AK

Issue: Use PFD and Budget Cuts

To: House Finance Committee

From Richard H. Bishop, 1555 Gus's Grind, Fairbanks, AK 99709

I prefer the percent of market value approach to tap the Permanent Fund for additional state revenue.

I think the amount of the PFD should be a function of the financial performance of the Permanent Fund, which I well remember was established as a "rainy day fund" to support state government when oil revenues fell or disappeared, not to provide a guaranteed entitlement for all Alaskans forever.

Early supporters of the PFD underestimated the careless growth of state government when revenues were available. They also underestimated people's greed regarding the "free" PFD which many now claim is an iron-clad lifetime right. They over-estimated the public in Permanent Fund performance. Most of the public could care less how the Permanent Fund is doing as long as they get the most free money they can.

If a broad tax is needed I think an income tax is more fair and simpler than a sales tax.

I support further state operational budget cuts. Look hard at other "freebies"; and entitlements, make-work programs, welfare, food stamps, special interest grants favoring some Alaskans over others, etc.. Most are probably paying many people who don't qualify and/or have figured out how to exploit "the system".

Last, how can resource development/extraction companies firmly plan future investments and work in Alaska if the state keeps changing the rules?

Good luck.

#24

Emily Vockeroth

Fairbanks, AK

Issue: Education

House Finance Committee Public Testimony

March 2, 2017

Thank you for prioritizing early learners and supporting programs like Best Beginnings in your proposed budget. I am in support of a state that invests in preventative programs that will strengthen communities and reduce costs down the road. I recognize that in order to do so, Alaskans must invest personally and I would like to see the Permanent Fund restructured to meet these priorities.

I am a stay at home mom of two young girls and a volunteer for Fairbanks Families: Best Beginnings Partnership and the North Star Imagination Library. I understand how important it is to support families during the early years. Parenting is hard work and many families are without a strong social network to support their efforts. While the Alaska Constitution does not explicitly require it, investing in the critical years of brain development before children arrive at school has the potential to reduce costs in the K-12 system by catching delays and intervening right away and establishing strong connections between parents and educators that will carry through the years.

People that say early education begins at home and is the responsibility of parents are right on. However, I believe that those parents need support and education. Programs such as Parents As Teachers and Imagination Library take place in the home and offer parents the opportunity to learn and grow with their child. Even as an early childhood professional, I benefited greatly from my participation in Parents As Teachers. Having a child does not make you an expert and parents with Ph.Ds do not necessarily know much about child development!

Investing in early childhood is a smart choice. Study after study has shown the returns, \$4-9 for every dollar invested, according to research by James Heckman. The State of Alaska is at a turning point. While we face this crisis, we have the opportunity to prioritize and refocus. Let's keep our investments where they matter: early childhood and education.

Thank you for your time and dedication to the state of Alaska.

Emily Vockeroth

735 Moosewood Circle

Fairbanks 99712

#25

Patricia Stark

Fairbanks, AK

Issue: Early Learning

House Finance Committee Public Testimony

March 2, 2017

Thank you for prioritizing early learners and supporting programs like Best Beginnings in your proposed budget. I am in support of a state that invests in preventative programs that will strengthen communities and reduce costs down the road. I recognize that in order to do so, Alaskans must invest personally and I would like to see the Permanent Fund restructured to meet these priorities.

I am a retired elementary school teacher and a volunteer for the North Star Imagination Library. I understand how important it is to support families during the early years. Parenting is hard work and many families are without a strong social network to support their efforts. While the Alaska Constitution does not explicitly require it, investing in the critical years of brain development before children arrive at school has the potential to reduce costs in the K-12 system by catching delays and intervening right away and establishing strong connections between parents and educators that will carry through the years.

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Investing in early childhood is a smart choice. Study after study has shown the returns, \$4-9 for every dollar invested, according to research by James Heckman. The State of Alaska is at a turning point. While we face this crisis, we have the opportunity to prioritize and refocus. Let's keep our investments where they matter: early childhood and education.

Thank you for your time and dedication to the state of Alaska.

