

Doniece Gott

From: Donna Rae Faulkner [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2019 10:11 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Tom Begich; Sen. Chris Birch; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Lora Reinbold; Sen. Mike Shower; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. David Wilson
Cc: Senator@sullivan.senate.gov; senator@murkowski.senate.gov
Subject: Written Testimony for the Budget (SB20) - Petition Supporting the AK Division of Agriculture from Homer
Attachments: HomerSupportForAKDivisionofAg Budget2019.pdf

Dear Honorable Alaska State Senators,

Attached is a letter signed by 26 members of the Homer Garden Club and community, urging full-funding for the Alaska Division of Agriculture. We recognize that Alaska Grown and all the Division of Ag staff who support farmers and agriculture have made a positive difference in the economy, lives and health of our community. Alaska Grown's fantastic awareness, education and marketing campaign has clearly gained recognition and helped Alaskan agriculture make great strides. We see the logo on young and old across the state and wraps on fresh veggies from Alaskan farmers. Restaurants are proud to display the logo and consumers are looking to buy Alaskan grown vegetables. Alaskans across the state are enjoying the growing small agricultural movement! Alaskans are participating in Farmers Markets, Food Hubs, CSA's and on farm events and finding great local produce in their stores! Value added products are coming to market! It is really exciting! Check out some of the data in reports like the January 2018 SPORK report *Southcentral Alaska Agriculture and Food Hub Market Analysis* (created with Division of Ag support.)

The federal grants that are administered by the Division of Ag (including the Specialty Crop Block Grants - SCBGs) have been a big boost in educational opportunities for farmers and studies/equipment to develop profitable varieties and products that support our communities and the state's economy. We have more small market farms, peony farms, and high tunnels on the Kenai Peninsula than ever before! Our little farm, Oceanside Farms, is the recipient of a Specialty Crop Block Grant and we are working to inspire and promote increased knowledge, enthusiasm, and greater use of Alaska grown rhubarb in 2019. The money for our work comes from the Feds, but is administered by the Alaska Division of Ag. If you cut the Division's budget and 21 positions (!?!), it is unclear who will continue to monitor the awarded grants (like ours) and it seems that the state's growers and ag researchers would not even be eligible to apply for SCBGs in the future! That could mean a loss of millions of dollars in Alaska! Some of us farmers don't even realize all the times we've benefited from these grants! Others including the Alaska Division of Ag have been awarded grants that they then pass on as educational and networking opportunities for farmers! That happened to us when we applied for a (partial) scholarship to attend the Great Lakes Expo last year where we learned a great deal and have been inspired to hopefully scale up our vegetable sales on our farm. We just presented a sort of "GLE expo trip report" to the Homer Garden Club, as well as work we are doing to support farmers in Kodiak and our "Rhubarb-palooza" planning for our SCBG that the Homer Garden Club members as well as those attending farmers markets on the Kenai Peninsula will have an opportunity to participate in. We are all connected. The Farm to School (or Farm to Institution) support - including an outstanding newsletter - have helped numerous teachers and cafeteria personnel and others to be aware of a variety of governmental and non-governmental grants, curricula and workshops that they would never have even been aware of. We are growing lots of asparagus and cauliflower, and the Alaskan variety studies and research paid for by SCBGs by others in years past have guided our decisions and set us up for success! Our vegetable growing supports the health and local economy (including the sales taxes we collect.)

Please don't slow or stop the momentum that the Division of Ag has been nurturing so very well!

We ask that the attached letter please be submitted as part of the public record re: SB 20.

We hope that we have submitted this letter/petition to you properly - it is important to us.

Please feel free to call or e-mail us if you have any questions for us or anything that we might help you with in supporting our Alaska Division of Ag.

Respectfully counting on you,

Donna Rae and Don

Donna Rae Faulkner and Don "Iceman" McNamara
Oceanside Farms

[REDACTED]

Homer, AK 99603

[REDACTED]

<https://oceansidefarms.weebly.com/>

March 17, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing this letter in response to the proposed cuts to the Division of Agriculture budget as outlined in the Governor's budget, released 2/13/19.

Agriculture is one of the only renewable resources in the State and our industry is growing! We are one of the only States' in the Nation whose number of farmers is growing! The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agriculture Census data in 2012 showed the largest percentage of growth in direct to consumer (farmers market!) sales per capita in the Nation was right here in Alaska! USDA Ag Census data for 2017 will be released in the next month and we anticipate more positive growth.

Programs slated for reduction or elimination from the State Division of Agriculture include: the Alaska Grown program, the Agriculture Revolving Loan Fund, the Farm to Institution program (including the Farm to School program), and nearly all of the services of the Plant Materials Center. In addition to providing marketing and promotion, access to lending, development of new markets, and research on varieties and diseases, these programs also bring in millions of dollars in Federal funds. **Without the Division team to provide support, these dollars will be turned away and growers will not have access to essential programs.**

In fact, the local speakers at our Homer Garden Club meeting today are valued market farmers in our community and grateful recipients of a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant that is promoted and administered by our Alaska Division of Ag.

Alaska is getting world-wide recognition for its peony production. Alaska's growing peony industry has been supported by at least 8 marketing and research Federal USDA grants and expertise from UAF staff. The Alaska peony industry is still developing and contributing to tourism, jobs and the economy of our great state. We are proud of our local peony growers and the Alaska Beauty Peony Co-op that is made up of at least 10 member farms based in Homer (some as new enterprises on homesteads and some as family farms run as a second career). Without the research, marketing and development funded largely by Federal grants administered by the Division of Ag, it is doubtful that this blooming industry would not have come this far.

Services provided by the Alaska Division of Agriculture should be considered "core" services. Not only are the dedicated staff incredibly knowledgeable about Alaska agriculture issues, they are highly efficient, budget conscious and committed to supporting the industry as a whole. Alaskans' have benefited from a Department or Division of Agriculture since Territorial Days; farmers, ranchers and other industry members are dependent on the knowledge, expertise and unbiased support that Division staff provide.

Alaskans' import 95% of the food they purchase, but have demonstrated their support of Alaska Grown products through their commitment to shopping at Farmers Markets, participating in the \$5 a week Alaska Grown Challenge at retail grocery stores, and encouraging growers of all products to increase production. To cut off the valuable services provided by the Division of Agriculture now, during this time of incredible momentum, would be devastating to our immature but thriving industry.

We encourage you to take the time to read "Southcentral Alaska Agriculture and Food Hub Market Analysis" report that was researched and written by SPORK Consulting. It is available thru the AK DNR website at <http://buyalaskagrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Southcentral-AK-Agriculture-and-Food-Hub-Analysis.pdf>. It provides data and helpful insights into the agricultural movement in our area of the state. Ironically if the Governor's proposed cuts to the Division of Ag are approved, there would be no one to administer the USDA SCBG that provided funds for that kind of informative research and analysis.

As members of the Homer Garden Club and community, we urge you to support full-funding for the Division of Agriculture. Everybody eats and therefore we are all "involved" in Agriculture. Support the industry that can both help strengthen our food security, health, and grow our economy. Thank you for your consideration.