Sincerely,



Patricia Stark

#26

Jeff Benowitz

Issue: Support UA & Board of Regents lacks a faculty member

Dear legislatures,

First off I'd like to commend Rep. Tammie Wilson for standing up for students and point out that the public support for athletics is not matched in donated dollars and that the University of Alaska student's pay the price in increased college loan debt.

I am here today to not testify about the University State appropriation. I as a ~25 year member of the University of Alaska community I appreciate the support the University of Alaska receives from the State of Alaska which demonstrates, as our State constitution does, a commitment to the U of A mission of education, research and outreach.

I am going to testify about a vexing problem am sure you yourself have faced. The State provides the Board of Regents a single number and the Board directs how it is spent. The board of regents by statute consists of representatives from UA administration, government appointees of private citizens, and a student. A stake-holder group not represented. Are the faculty of the University of Alaska. This is surprising considering the wealth of institutional knowledge and expertise this community represents. Faculty are the main bridge between students and administration, they not only cost 20% of the University budget, but also bring in 40% of the University budget through teaching classes and external funding. Arguably faculty are best suited to help direct where the state appropriation needs to be invested to increase revenue and great a sustainable fiscal plan for the University.

I ask you all or one to sponsor a bill to add a faculty member to the board of regents as a voting member. 2 year position, rotate between UAS, UAF, UAA and Rural campuses system. Selected by faculty governance at each system.

Thank you,

Jeff Benowitz

#27

Erica Marley

Kenai, AK

Issue: Fully Fund BSA

Dear Mr. Seaton,

I am a parent of students enrolled in public schools on the Kenai Peninsula. I am writing to ask you to support funding the Base Student Allocation (BSA) at the same amount as last year. Even with status quo funding, schools will have to make cuts. The state legislature is currently considering reducing the BSA between 1% and 5% for the 2017-2018 school year. In the last three years the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District has made budget cuts totaling \$6,065,829.00. And for the 2017-2018 school year another \$2,484,701.00 is proposed being cut. These cuts are necessary even if the BSA is not reduced. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) fund balance has been tapped every year for the last four years and is now nearly gone. Even a 1% cut would require KPBSD to make drastic staffing cuts that would directly impact students learning by significantly raising the pupil to teacher ratio and reducing the staff of much needed intervention programs or eliminating these programs altogether. I implore you to carefully consider any reductions to the BSA and to do your best not to make them. Thank you for your time.

Erica Marley

#28

Heather Koponen

Fairbanks, AK

Issue: Funding choices

Thanks you Representatives for your service to Alaska, present and future:

PLEASE PROTECT FUNDING FOR:

- Health and Medical, including Behavioral/Mental Health, Social Workers, State Medical examiner's office, Medicaid:

Maintaining and restoring health means entry and returns into healthy roles in society rather than increasing the

needs placed on policing, courts, prisons. The lives affected include families and friends and co-workers,

not just the direct recipients of services; many are crippled in their contributions to society by the disabilities of

those near them. And to have a medical examiners' office or laboratory backlogged and delaying processing

and resolution of cases is worse than outrageous.

- Education including UAF and medical - So we can fill needs for workers of all sorts within the state. Also critically needed

are accessible and affordable re-training programs for folks whose jobs change, to allow folks to adapt and return

to productivity and self-esteem rather than becoming "a burden"

- Elections - Apparently needs increased training, thus more funding!

- Courts, especially therapeutic courts, public defenders, Corrections, including Rehabilitation. Give life skills training

and mental health services to decrease recidivism. Prisons create recidivism. NO PRIVATE PRISONS!

- Highway and airport maintenance - but please cut some planning and construction. DOT and other departments

do not need to be jobs programs - If not so many construction jobs are not needed, retrain folks for jobs for

which there is need. We should not be building roads we cannot maintain, and private "resource" developers

should not be using public moneys to build the infrastructure for their profits. Please increase gasoline and

related taxes to cover the costs of DOT! If we don't pay now for what we are getting, future generations will!

- Public Broadcasting, especially radio. An informed population is essential to a republic/democracy. When inadequately

funded and forced to rely on corporate fundraising, public broad-casting becomes subject to the same biased

and incomplete reporting as private broadcasting - those with the money dictate coverage, thus circumventing

the first (and in my eyes most important) amendment of the U.S. Constitution: freedom of press and speech

of real bones & blood people (Not corporations!).