Sincerely,


Printed Name	Signature	Address (Homer, 99603 unless otherwise noted)
Donna Rae Faulkner	Donna Rae Faulkner	Donna Rae Faulkner Donna Rae Faulkner
Janice Peyton	Janice Peyton	Janice Peyton Janice Peyton
Lorraine Haas	Lorraine Haas	Lorraine Haas Lorraine Haas

Gloria Mumm	Gloria Mumm	Box 112, Homer, Alaska Box 112, Homer, Alaska
Robbie Coffey	Robbie Coffey	Box 112, Homer, Alaska Box 112, Homer, Alaska
RENEE PATTON	RENEE PATTON	Box 112, Homer, Alaska Box 112, Homer, Alaska
Francie Roberts	Francie Roberts	Box 112, Homer, Alaska Box 112, Homer, Alaska
Margaret P Craig	Margaret P Craig	Box 112, Homer, Alaska Box 112, Homer, Alaska
Marguerite Pittman	Marguerite Pittman	Box 112, Homer, Alaska Box 112, Homer, Alaska

As members of the Homer Garden Club and community, we urge you to support full-funding for the Division of Agriculture. Everybody eats and therefore we are all "involved" in Agriculture. Support the industry that can both help strengthen our food security, health, and grow our economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Printed Name	Signature	Address (Homer, 99603 unless otherwise noted)
Don McNamee	Don McNamee	████████████████████ HOMER 99603
Dorothy Fry		████████████████████ HOMER, AK 99603
Tim Alzheimer		PO Box 825 Homer, AK 99603

Barbara Kennedy	Barbara Kennedy	████████████████████ Homer
Shirley FORGIER	Shirley Forgiuer	████████████████████ Homer
Jeanne Walker	Jeanne Walker	Homer
Jane Wiebe	Jane Wiebe	████████████████████ Homer, AK 99603
Linda Rowe	Linda Rowe	████████████████████ Homer, AK 99603
Sharon FROESCHLE	Sharon Froeschle	████████████████████ Rel Homer AK 99603
Barbara Haynes	Barbara Haynes	████████████████████ Homer AK 99603
Lori Murray		PO Box 1220 Homer, AK 99603

Kim Penkine	K Pen	Box 1307 Homer
Ruth Ann Christensen	R. Ann Christ	Box 1307 Homer AK
Nora Rjek	Nora Rjek	Box 1307 Homer, AK 99603
Marylou Burton	Nyleen Bur	Box 1307 Homer AK 99603
Christina Castellanos	Castellanos	Box 1307 Homer AK 99603
Martha M. Maltby	M. M. Maltby	Box 1307 Homer AK 99603

Doniece Gott

From: Shareen Crosby
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2019 8:08 AM
To: Doniece Gott
Subject: BASIS FW: Support UA and the Division of Agriculture

Shareen Crosby
Chief of Staff
Office of Senator Natasha von Imhof
shareen.crosby@akleg.gov
Session: 907-465-1881
Interim: 907-269-0250
Mobile/Text: 907-317-8811

From: PS Holloway <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2019 4:17 PM
To: 863surcons@gmail.com
Subject: Support UA and the Division of Agriculture

Dear members of the Alaska State Senate:

Support services for the agricultural industry are composed of a three-legged stool:

1. **The University of Alaska Cooperative Extension Service**(farmer liaison with latest ag research, education, required industry training in safe pesticide application certification, management of pass through federal grants (SARE), industry support through conferences, farm tours, and classes).
2. **The University of Alaska Fairbanks Agricultural Experiment Station**(agricultural research specifically for problem solving and new crop development in Alaska [i.e. Alaska's peony industry would not be in existence if it hadn't been for research at the Fairbanks Experiment Station])
3. **Alaska Division of Agriculture**(certified inspection of peonies, timber, milk and Alaska Grown crops, farmer loans, statewide quality certification and marketing through Alaska grown, school food programs promoting locally grown produce, plant certification through the Plant Materials Center, and more).

Cut off one leg and they all topple. The services provided by these entities cannot be outsourced. In 2001, the University Experiment Station started the research that has resulted in the new Alaska peony industry. Statewide education and troubleshooting in peony production were conducted through Cooperative Extension. In turn, Extension notified Station researchers of production problems that needed to be resolved. This feedback loop was the foundation for 20+ years of research with peonies at the Station. In the meantime, peony growers signed up for farm loans as well as Alaska Grown Certification so they could use this as a stamp of approval, not only for Alaskans but for markets in the lower 48 that market Alaska peonies. Just this past summer, SAMS club in Pittsburgh, PA advertised Alaska grown peonies for sale! Division of Ag certified inspectors also worked with the industry to set up trial markets to Vietnam, Taiwan, Canada,

Europe and even California! One leg cannot work without the other two! They have worked well together for many years.

Perhaps to save a few dollars, the director of the Division of Ag position could be moved to Anchorage to close out the Palmer office. This does not need to be in Palmer, but we do need a director with a staff to manage the marketing, school programs and manage grant funds from the feds.

Agriculture in all its shapes and colors, is a thriving industry in Alaska considering the size of our population and the enormous economic roadblocks from imported products. The peony industry had already made waves in the world cut flower markets, and the potential is there for even more diversified flower exports. Fresh milk. Locally grown produce. Reindeer! Peonies! Hay and straw. Cows and yaks! Small animals from chickens to turkeys. Greenhouse plants. 4-H Turf grasses. Trees and shrubs. FFA, Fireweed honey! Horses. Delta barley flour brownies (have you tried them???)

Be proud of agriculture in Alaska, and please, please—support it!

Sincerely
Pat Holloway
A.F. Farmer LLC
Fairbanks, AK 99708

March 8, 2019

The Honorable Natasha von Imhof

State Capitol Room 516

Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Senator von Imhof,

This letter is to request funding in the FY2020 Budget to implement the Jonesville Public Use Area Management Plan process. Last year the Alaska Legislature passed House Bill 6, creating the Jonesville Public Use Area. This legislation came after much hard work by concerned citizens to address dangerous and unlawful activities that occur in the Jonesville Mining area. These activities impact residents of Sutton and users from throughout southcentral Alaska.

Currently a committee of interested persons has been meeting to gather data concerning the area and are currently creating a draft of the Management Plan. The committee has enjoyed a wide range of interested parties and groups with expertise related to these activities.

But most of all, we need your help! We have been told your Department of Natural Resources will take over the planning process started by our volunteers pending sufficient funding. We are very anxious to start the formal process and are asking you to fund a planner for our project.

Given the length of time that will be necessary for the planning process, your prioritizing of this position will hasten the return of law and order to our community. We urge you to include the funding of approximately \$120,000 in this year's budget.

Help us make the Jonesville area safe for all our residents and recreational visitors. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Jonesville PUA Management Planning Committee

Chair: C. Brian Largent (907) 586-1111, email: [REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Shareen Crosby
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2019 10:20 AM
To: Doniece Gott
Subject: BASIS FW: Division of Agriculture

Shareen Crosby
Chief of Staff
Office of Senator Natasha von Imhof
shareen.crosby@akleg.gov
Session: 907-465-1881
Interim: 907-269-0250
Mobile/Text: 907-317-8811

From: Wayne Floyd [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2019 10:11 AM
Cc: Rep. Geran Tarr <Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov>
Subject: Division of Agriculture

Dear Legislator,

When I was in Juneau, I visited 29 of your colleagues over a four day period, most who were on the Finance and Resources Committees of both the House and the Senate. I very encouraged by the expressed support from everyone I met with. The handout I provided mentioned Alaska has 50% of the peony growers in the world. I was unsure if that fact was true or if it should have said in the U.S. The fact is indeed "*in the world!*" and 5 of the top 25 peony producers in the world are located in Alaska, as well!

An additional fact has come to light since my visit with you. Because of DEC cuts, our two Dairy farms which sell milk in stores, will be forced to close. The reason? They will no longer be able to obtain federally required certification, which is required for them to sell to a wholesaler or retailer. One farm, the Havermeister Farm in the Mat-su, has been in business since the 1930's. Also, any new farms wishing to sell through our local stores will be prevented from starting up. Here is the Havermeister

Dairy's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Havemeister-Dairy-408861925852606/>

Another huge area of concern is the probable discontinuation of Cooperative Extension Service and Agriculture research and instruction at UAF. These service form the other two legs of a three-legged stool supporting Alaska's agriculture industry. Pat Holloway is a colleague of mine, who is directly responsible for the start of the Alaska Peony Industry. Here is a letter she recently sent to the University which explains it well:

Dear President Johnsen:

Support services for the agricultural industry are composed of a three-legged stool:

1. **The University of Alaska Cooperative Extension Service**(farmer liaison with latest ag research, education, required industry training in safe pesticide application certification, management of pass through federal grants (SARE), industry support through conferences, farm tours, and classes).
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research with peonies at the Station. In the meantime, peony growers signed up for Alaska Grown Certification so they could use this as a stamp of approval, not only for Alaskans but for markets in the lower 48 that market Alaska peonies. Just this past summer, SAMS club in Pittsburgh, PA advertised Alaska grown peonies for sale! Division of Ag certified inspectors also worked with the industry to set up trial markets to Vietnam, Taiwan, Canada, Europe and even California! One cannot work without the other two!

Agriculture in all its shapes and colors, is a thriving industry in Alaska considering the size of our population and the enormous economic roadblocks from imported products. The peony industry had already made waves in the world cut flower markets, and the potential is there for even more diversified flower exports.

Fresh milk. Locally grown produce. Reindeer! Peonies! Hay and straw! Cows and yaks! Small animals from chickens to turkeys. Greenhouse plants. Turf grasses. Trees and shrubs. Fireweed honey! Delta barley flour brownies (have you tried them???)

Be proud of agriculture in Alaska, and for heaven's sake—support it especially since it is a major mission of LAND GRANT!

Sincerely,

Pat Holloway

Please continue to push for restoration of the Division of Agriculture, and provide earmarked funding for the University CES and Agriculture Research and instruction. I was told generally earmarking funds is not usually more than a spoken agreement by the University to follow recommended funding. However, I was told there is a way to make it more binding. Again, a sincere thanks for your avid support of Alaska's Agriculture

Warmest regards,
Wayne Floyd,
Diversified farmer
Alaska Peony Grower Assoc. Board Member,
APGA Export Committee Chairman

Wayne and Patti Floyd
Cool Cache Farms, LLC
...A Cut Above

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

www.alaskanpeony.com

Doniece Gott

From: Jim Brogdon <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, March 31, 2019 12:31 PM
To: Finance
Subject: PFD

You need to leave the PFD fund to the people alone. If you can't make the budget by all the taxes and other fees that you are charging the citizens per year, you need to trim the government. You need to run the state like a business. You can't stay in business if the expenses exceed revenue. Start making cuts and leave our PFD alone and give us back the money you already stole from us.

Jim Brogdon
e-mail: jimbrogdon@hotmail.com
CELL PH: [REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Wallin, Michael D CIV USARMY USARAK (US) <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2019 8:43 AM
To: Finance
Subject: I support full pay back of PFD (UNCLASSIFIED)

CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

I support the full payback of the PFD. This money belongs to the people not the government....Period. I also support very common sense spending. We've had to many years of total uncontrolled and unchecked spending by all parties and these days need to end now. I believe if we live within our means we can come out ahead.

Thanks'

Mr. Michael,D,Wallin

CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

Doniece Gott

From: Stephanie Allison <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2019 12:41 PM
To: House Finance; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: The State Budget

Dear Esteemed members of the House and Senate Finance Committees,

As a 40 year resident of the State of Alaska, I feel that it is time for our citizens to begin paying for the state services we receive. That payment can be in the form of dividend earnings used for state services, income taxes or a combination of the two. To expect the state to successfully function at the level of our dwindling revenue is short-sighted and I fear will have unexpected repercussions that cannot be predicted. I expect the legislature to develop a plan which restricts the amount of withdrawal from the permanent fund investments so that the investment earnings continue to grow and are available for future Alaskans, into perpetuity.

I expect my fellow State of Alaska employees to continue to identify and implement cost saving measures. I believe that the cuts to travel are more than reasonable. I would very much like for the concept of costs savings with Shared Services of Alaska (SSoA) to be reviewed, to determine if the concept is actually working. From my point-of-view in the Department of Education and Early Development, it is difficult to see any increase in efficiency that has led to a cost savings.

Thank you for your time, and your service to the Citizens of Alaska.

Stephanie L. Allison, CPA
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: ROBERT AND CYNTHIA <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, March 23, 2019 2:16 PM
To: Finance
Subject: In Support of Gov. Dunleavy's Budget

I live in Ketchikan and work for the State of Alaska. Although I belong to the ASEA GGU Union, I do not share their advertised sentiments regarding the State Budget. I am in full support of Gov. Dunleavy's budget that is sustainable and balanced. I do not want to see any new taxes or lose any portion of the PFD.

Sincerely,
Cindi Davis
[REDACTED]
Ketchikan AK 99901
[REDACTED]

Sent from Outlook



Traditional Tribal Council
P.O. Box 69, Port Lions, Alaska 99550
PORTLIONSTRIBE.NET

March 12, 2019

Governor Michael Dunleavy
3rd Floor, State Capitol
PO Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811

Commissioner John MacKinnon
Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
PO Box 112500
3132 Channel Drive
Juneau, AK 99811

Representative Neal Foster
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 505
Juneau, AK 99801

Representative Tammie Wilson
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 511
Juneau, AK 99801-1185

Senator Natasha von Imhof
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 516
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Bert Stedman
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 30
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Alaska Marine Highway Budget Reduction Impacts to Coastal Communities

Dear Governor Dunleavy, Commissioner MacKinnon, Representative Foster, Representative Wilson, Senator von Imhof, and Senator Stedman:

The Native Village of Port Lions Traditional Tribal Council represents Tribal Members living in the community of Port Lions. Our Tribal Government strongly encourages Governor Dunleavy and the legislature to adequately fund the Alaska Marine Highway and sustain its regular service schedule to the community of Port Lions.

A majority of families and businesses located in our village rely on the ferry system.

We wanted to talk about ways the Alaska Marine Highway silently keeps Alaska's rural coastal communities connected and allows them to be able to sustain their way of life and cultural traditions:

- The ferry service to the community of Port Lions provides a reliable and affordable option for:
 - Providing food security – Port Lions does not have a grocery store. At times freight costs for standard grocery order can cost more than a charter on the local airways.
 - Bringing critical infrastructure supplies required for a thriving economy such as lumber and heavy equipment are brought in on the Tustumena.
 - Providing transport to medical appointments – The weather on Kodiak Island frequently does not allow for air or small boat travel to specialist appointments in Kodiak and/or Anchorage. Many times Port Lions residents rely on the ability to get from Port Lions to Kodiak on the ferry in bad weather.
 - Providing transport for our students to school and/or sports events.