- Revenue Sharing. Communities of all sizes perform essential services with these funds: landfills, outhouses for travelers,

community facilities to maintain healthy communities.

- Pioneer Homes. They need to be expanded! Alaska's elders and all of us into the future have earned these.

They are well run and their outcomes are better than similar private facilities. Helping elders helps working-age

family members continue in the workforce and as active volunteers and contributors to society.

- APOC. Don't forget the self-asserted "Corrupt Bastards Club"! Where there is power, there is the will to buy it!

- Environmental Protections and response. "We did not inherit this Earth; we are borrowing it from our children."

Money won't bring back what our current generations are greedily despoiling.

CONSIDER CUTTING FUNDING TO:

- Alaska Aerospace Corporation - cut entirely

- Anchorage Legislative Office;- what an example of Unethical self-service!

- AIDEA - Is this group truly looking to diversify our economy away from petroleum and military?

- "Performance Bonuses" to the tune of \$6 million; There should be a [low] limit on the amount of any bonus, and it should not be based on a % of salary: Why should an exemplary physical laborer be awarded less than an exemplary paper-pusher?

Thank you again.

Heather Koponen
Fairbanks, AK 99709

#29

Jerome Baxter

Fairbanks, AK

Issue: Fully fund education

Dear House Finance Committee,

I am a first grade teacher at Pearl Creek Elementary in Fairbanks. I have been teaching students in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District for seven years. I have not always been a teacher, and I have seen what it means to operate an organization with limited funding (e.g., layoffs, increase duties for already heavily weighted employees and low moral).

I urge you to consider funneling funding to area of public education. As a first grade teacher, I have observed losses in funding for the reading support staff. It has become increasingly difficult (in an already difficult area of education) for me to get my students to the cutting edge of their reading potential. As a professional in the area of reading, I know what I need (just as a mechanic knows what is required to successfully repair, maintain and operate an engine) in my area of expertise.

We (as reading teachers) need reading tutors for our young readers. If anything at all, I would ask in as firm a tone as possible, in the most serious manner possible and the most respectful, yet peaceful fashion that we need you to help us keep our reading tutors.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Jerome Baxter
Pearl Creek Elementary

#30

Carl S. Benson

Fairbanks, AK

Issue: Savings last, Income tax and oil taxes

Dear Committee Members,

First, any spending from savings accounts is far worse than the face value because the interest earning value of the account is destroyed forever.

Here are my thoughts in answer to the request for comments.

Let's follow the governor's plan of (1) adjusting tax breaks and credits to the oil industry, (2) broad-based taxes, and (3) use some earnings from the Permanent Fund's Earning Reserve Account for their original purpose.

Clearly, continuing to cut the state government cannot solve our budget problem. Adjusting oil industry tax breaks must be first because people don't want to pay an income tax that goes to Exxon.

And paying 85% of the oil industry's exploration costs is embarrassingly stupid! Think of it. For every dollar of exploration costs, the industry only kicks in 15cents.

We have some "low hanging fruit" that makes it easier for Alaska to deal with a budget gap than it would be for any other state. Our motor vehicle fuel tax has not been adjusted in more than half a century in spite of inflation. At 8 cents per gallon it is the lowest in the nation. If it were doubled it would still be a dime below the national average; tripling it would bring it into line with the other states.

I agree fully with the State re-installing its income tax at 15% of Federal income tax, as it was. I am totally opposed to a statewide sales tax.

A statewide sales tax would be costly and difficult to manage with a few cities and many widely scattered, small villages. Administering it would require a whole new agency. It is regressive; the poorest people pay the same tax on a pair of socks, as do the wealthiest. Some communities already have a sales tax and adding the statewide tax would complicate their lives. We could still have problems with merchants collecting the sales tax and pocketing it for their own use.

We never had a statewide sales tax, but we DID have a Territorial and a State income tax and it served us well. In addition to giving the Territory the means to deal with domineering fishing and mining interests, it paid for the Constitutional Convention of 1955, laying the foundation for Alaska Statehood. I have been told this by two members of that Convention, namely the late Judge Thomas B. Stewart and Dr. Victor Fischer. It is also well recorded in the marvelous book *College Hill Chronicles* by T. Neil Davis.