We ask that you keep in mind the cheapest cost to travel roundtrip from Port Lions to Kodiak with one's vehicle is approximately \$346, for just three hours in Kodiak to gather all your groceries and get back on the ferry to return home. The convenience to be able to immediately begin shopping for supplies with your vehicle rather than having to go and rent a vehicle is crucial. The roundtrip price is affordable, although on the higher end of affordable for our members. Many if not all of the coastal communities the Alaska Marine Highway serves already suffer from poor economic conditions. You can relate this same concept to bus service in the urban areas, where bus service is designed to meet the need of residents who cannot afford a personal vehicle, but can afford to take the bus to get their necessities.

The lack of infrastructure (transportation, food security, access to high speed internet, high cost of living) statewide is a serious concern to the rural communities.

The City and Tribal governments of Port Lions continue to work together to promote our community, improve our economy to end the outmigration, and bring our people back home. As it is we have the looming threat of schools closing. If the state pulls the Alaska Marine Highway, it will in essence undermine all the efforts we have made in investing for our future.

The Native Village of Port Lions strongly supports keeping the Alaska Marine Highway and the existing routes moving forward. We also stand by the many resolutions, including our own which advocate for securing funding for the replacement of the M/V Tustumena. Without the Alaska Marine Highway, and the M/V Tustumena, we would not be able to remain on the land that we are culturally tied to.

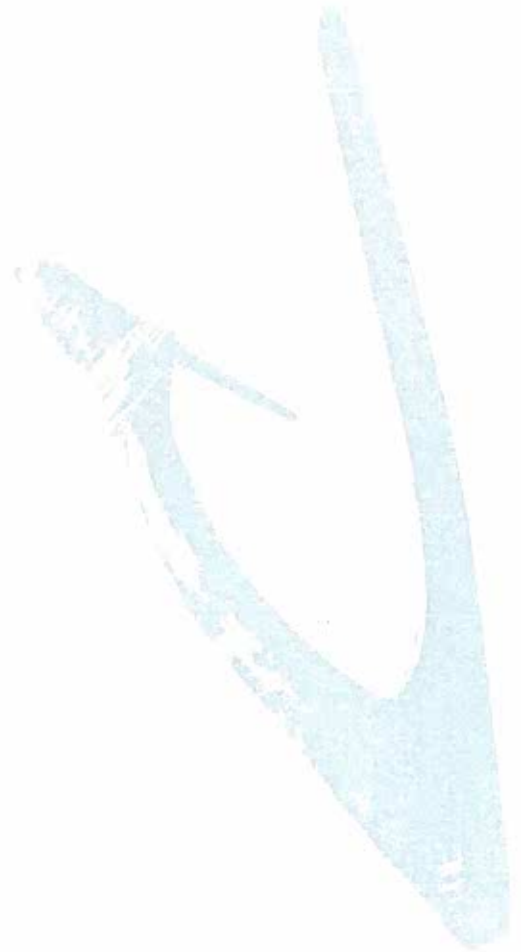
Respectfully Submitted,
NATIVE VILLAGE OF PORT LIONS
TRADITIONAL TRIBAL COUNCIL



Lester Lukin
Vice President

cc:

Lieutenant Governor Kevin Meyer
Speaker of the House Bryce Edgmon
House Majority Leader Steve Thompson
House Minority Leader Lance Pruitt
Senate President Cathy Giessel
Senate Majority Leader Mia Costello
Senate Minority Leader Tom Begich
Representative Louise Stutes
Representative Adam Wool
Representative Tiffany Zulkosky
Senator Gary Stevens
Senator Shelley Hughes



March 19, 2019

The Honorable Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
The Honorable Natasha von Imhof, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Senators Stedman and von Imhof,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) budget. The Juneau School District strongly opposes proposed cuts to funding for AMHS by Governor Dunleavy. This State Highway is a vital link for the Juneau School District to our neighboring districts, providing important connections for students and staff. We rely on AMHS for collaboration on professional development for teachers and administrators as well as participation and competition for student activities.

Extracurricular activities enrich the educational and social development and experiences of our students. Schools offer activities such as music, academic clubs, and sports for students to learn the values of teamwork, individual and group responsibility, character, physical strength and endurance, competition, diversity, and a sense of culture and community. This fall I spent time at a STEM Robotics competition at the Centennial Hall where students from elementary, middle and high schools throughout Southeast engaged in amazing learning. This event, as an example, would not be possible without access to the AMHS.

Extracurricular activities strengthen student engagement leading to consistent attendance, academic achievement, and increased graduation rate. Since the Juneau School District grew from one to three high schools, we have seen the expansion of extracurricular activities. During the same time, district graduation rate went from 70% to 83%. High school participation in activities increased from 50% to 67%. Attendance rate in our district has reached 95%.

Student activities programs offered as an adjunct to the regular instructional program fulfill educational objectives that are not adequately served through formal courses of study. Our district cannot offer these opportunities to our students without AMHS.

Flat funding for education has led to cuts in financial support for student activities from our district. Teams now fundraise millions of dollars for travel thanks to generous support from our community. The City and Borough of Juneau increased funding outside the CAP to help with expenses, including funding for coaches and officials.

The AMHS has helped as well, offering school discounts on student travel. During the 2017-18 school year, student activities purchased 706 tickets on the AMHS. So far this school year, schools have purchased 671 tickets and have booked an additional 265 tickets so far for spring activities. Without this mode of transportation, our students could not afford this level of travel.

Thank you for your consideration of supporting the AMHS and keeping opportunities for our students and staff.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bridget Weiss
Superintendent
Juneau School District

Doniece Gott

From: Becky Chapek [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2019 7:29 PM
To: House Transportation; Sen. Gary Stevens; House Finance; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Comments on SB20 and HB 39

I've got some pretty concerned clients as their reservations have been cancelled for their September departure out of here.

I run two businesses here that both won't operate like they need to without a ferry.

Set up the income tax, take my permanent fund and quit wasting time. Take away the line item veto power of the Governor before he drives anymore jobs and people out of this State.

Thanks for the hearings - I'm sure you found the one minute wonders as tedious as we did, but it was clear that your political terrorism is taking a toll. Quit treating a critical transportation link like a political hot potato and run it like a business.

Thank You, Becky Chapek

--
[Chinook Auto Rentals](#)

Cordova Airport

[REDACTED]

Cordova, AK 99574

[REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

www.chinookautorentals.com

Doniece Gott

From: Ken Post [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 30, 2019 7:31 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: University budget cuts

Dear members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the extreme budget cuts proposed by our governor to our university system. I am a resident of Juneau and at age 47 I returned to school in the Masters of Arts in Teaching program at UAS. I have a BA degree from Syracuse University and an MS from the college of Forestry at the U of Idaho and I felt that my educational experience at UAS was superior to those other schools. Granted, I was 25 years older than my early college years, and maybe I was a better student, but the level of dedication, personal attention and expert instruction that I experienced at UAS helped me succeed and truly inspired me. I worked in classrooms as well as in educational positions at AK Dept. of Fish and Game for many years after obtaining my MAT degree.

The education I received at a small university like UAS opened up a whole new world for me and provided me with amazing opportunities that I never would have had if I had not attended a state college in Alaska.

Please, Please do not let that little gem of a school die from severe and in my opinion unnecessary budget cuts. The University of Alaska - all of it's campuses- are vital to Alaska, to our people and

to our economy. I would be willing to give up half of my permanent dividend fund and pay state taxes to avoid these drastic measures.

Thank you for your time! - Best, Anne Post

Dear Finance Committee

I am a student who moved here to Juneau last summer. So far I have really loved living here, as I had been wanting to move to Alaska for a long time. I am really shocked about the new proposed budget cut and how 41% of the college budget will be cut for mining and oil expansion. I think it is important for students to go to college, because it educates them and keeps them out of trouble. Where I am from everyone goes to college and we should be trying to get more students into college, and I think by cutting the budgets less people are going to be encouraged to go.

University of Alaska has already suffered several budget cuts in the last four years. If there are more cuts then the university is going to have to start cutting major services that are important to students education, and will cause stress among staff. I believe an education is more important than drilling for oil and mining because those jobs destroy our natural resources. As a state with so many resources we should be investing in renewable resources to conserve our wild lands and worry less about oil. 75% of oil production has ceased in the state of Alaska over the past two years.

With everything at stake right now I think it is important to observe our universities here in Alaska and look at there overall performance. I do not know how successful UAA, or UAF are but UAS here in Juneau could have a lot more students attending than it does. The problem is a lot of students that are from here do not see the city of Juneau in the same way people who are not from here do. Perhaps if there were more investments done to our infrastructure in the suburbs that attracted students, they may look into going to UAS.

I understand you are busy with a lot of things right now. But I ask please do not forget about our college students. We need to be able to get a good education to help better our world. I thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and have a great day.

Sincerely

Eric Vilmer

Dear Legislators,

I am currently a freshman attending the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The current education cuts are too severe for many to be able to continue attending university. The idea that the price of education could double is too much, many of the people I know attending this school could no longer afford to attend university, or the alternative was massive cuts to faculty in which the credibility and function of the university could be removed. Removing the deficit should not be accomplished in a single year, but instead be spread out of multiple years to lessen the burden everyone must feel. Additionally, funding for early education should never be cut, that is the most important time to fund teachers who want to be able to teach kids and be passionate about their jobs, losing those teachers takes away from the educational experience many have. Without passionate teachers, many students would have no passion of their own to pursue further education and receive meaningful degrees.

I am currently attending UAF because I wanted to experience Alaska. This is likely to become my permanent residence someday. It is beautiful up here and I love the weather, but with education prices estimated to rise I would not be able to afford to go here. I would have to return to the lower 48 to pursue my education and I feel that I would no longer have the motivation to return here, I also know of my friends' situations. Some of them are only barely able to go here on a small amount of student loans and scholarships, but again these prices increasing would cause many of them to no longer be able to attend this university or any university in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Jared DesMarais

Dear Alaska State Legislature,

I am a freshman majoring in mechanical engineering at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. I am writing to you about the recent proposed budget cuts on the University of Alaska. I am an immigrant from South Korea but now a resident of this state. I've attended public schools since kindergarten and have personally witnessed the effects of budget cuts on education. I am aware that if this proposal is approved, a substantial amount of money will be cut from the UA system. I believe that this is a short-term solution to the long-term problem that the state can no longer solely rely on oil to fund it. A big reason that I am still in the state of Alaska is because of the scholarship programs in place. If this budget cut of 41% effects tuition or scholarship programs, I believe many students attending University of Alaska schools will begin to make other plans. I personally have had plans to complete undergrad and potentially more at UAF but if it comes to the point of having to burden my family due to financial reasons, I will have to reevaluate my current plans.

Respectfully, HyunSoo Lim

Dear Alaska State Representative,

My name is Isabella Knott. I am 16 years old, and I attend both the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Austin E. Lathrop High School. I am able to do this because I am enrolled in the Fairbanks BEST homeschool program, which allows me to have many opportunities exploring my academic future. I have lived in Alaska all of my life, and have gone mushing under the Alaskan stars, played in the snow, and skied under the Aurora Borealis. I tutor high school students in English, math, and sometimes science, and I do everything I can to help other students succeed. So, when I heard that you plan to withhold significant funding from both the University of Alaska and the K-12 school's funding, I felt obliged to write to you.

Although I am not an adult, I have many qualifications to have concern over the plan to hack into the budget for our schools. I am a 16-year-old studying at the University, pursuing a Psychology major, and hoping to go into forensics when I am an adult. I am a research assistant for Nature Lab, a group of psychologists pursuing the answers to some of Alaska's strangest mysteries, and I am currently assisting with a project to discover the cognitive bias within people when considering dog breeds to adopt. I am a varsity athlete at Lathrop High School, and a proud captain of the track and field team. These experiences in public education have allowed me to grow as an individual.

Right now, I am in a very unique position. Because the University has allowed me to pursue my academic goals and be dually enrolled in both high school and college, your bill is threatening to shut down everything I have worked hard to obtain. I clawed my way through college and am now almost a sophomore at the University at the age of sixteen because of my hard work. If your budget is approved, I will no longer be able to attend many of the classes that are helping me succeed and make a difference in the world. I will no longer be able to be a research assistant at Nature Lab, and the questions I am helping to investigate will never be

answered. The University would become a mere husk of what it is today, and the opportunities I have been generously offered would slip away from my hands like water.

Because of the coursework and experiences I have undergone at the University of Alaska, I have been able to expand my academic dreams to levels I did not know I could reach. I am allowed to study topics in my future career, and this training has strengthened me to meet the challenges of the world head on. The journey I have been on has been long and winding, a solitary climber facing a mighty mountain, and I have enjoyed every step of the way. I ask you to please allow me to continue that journey.

Sincerely,

Isabella Knott

Isabella Knott

Fairbanks, AK 99712

Doniece Gott

From: Tracey Schaeffer [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 04, 2019 9:43 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Rep. John Lincoln;
Rep. David Eastman
Subject: Public Radio

Public radio! So much more than entertainment in rural Alaska. It a way to keep people safe, informed and connected. It a way to educate and inform! Very necessary!

--

Tracey Schaeffer, Occupational Therapist
Arctic OT Services, [REDACTED]
Fax: [REDACTED]

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March 29, 2019

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members:

The Juneau Suicide Prevention Coalition (JSPC) would like to provide comments on the Governor's proposed FY 2020 budget, and its impact on suicide prevention efforts in Juneau and throughout the state. As you know, the suicide rate in Alaska is extremely high. In 2017, Alaska's suicide rate was the second highest in the country, nearly twice the national average. Suicide is the leading cause of death among Alaskans ages 10 to 64, and the sixth leading cause of death overall in our state.

The JSPC has been in existence for over ten years and we have provided a variety services to reduce the stigma surrounding suicide, educate the community and provide support to families and community members impacted by completed suicides. We have found through our work that suicide is correlated with, and influenced by, a number of factors including: childhood trauma, physical and behavioral health issues, poverty and homelessness. We are concerned that these are the very areas that are targeted for either elimination or large reductions in the Governor's proposed budget.

The specific programs and services in the Governor's budget that will have the most adverse impact on suicide prevention efforts in the state include the following:

- **Medicaid:** Medicaid is the funding source for primary care, preventive dental and behavioral health services for thousands of Alaskans. These services are critical to maintain physical and mental health and well-being.
- **Safety Net Services:** Programs such Adult Public Assistance and Tribal Assistance Programs are essential to ensure that Alaskans can meet basic needs including food, shelter, transportation and clothing.
- **Housing and Homelessness Services:** The Special Needs Housing Grant Program and the Homeless Assistance Program provide emergency assistance, shelter and long-term housing options for Alaskans in need.
- **Senior Benefits Program:** This program provides financial assistance to seniors to help meet basic living expenses.
- **Youth and Early Intervention:** These programs, including Head Start, Early Childhood Grants and Pre-Kindergarten Grants promote healthy development and early intervention for disabilities and behavioral health disorders, and prevent serious problems later in life.