In contrast to a statewide sales tax, the income tax is easy to administer. Federal tax records are available, so the state needs only to apply a percentage of the amount paid to IRS. This is the simplest

state income tax calculation in all the 50 states. All the individual does is send a copy of the IRS Form 1040 and mail 15% of the bottom line amount to the State of Alaska. Money paid as state income tax is deductible from the federal IRS tax, keeping more Alaskan money in Alaska.

With the income tax, those for whom the dividend means the most would pay the least, and those for whom the dividend means the least would pay the most.

People in Alaska could again proudly say "I am a tax payer" and "I am a citizen of Alaska," not just a resident. The pride in this would offset any cost.

Sincerely,

Carl

Carl S. Benson
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

#31

Amanda Adams

Seward

Issue: Education

SEWARD LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Seward.lio@akleg.gov
907-224-5066/ phone, 907-224-5067/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME:

Amanda Adams

REPRESENTING:

- self citizen - parent

BILL# / SUBJECT:

education funding

PO Box 1633
Seward, AK

COMMITTEE &

HEARING DATE:

3/21/17

amsuad@yahoo.com

Please consider funding education in Alaska at the maximum amount possible! Students (children) do not have a voice in these debates, so it is vital that we understand their needs and rights to have quality, comprehensive ~~edu~~ ^{education} education. This requires funding to meet their needs. In tough economic times, children suffer the most as the stresses of society (their parents, communities, and government) trickle down to them in direct ways. For example, cutting funding for education. For example, having enough to eat. They spend so much of their time in school it is vital that we have the resources there to meet them where they are and prepare them to take on the challenges that will be handed down to them by us. They must be supported not cast aside. Cutting the children out of the equation will never serve us - society & the State of Alaska. Instead, let us prepare them & support them in their education!!

#32

Tonja Moser

Juneau, AK

Issue: Education funding

Hello

I am writing to strongly urge you to INCREASE funding for education, not decrease it. What else could possibly be more important than funding our future, our students, and the next generation?

Alaska's students' needs are not being met in the following ways, all because of a lack of funding:

Class size--as an English teacher, I have 142 students. I believe that teaching them to analyze and write articulate responses and meaningful arguments is a key to raising an informed and involved population, yet how can I do that with 10 minutes of prep time per class and 142 students? Similarly, can you imagine how hard it is for my elementary and middle school colleagues to prepare their students for the rigors of high school and postsecondary education when their class sizes are too big and the needs of their students are larger than the resources they have to help them.

Technology--we are desperately behind teaching students how to use technology. Most students have little to no access to even the most basic word processing applications, not to mention computers that can program, keep up with the latest applications and tools, and allow students to utilize valuable information that is available online.

Elective classes--These are the first classes to go when you don't fund education yet, how are our students supposed to learn valuable skills that help them plan their future, find their passion, and be contributing citizens of the world without them?

Hiring quality teachers--we are not able to attract experienced, dedicated teachers due to a dismal retirement plan that sets us up to hire and train new teachers and watch them leave the state and take that valuable training and education to a state that has a realistic retirement plan and better pay.

Professional development--a key to keeping education meaningful and to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the students is to continue to encourage teachers to grow as a professional and stay on the cutting edge of new technology and new methods of teaching, yet our professional development is almost nothing without the finances to sustain it.

Each of the above key components of a strong educational model are missing or severely lacking in Alaska because our legislature is looking out for someone other than the children of the future. Shame on us.

Please consider these basic requirements for a strong educational program and work to increase, not decrease, funding for education.

Sincerely,

Tonja Moser

#33

Ghert Abbott

Ketchikan, AK

Issue: No Cuts, income tax

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Ketchikan_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

50 Front St., Suite 203
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901Phone: (907) 225-9675
Fax: (907) 225-8546**WRITTEN TESTIMONY**NAME: Ghart AbbottREPRESENTING: SelfBILL# or SUBJECT: HB57COMMITTEE AND
HEARING DATE: ~~March~~ March 2, 2017

It is clear that the current fiscal crisis stems in large part from an overreliance on oil revenue, which fluctuates constantly according to the gyrations of world markets and the decisions of self-interested multinationals. Cutting services to the bone will not solve this problem.