Please restore full funding to the areas noted above, as any reductions will undermine the web of support that is vital for vulnerable Alaskans and suicide prevention efforts in our state. Thank you for your consideration and leadership.

Sincerely,

Jordan Nigro
Chair

cc.: Senate Finance Subcommittee Members for Health and Social Services

Doniece Gott

From: Rep. Andi Story
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2019 5:50 PM
To: Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof; Sen. Bert Stedman
Cc: House Finance; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: FW: Comments on the budget approach, Medicaid reductions including adult dental and other items before the legislature

Co-chairs of Finance and chairs of the HSS Finance Subcommittees,

I wanted to share with you some written testimony from a constituent of mine, Dr. Brad Whistler, DMD, about Medicaid Adult Dental Services. He gave me permission to share this with you all, so thought I would forward it along.

Thank you for your hard work on this year's budget.

Andi

Medicaid Adult Dental Services:

I worked with the administration and Alaska Mental Health Trust in legislative hearings for Medicaid adult dental services and on the implementation team in DHSS. Low-income adults and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities experience more dental decay. Left untreated it can result in pain and infection, time off from work, exacerbate or cause complications with other chronic disease experienced by the individual and for those without coverage it can lead to increased emergency department (ED) utilization to address pain and infection.

While individuals without coverage, or access, to dental care may seek ED services to relieve pain and infection, EDs are seldom equipped to address dental problems. The ED will typically offer palliative care with prescription of pain killers and/or antibiotics. While there is more awareness now, nationally this is known to be one source of opioid prescriptions. The dental conditions left untreated can flare up again and lead to subsequent ED visits. These visits are often a source of uncompensated care for hospitals and costs are shifted to self-pay and insured patients.

Pregnant women experience hormonal changes which include risk of development of early periodontal disease. Periodontal disease has been shown in studies to be associated with low birthweight infants, pre-gestational births and preeclampsia.

Periodontal disease has a reciprocal relationship with diabetes. Individuals with diabetes are more likely to have periodontal disease and periodontal disease, as a chronic infection, may make it difficult to stabilize blood sugar levels. Periodontal disease is also implicated in complications of cardiovascular disease and recent exploratory studies are looking at association of periodontal disease bacteria and development of amyloid plaques in the brain.

Dental decay and treatment are best addressed by treating families. The bacteria associated with dental decay are typically passed mother/caregiver to child. So a new mother with active, untreated dental decay is likely increasing risk of early childhood caries for the infant. General dental practices generally serve families so delinking coverage of the adults from the children does not fit with the practice model. Studies show parents with dental coverage are more likely to get their children in for routine dental appointments.

Older adults are at risk of developing dental decay even if they had good oral health most of their adult life. Risks relate to medications that can reduce saliva output or similar issues post-cancer treatment. With progress in prevention and treatment older adults have most or all of their natural teeth, yet changes in

functional can result in failure to maintain their oral hygiene. Adults in skilled nursing settings or with impaired immunity that are experiencing active dental decay are at risk for aspiration pneumonia.

Brad Whistler, DMD

[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99803

Food Bank of Alaska is concerned
proposed cuts to programs

**FOOD BANK
of ALASKA**



with Governor Dunleavy's
critical to low-income Alaskans.
include important funding
but also programs that low-

income Alaskans - our clients - rely on. Cuts to programs like SNAP, Senior Benefits, and Adult Public Assistance will increase the pressure on the anti-hunger network to fill the gap at the same time many in our network will be grappling with their own funding cuts.

Some programs/funding streams we want to protect include:

- **The Senior Benefit Program** funding of \$24.4 million will be eliminated, and the Governor is seeking a full repeal of the program altogether. This program provides cash assistance to more than 11,000 low-income Alaskan elders so they can afford necessities like food, heat, and medication. The loss of this funding combined with other proposed cuts, like those to the PFD hold harmless fund or to Adult Public Assistance, means that some low-income seniors could be seeing multiple layers of resource cuts.
- **Human Services Community Matching Grant (HSCMG)** funding of \$1.38 million will be eliminated. This is one of the only funding streams to support operations for basic needs services like food and shelter. The loss of these funds to our anti-hunger network would be compounded by the decrease in other benefits for low-income Alaskans, which creates additional need and puts additional pressure on our network.
 - Food Bank of Alaska has been a recipient of this funding in many past years at \$100,000, and we have used the funding to purchase fresh produce to supplement donations and to support our Anchorage holiday distributions (Thanksgiving Blessing and Neighborhood GIFT, which together provide complete holiday meals to over 10,000 families).
 - Additionally, this has been an important source of funding for many of our partner agencies, including Bean's Café, Catholic Social Services, Covenant House Alaska, Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), and more.
- There is an overall \$35.4 million cut to public assistance, including cuts to **Adult Public Assistance** (for low-income seniors and disabled individuals), **tribal assistance program**, and the **PFD Hold Harmless Fund**, which will likely reduce eligibility and benefits for many public assistance programs.
 - **Public Assistance Field Services** – There is a \$2.2 million cut, which we believe represents a reversal in funding for the 20 additional DPA staff positions that we advocated for last year to help address the SNAP/Medicaid backlog. The State is doing much better on the backlog, but we worry that additional cuts will put us into a backlog situation again.

- The Permanent Fund Dividend Hold Harmless – This is cut in its entirety, about \$17.7 million. This funding stream is a bit complicated, but plays an important role in allowing low-income Alaskans to maintain eligibility for programs like SNAP when the PFD comes out. From what we have gathered there doesn't seem to be a clear plan for how the State would implement this in an effective way. For example, it seems like without the PFD Hold Harmless supplement, most SNAP recipients would be kicked off the program in October due to the injection of income. If those same people were to spend down their PFDs and then reapply, it would be an administrative nightmare, and I would imagine end up costing the State a lot in additional administrative costs. Additionally, customer service for clients would be a concern.
- The **Homeless Assistance Program (HAP)** will be cut from \$7.9 million dollars to \$950,000, and the **Special Needs Housing Grant (SNHG)** will be cut from \$1.9 million dollars to \$200,000. Thousands of Alaskans will lose access to homeless prevention supports (rental/utility emergency assistance and long-term rental assistance), emergency shelter options, and the ability to be rapidly rehoused in multiple communities.
- There are huge cuts to **Medicaid**, including a \$249 million general fund reduction, which would make us ineligible to receive \$465 million in federal funds. Cuts to healthcare for low-income Alaskans will undoubtedly increase hunger, as we know many food insecure Alaskans already report having to choose between food and healthcare on a regular basis.
- While child nutrition programs weren't cut directly, the massive 25% in reductions to public education will almost certainly result in the reduction of the **school meal program** in many districts. Some rural districts have already cut this critical program because of insufficient budgets, and this is of huge concern to us, given the critical role that school meals play in addressing childhood food insecurity. The State of Alaska Child Nutrition Programs are reporting that they already have several districts not committing to operating a school meal program for fear of budget cuts.