Stabilizing the states finances therefore requires a broader and less ~~volatile~~ volatile system of taxation than we have now. Two such systems have been proposed, a state sales tax and a state income tax, of these two, I believe that a state income tax is by far the more moral choice.

A sales tax is regressive, it falls heaviest on the poor, on students, on ordinary working people, and small business owners, taking a greater proportion of their income than it does from wealthy people and large corporations. A state sales tax will thus increase social inequality and economic concentration, ~~decreasing~~ decreasing opportunities for Alaskans to better their lives.

In contrast, an income tax, particularly a progressive income tax, will tax people according to

their circumstances. Those most heavily affected
will be those who can most afford to pay.

I therefore urge the House to stick to
its guns in the coming negotiations and
refuse approval of any plan that does not
include an income tax.

Thank you.

Page 2
Gert Abbott

#34

Ketchikan Indian Community

Issue: Tribal Health Clinic

Talking point

Ketchikan Legislative Information Office Meeting

3/2/2017

HB58

1. Access to local non-IHS providers will impact continuity of care.
 - a. Patients' health will decline at an accelerated rate due to limited funding to local providers and healthcare facilities.
2. Affordable Care Act allows Ketchikan Indian Community to collaborate with local providers to reduce Contract Health Services spending. (The CHS program by national standard is severely underfunded by up to 60% depending on membership)
3. Local provider will limit services they offer, consequently impacting the local economy. (Jobs, ETC.)

Ketchikan Indian Community, Ketchikan Tribal Health Clinic

2960 Tongass

Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

#35

Jocelyn Riske

Kenai, AK

Issue: Supports UA funding

KENAI LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Kenai_LIO@akleg.gov

Phone: 907-283-2030 / Fax: 907-283-3075

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME:

Jocelyn Biske

REPRESENTING:

KPC

BILL # or SUBJECT:

College Allotment HB 57

COMMITTEE: HFIN

KPC student union rep

DATE: 3/2/17

Hello, I am currently a student at KPC, and strongly suggest the budget cuts not be made. I am 19 years old and am pursuing a degree in nursing. KPC means so much to me. Firstly, I am able to live close to family, work, and the place I call home while getting an amazing education ~~for~~ that is affordable to me. The staff at KPC are extremely dedicated in helping each student. Because of KPC, I have been able to find my places.

#36

Kateland Farrell, KPC

Kenai, AK

Issue: UA Funding

KENAI LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Kenai_LIO@akleg.gov

Phone: 907-283-2030 / Fax: 907-283-3075

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME:

Kateland Farrell

REPRESENTING:

KPC

BILL # or SUBJECT:

HB 57

COMMITTEE:

HFIN

DATE: 3-2-2017

UA budget cannot go below \$ 325 million.
345 million is what we really need
But we can make do with 325.
309 would be completely debilitating. For ALL
campuses, except small satellite campuses

#37

Lynn Hohl

Seward, AK

Issue: Education Funding, don't fund shift to municipalities

SEWARD LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Seward.lio@akleg.gov
907-224-5066/ phone, 907-224-5067/fax

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME: Lynn Hohl
REPRESENTING: Eastern Kenai Peninsula Borough on the KPBSD Board of Education & myself
BILL#/ SUBJECT: HB 57
COMMITTEE &
HEARING DATE: House Finance 3/2/17

I have lived in Alaska since 1971, almost 27 of those years in Seward. My husband & I raised our four children in Seward. They are products of Seward public schools with college degrees & rewarding careers contributing to their communities. I began advocating for education funding when our eldest entered kindergarten in 1986 and truly appreciated the three-year funding plan schools operated within a number of years ago.

Thank you for maintaining public school education funding in HB 57 and providing this opportunity to again voice my support for investing in the education of Alaska public school students and their impact on the economic future of Alaska.