Questions can be directed to Cara Durr, Director of Public Engagement: 907-222-3113, cdurr@foodbankofalaska.org OR Eve Van Dommelen, Policy and Advocacy Manager: 907-222-3103, evandommelen@foodbankofalaska.org



ALASKA STATE HOSPITAL &
NURSING HOME ASSOCIATION

March 20, 2019

The Honorable Adam Crum, Commissioner
Department of Health & Social Services
350 Main Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Commissioner Crum,

The Department of Health & Social Service's presentation to the House Finance Health & Social Services Budget Subcommittee on March 19 provided the first opportunity for us to understand how the Department plans to address the Governor's \$714 million proposed Medicaid reduction.

We are concerned that so far these proposals have been developed without provider input and we hope the Department will now engage with providers in discussions. Productive changes to Medicaid require working together and we welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively on solutions to address the state's health care needs. ASHNHA has been part of Medicaid reform efforts and we want to continue to be part of the solution. General fund payments to hospitals were less in SFY18 (\$42 million) than in SFY15 (\$46 million) despite an additional 79,000 Medicaid recipients receiving care. Working together we have provided more care to vulnerable Alaskans at less cost to the state.

We have the following comments, questions and concerns about the items raised in the hearing and we welcome the opportunity to meet with your staff to discuss these issues further.

General comments on rate reductions: Provider rate cuts are the easiest lever for the Department to pull to address Medicaid cost growth. However, provider rates simply ratchet down the amount that the Department pays for services without addressing the underlying structure, organization or cost growth of health care. Medicaid already pays below cost, so reducing Medicaid rates merely shifts burden and risk from the state to other payers.

Many states have reduced provider rates, but cost growth in the Medicaid program has continued. Reducing provider rates is not innovative, forward-thinking or transformational. In fact, reducing provider rates could harm efforts to transform the delivery system to achieve a more sustainable growth rate moving forward. Much work has been done through SB 74 and the Alaska Healthcare Transformation project on moving Alaska's health care system toward a

delivery system that rewards value and promotes efficiency. Cuts of this nature could set the health care reform journey back, without demonstrating a long-term reduction in health care cost growth.

Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) 5% cut and rate methodology change to acuity-based rate:

We are very concerned about the impact of a 5% rate cut on SNFs as of July 1. As you are aware, the SNF payer mix is 85% or more Medicaid. Since Medicaid is a cost-based rate that doesn't truly cover all costs, SNFs operate on very thin margins. In past periods of budget reductions, SNF rates were not cut, but inflationary adjustments were suspended. Even the suspension of inflation adjustments pushed many SNFs to the edge of financial viability. The current line item budget shows a total reduction in SNF payments of \$5 million. It is unclear if the current system can support such a reduction without facility closures. SNF closures could impact the viability of Critical Access Hospitals (see below) and the capacity and throughput in acute care hospitals which would no longer have safe discharge locations for patients needing 24-hour nursing care.

Moving to an acuity-based rate by Jan. 1, 2020 would require significant work of SNFs, at a time when facilities will be under financial stress. We are concerned that the timeline is too aggressive, and we hope that detailed analysis has been completed given the potential impacts on vulnerable SNFs. Further, as noted below acuity-based rates may not be appropriate for low-volume facilities.

Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) "held harmless": While the budget exempts CAHs from the 5% inpatient cut, it does not exempt their co-located SNFs from a budget reduction. Many CAHs are supported financially by the co-located SNF, which provides economies of scope that allows the facility to maintain financial viability. SNF rates are as important, if not more important, than CAH inpatient rates. The reduction of SNF reimbursement could push several CAHs toward financial insolvency. Further, more information is needed to determine if the acuity-based rate system will be appropriate for CAHs operating low volume SNFs. The high fixed costs necessary to operate a facility offer little flexibility to change staffing or reduce costs based on a resident's acuity. We are concerned about the lack of analysis on the impact on small SNFs and we urge the Department to evaluate if this change will result in the closure of small rural facilities. Alaska already has one of the lowest rates of SNF beds per capita in the country, and with a growing elderly population we can't afford to lose any existing capacity.

Physician and other provider rate cuts: The Department proposes to reduce physician and other provider rates by 5%, holding primary care harmless. Physicians have previously received a 10% rate cut and have had inflationary adjustments suspended, making the cumulative reduction more than 20%. This reduction will affect other provider types as well, such as behavioral health providers, physical therapists, nurse practitioners and other critical non-physician providers. It is not clear if the Department has conducted an impact analysis on the proposed rate reduction and if it would disrupt services for patients. Before moving

forward, such an analysis should be completed. Behavioral health providers finally received a rate increase after nearly a decade of flat rates. Cutting rates now will stifle the development of much needed behavioral health programs and push those with needs to the highest cost setting.

Medicaid adult dental eliminated: Eliminating adult dental will result in an increase in emergency department use for dental problems that could have been prevented or treated in a less costly care setting.

Movement to diagnosis-related group payment methodology for PPS acute care hospitals: ASHNHA supports further investigation regarding moving to a DRG based payment methodology for Medicaid. However, we would appreciate a more complete understanding of the Department's research and analysis of this change. Finally, a start date of January 1, 2020 seems overly optimistic, so we would appreciate more information on the anticipated process.

Other administrative changes: While we appreciate the focus on administrative efficiency, we are concerned that the Department's projections are overly optimistic. For example, the Department projects a \$26.5 million in savings from reducing the timely filing allowance, which simply means that providers will have less time to file claims. A second example is the implementation of a nurse advice line for Medicaid, which is projected to save \$1 million, an aggressive target. We hope that the Department has done analysis and projections to verify these numbers, or the Medicaid program could end up with an unanticipated budget shortfall.

Medicaid expansion and other eligibility changes: While we appreciate that the current proposal does not include moving forward with any changes to eligibility, concerns remain about Medicaid expansion and overall Medicaid eligibility in the future. For hospitals to absorb these cuts and proposed changes, they need assurance that current eligibility will continue. The ability to achieve the proposed cost containment measures is contingent on maintaining eligibility. This is especially true for the shift from behavioral health grants to Medicaid funding. Without assurance of stable eligibility, providers will not make investments in behavioral health services. Similarly, managing a DRG payment structure requires sufficient volume of patients to allow for variability.

Impact of changes on other Medicaid reform:

The plan for cost containment is silent on key initiatives that have been underway for several years including the Coordinated Care Demonstrations (United Healthcare managed care demo) and the behavioral health Administrative Services Organization. How will the work that has been developed to date be impacted by the proposed measures? Will these efforts continue?

Finally, we are concerned that this plan only accounts for \$100 million of the anticipated \$225 million general fund cut for FY 20. The \$225 million general fund cut represents a \$714 million

cut when considering federal funds. Providers, like any other business or organization, need certainty for planning and management purposes. The lack of certainty is having a chilling effect on the ability of providers to invest in new facilities and services, as evidenced by the suspension of capital projects in Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley. Included in these projects are badly needed inpatient psychiatric beds that serve a critical role in meeting Alaska's behavioral health needs.

While we continue to hear that the Department is in conversations with CMS about how to address future reductions, the lack of direction and vision is of serious concern to the providers responsible for caring for Alaskans. We have heard repeatedly that the Department is talking to CMS about innovations. To ensure success, we encourage you to involve stakeholders as part of the dialogue and process. We want to work together as good partners to improve and transform the Alaska health care system – and we look forward to the time when we can focus on that shared vision.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to further discussions.