Additionally I want to express support for a comprehensive fiscal plan without shifting costs to local municipalities while maintaining important governmental services, like education, as we cannot cut our way out of this situation.

#38

Barbara Brown

Kodiak, AK

Issue: Education Funding

Greetings to the members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Barbara Brown and I am 14 year resident of Kodiak Alaska. I am advocating for education funding as I am the mother of young children and employed as an Associate Professor of Counseling at Kodiak College.

As you consider the budget, please concede that we need a way moving forward to fund the services that will be increasingly the responsibility of our state to provide. Education is the most critical of these. Local school districts have already had to reduce teachers and staff and programs due to flat funding over the last five years. We need to commit to providing a robust education for all Alaskans in a climate where national legislation that threatens to take away funding for even the healthy food that growing brains need to learn. It is clear that Alaska is going to need to increase our allocation for education at the K-12 level if we expect to provide an environment that allows our most precious resource, our children, to flourish. If you have spent some time in our local schools, you know that the most of the students eating our delicious, locally sourced, and whole food school breakfast and lunches are likely to be eating their only nutritious meals of the day.

Furthermore, our university system cannot withstand further budget cuts without seeing significant impacts in enrollment and completion. We need investment in local campuses that provide the technology and internet access that our students need to successfully complete their courses and programs. We need staff and faculty who are skilled at assisting and teaching first-generation and underprepared students.

How will we pay for education? I believe Alaska should institute the state income tax structure being proposed by Governor Walker which will provide revenue by charging Alaskans 15% of their federal tax rate. This tax structure will allow those of us who can afford to pay federal taxes to pay for essential services, like education. Please realize that 1/3 Alaskan residents live outside our state and do not contribute to our communities through local sales tax. Those people who make a living off of our natural resources must start contributing to the needs of the state. If you do not adopt this tax policy, you are allowing our revenue to be exported at a rate that is unacceptable and at a cost that is too dear.

Thank you for your consideration and service.

#39

Kim Leslie, KPBSD

Kenai, AK

Issue: Education Funding

My name is Kim Leslie and I live and work in Seward as a high school science teacher for the entire KPBSD district via our distance programming. I have been a teacher for close to 20 years. Thank you for listening to my voice on the topic of the budget and education funding. And I'm sure you appreciate that the tiny voices of all the children are likely not much of a part of this grown up world of decision making – but I hear them every day:

What I am noticing as times get tighter in Alaska is that the home life of my students is suffering. The stress of adult life is trickling down into their child lives and it manifests in ugly ways. The reality is that school is so much more than just a place of learning subjects like math and language arts. It is a safe place where children spend 40 hours of their lives each week, learning how to be good people, good citizens with teachers who care so much and take every effort to model that citizenship. In the end, I deeply believe that the time a child spends in school and the quality of that time will dictate an enormous part of their character. It provides them the time to practice how to be and how to contribute later in life. If we put our efforts into prioritizing schools, we are investing in the future adult citizens of Alaska. What could be more worthy?

To keep schools such a positive forum for our children requires money... money for as many adults modeling kindness and cooperation and collaboration as possible... money for quality supplies for students to explore and understand and be successful... money for healthy food and safe clean structures... Again, each child is spending at least 40 hours of their week here. It's more time than they likely spend during waking hours with most members of their families. School often feels like their family.

What could be more worthy?

Kim Leslie

Science Teacher

Distance Learning Program

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

#40

Pat Gibbs

Kodiak, AK

Issue: Education Funding

Public Testimony on HB57:

I have lived on Kodiak Island for over 35 years. Our two children were attended Kodiak's public school throughout their K-12 years. I am now raising two grandchildren and they currently attend one of our local elementary schools here in Kodiak. Funding education is critical to the short and long term future of the state.

I recognize and appreciate that our state operating budget is in need of revision, yet I firmly believe that we need to invest in our future by not cutting more from the funding of K-12 public education. I volunteer in our schools every week and see how various programs that have been dramatically reduced or eliminated all together have hurt student learning and outcomes.

Please, as members of the House finance committee, support full funding of the BSA (Base Student Allocation) at \$5930 provided by this bill. In addition, I respectfully request you support the \$6 million in school funding that this bill has added back to reverse a Governor veto of school busing funds.

I also hope that you will oppose the amendment that reverses state reimbursement for bond debt already issued. Passage of this amendment would place a huge financial burden on school districts and could result in many additional cuts, including, but not limited to staff reductions.

Your task as members of the House Finance Committee is incredibly complex. Your time, energy and desire to create a sustainable budget are most appreciated. Just remember our children are our future. Please give them the resources they need to succeed.

Thank you,

Patricia B. Gibbs

Kodiak, Alaska 99615

#41

Gina Johnson

Kodiak, AK

Issue: Alaska Marine Highway

March 2, 2017

Thursday

To Whom It May Concern:

I hope when you start looking at what to cut for the state budget, that you leave the Alaska Marine Highway System alone!

For those of you that don't understand how important it is to us in remote areas for ferry service, consider this: if the Sterling Hwy., Seward Hwy., Parks Hwy., Richardson Hwy., Alaska Hwy., etc., was closed down for days on end, how would you function? survive?

Our "highway" does get "closed" when the seas get too big, and/or when there is heavy freezing spray. So, due to those circumstances, some of the scheduled runs are cancelled. The ferry resumes service when it is safe to get back on the "highway".

There are times commercial air service can't get in or out of our remote communities, so with regular ferry service, it is still doable to travel. Which is a much more economical way for students to travel for school activities.

If a person is moving from Kodiak to mainland Alaska, freight that can't be put on the ferry, has to be transported to WA state. From there it is rerouted back to Alaska. Not only time consuming, but much more expensive.

The "Tustemena" is going to dry dock for annual maintenance, leaving Kodiak March 8, 2017 @ 9:45 p.m. It's not scheduled to return to service until May 14, arriving the city of Kodiak on May 15 @ 9:15 a.m. The "Kennicott" will service us during this time frame. It has had a delay in coming back into service, it is now scheduled to show up in Kodiak on April 7.

This is over 4 weeks without ferry service. How would you like it if you did not have access to your highway for this length of time? All remote areas travel plans are subject to change without further notice due to weather. We get that, but to take away or lessen the ferry service is not acceptable.

S/Gina Johnson

Kodiak, AK 99615

#42

Tony Wilson

Issue: Education

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a public educator within Alaska, and I feel that public education is necessary because, it allows people of all demographics to receive an education. It is important for the future of Alaska and Alaskans to have access to free public education. I have worked as a teacher, facilitator, outdoor leadership instructor, and coach since 2005. I have had the opportunity to affect the lives of many Alaskans in pursuit of their dreams. Without public education, none of that would have been possible.

As of right now I work for EXCEL Alaska. We are a 501c3 non-profit organization that works with 7-12th grade students. We primarily work with Western Alaska students but have worked all around the state. We provide students with the necessary transitional skills and career exploration opportunities to be successful in this ever-changing world. This is accomplished by increasing students knowledge in a wide variety of areas, including; personal, social and career development, service training, urban familiarization, leadership, character and life skills development.

This would not be possible without public education. All the districts we partner with, and all of the students come from public education entities.

I fully support public education in Alaska, and Alaskan's need it to build their future.

Kind regards,

Tony Wilson

EXCEL Alaska Lead Teacher

#43

Denise Caposey
Skagway, AK
Issue: Education

To all that have concern for the future of our Alaskan children:

Please consider how interconnected education and health are. I have been an educator for the past thirty years here in Skagway Alaska. My first ten years were in a child care facility that was begun, and still is, a small non-profit corporation that assists young families with their child care needs during "season."

We are all familiar with seasonal work. Its part of being an Alaskan. Or a politician. You are both. So I imagine you understand how difficult it is to sustain momentum with programs and our attain our goals for those programs in a seasonal economy. One program that CANNOT be underfunded is Education. And Special Education Services in particular. We desperately need more services in our bush communities. I have been a public school teacher for 20 years here in Skagway and can speak directly to these services in my years of working in the field.

Early Childhood Delays are common in Alaska's youngest youth. These delays can be addressed once they are identified. I am an early childhood educator, but not an expert in diagnosing abnormalities in children. I refer children that I sense may need further diagnostics to the professionals in the fields of Vision, Hearing, Speech and Language, sensory disorders, physical, and cognitive delays. We rely on professionals in theses fields to inform us so that we may better serve that child's needs. The sooner these delays are identified, the better chance of correcting them.

We rely on REGULAR visits from people in these professions to come to our communities. There is a shortage fo these visits. Sending one or two people out two to four times a year to service an entire community of school children is not adequate. We need more funding sources to provide the necessary tools and training that these services provide for the staff that work with these children.

I have always prided myself on being an Alaskan. It is because, in my experience, I have always felt supported by this great state. Our educational system and investment in children is a high priority to Alaskans, as it should be. It is a very different place than the rest of the USA. Things are expensive here. Transportation costs are ridiculous. But, we are unique. We are Alaskans, and we take care of our own.

The House Finance Committee has a big job to do. Let us do OUR job by supporting those people in the field, doing the real work of making this a great state. Support the teachers, the schools, the health care professionals, the coaches, mentors, and leaders of our communities who strive to improve our quality of life. Continue to invest in our future.

Put money into educational services and youth programs. Its money well spent.

Sincerely,

Denise Caposey
First Grade Teacher
Skagway Alaska

#44

Curtis Watkins
Fairbanks, AK
Issue: Education

Good afternoon

We have to continue to support public education. This investment will insure that Alaska's future will be secure. Let's think about the big picture.

Curtis Watkins
Fairbanks, Ak 99712

#45

Ilona Leider

Anchorage, AK

Issue: Education

You've cut cut cut good education to the bones.

I know the neglect of families - I'm their child's ASD teacher. The only way I can save their innocent children is to teach them real skills to get out of their poverty and tragic home life. You reduce funding public education and you fail the innocent kids living in families who don't care, cannot care, abuse, or just work all day and night to survive.

I also know because I'm a former curriculum music coordinator for ASD. That position was eliminated when I left for maternity leave. The new art/music position works 60+ hours/wk showing parents what their children can achieve when given a chance to show through music shows, art shows, not to mention curriculum to learn. This is what keeps that tiny % of kids to stay in school when all other classes are Ds & Fs.

My 2 & 4 year-old deserve this opportunity. Academics and extracurricularly. ASD is strong. Children learn, despite their home life.

For a child without any support, for my own children, FUND education. Take my dividend, sales tax me, fine. Please help innocent children born in poverty and neglect ... And the ones who can prosper because they are born to families who care.

Thank you for reading, Ilona Leider 99501

#46

N. Stevenson Jennette III

Issue: Education

We keep getting “Action Alert” emails from our union saying we should contact you about budget cuts to education, and how horrible that would be.

I imagine that every Alaskan, no matter what area of work or special need, could make the same claim:

“Help me! We’re important!”

I personally know that we need to do something about the budget, the Dividend Fund, and all that stuff, I’m just glad I don’t have to make the tough decisions I know your group is making.

Good luck, I trust you to act in the best interests of all Alaskans.

Steve

#47

Rebecca Dunne

Fairbanks, AK

Issue: Support PFD, Oppose School District Bond Reimbursement

Thank you for considering my written testimony in regards to HB 57:

I support limiting the PDF payout and using additional Permanent Fund revenues to fund state services.

I oppose further cuts to the state operating budget. I value state services, and I am willing to pay for them.

I strongly support an income tax, and I would like to see that added as an amendment to the budget.

I strongly oppose Rep. Seaton's amendment to remove state reimbursement for school district bond debt already issued. If the bond debt is shifted to local government, the financial burden on school districts will lead to more teacher cuts and reduced services for students.

Thank you,

Rebecca Dunne

Fairbanks, AK 99709

#48

Lara Applebaum

Issue: Education

To House Finance Committee:

As a parent and as an educator in Alaska for the last decade, I am urging you to support a fiscal plan that will close the state's budget deficit and avoid major budget cuts that will negatively impact our students. Access to quality public education is a fundamental pillar in building a productive future for our youth and society at large. Class size and the amount of time that I and other educators have to work with students 1:1 in the classroom is a major factor in providing quality education.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lara Applebaum