Sincerely,



Becky Hultberg, President/CEO

Cc: Members of the Senate Finance Committee
Members of the Senate Finance HSS Subcommittee
Members of the House Finance Committee
Members of the House Finance HSS Subcommittee

From: Jayne Andreen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 14, 2019 10:10 AM
To: Sen. Natasha Von Imhof <Sen.Natasha.VonImhof@akleg.gov>; Sen. John Coghill
<Sen.John.Coghill@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lora Reinbold <Sen.Lora.Reinbold@akleg.gov>; Sen. Elvi Gray-
Jackson <Sen.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov>
Cc: Patricia Owen <p.owen.mches@gmail.com>; Tim Hinterberger <tim.hinterberger@gmail.com>
Subject: Alaska Public Health Association letter concerning Division of Public Health budget

Dear Honorable von Imhof,

Please accept this letter from the Alaska Public Health Association, expressing our concerns related to the impact of past and future public health reductions on the health of Alaskans. Patty Owen and I are available to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely

Jayne E. Andreen, Co-Chair

Alaska Public Health Association Policy Committee
[REDACTED]

Patty Owen, Co-Chair

Alaska Public Health Association Policy Committee
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



March 19, 2019

The Honorable Natasha von Imhof
Senator
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Subject: Tribal Health Organizations and State General Fund Savings in the Proposed FY20 Budget

Dear Sen. von Imhof and Members of the Senate Finance Health & Social Services Budget Subcommittee:

Southcentral Foundation urges the legislature to scrutinize the impact of undesignated, multi-hundred million dollar cuts to Medicaid in the Governor's proposed Fiscal Year 2020 budget, and compare them to potential cost savings to the general fund that do not have a negative impact on service. Tribal Health Organizations (THOs) have found innovative ways to work with the State of Alaska to expand services on tight budgets and we would like to continue to partner with the State to provide much needed services to Alaska's most vulnerable populations.

Southcentral Foundation is the Alaska Native tribal health organization designated by Cook Inlet Region, Inc. and eleven Federally-Recognized Tribes – the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Igiugig, Iliamna, Kokhanok, McGrath, Newhalen, Niihoni, Nondalton, Pedro Bay, Telida, and Takotna – to provide healthcare services to beneficiaries of the Indian Health Service pursuant to a compact with the United States government under the authority of P.L. 93-638, as amended, the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act.

Southcentral Foundation provides services to more than 65,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people living in the Municipality of Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and 55 rural Alaskan villages. Services provided by SCF include outpatient medical care, home health care, dentistry, optometry, psychiatry, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, residential treatment facilities for adolescents and for women, suicide prevention and domestic violence prevention. We employ numerous staff, all of whom work in harmony to treat patients for the best access to quality care.

Southcentral Foundation is recognized nationally and internationally for its Nuka System of Care. Nuka is a relationship-based, customer-owned approach to transforming health care, improving outcomes, and reducing costs. Recognized as one of the world's leading examples of healthcare redesign, SCF offers health care organizations value-based solutions for data and

information management, integrated care, behavioral health, workforce development, improvement, innovation, and more. Alaskans already benefit from innovations born in THOs, such as Nuka, and we believe that more can be done.

Together with our peer THOs and partners in Alaska's healthcare sector, Southcentral Foundation is prepared to do the hard work of maximizing the trust relationship with the federal government – through maximization of 100 percent Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) tribal claiming through Care Coordination Agreements (CCAs), for example – thereby reducing overall Medicaid costs to the state.

In FY17 the state saved \$35 million through CCAs, in FY18 the state saved \$44.7 million through CCAs, and in FY19 the state is projected to save up to \$84 million. So, to date, since FY17, the state has saved \$125.7 million in Medicaid general fund state match. It makes good sense from a patient perspective, a quality care perspective, and it also makes good fiscal sense for the state to continue to work with tribes and tribal organizations to make sure these kinds of arrangements continue.

However, expanding upon this work will take time. We've seen demonstrable benefits of tribal claiming efforts over the past three years, and there are additional areas where CCAs could expand, for example: pharmacy, long-term-care, out of state residential psychiatric treatment facilities, tribal providers in non-tribal facilities, non-IHS mothers with IHS newborns, waiver services, service authorizations with date spans on travel itineraries, optical services.

Given the potential growth in savings to the general fund by expanding CCAs to the universe of possibilities listed above, we request the legislature work with the administration to craft a more measured timeline approach to cost containment, not seek to make massive multi-hundred million dollar undesigned cuts that will damage the system of care in our state.

The alternative is disruptive and very likely damaging. Medicaid preventative and optional services, which the state currently supports, decrease more expensive services down the line. We know, for example, that routine screenings can catch issues that otherwise might develop into an emergency health issue. And we know that preventative dental care can forestall massive health issues later in life. Investing resources in preventative healthcare makes good economic sense. Eliminating those services, on the other hand, or passing the cost of service onto providers, as contemplated in the proposed FY20 budget, does not.

In closing, Southcentral Foundation requests you to consider the many ways that partnerships with tribal health organizations can innovate health care programs and take pressure off the state general fund by maximizing tribal claiming. We stand ready to work with you and your colleagues to address the state's fiscal challenges while also providing exceptional health care services and protecting residents.

Thank you for your important work in this subcommittee. We are available to provide

March 18, 2019

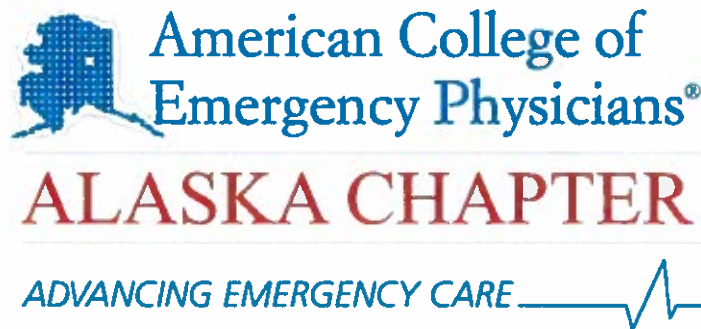
Page 3 of 3

additional thoughts or specific comments if you would like.

Sincerely,
SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION



Katherine Gottlieb, MBA, DPS, LHD
President/CEO



March 12, 2019

Senator Natasha von Imhof, Chair
Senator John Coghill
Senator Lora Reinbold
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson

RE: Support for Medicaid Funding

Dear Chair von Imhof and Committee Members:

I submitted this opinion piece with Andy Elsberg, another ER doctor, to the ADN which was published 3/7/2019. As Alaska considers how to make its budget work, we urge you to support full funding for Medicaid.

As emergency room doctors, we see the impacts of health care policy decisions first-hand. The ER is the safety net for our society's health care needs, and as Alaska's ER doctors we see when the systems is working and when it is broken. Slashing the health care budget and denying tens of thousands of Alaskans access to health care will devastate the progress made over the last few years with Medicaid reform and expansion.

Prior to 2016, ER doctors frequently saw patients who delayed medical care because they could not afford insurance despite having a job, and could not qualify for Medicaid. Patients who were developing heart failure who showed up when they could no longer breathe from the fluid building up in their lungs. Women who presented with metastatic breast cancer because of an open wound from a tumor breaking through the skin. In the ER, we wouldn't even ask why patients didn't come in earlier, before they had a life-threatening problem. We knew the answer — "I don't have insurance, I couldn't afford it."

In 2015-2016, a bipartisan effort led to the passage of Senate Bill 74. This was an ambitious project to redesign Medicaid in Alaska. Alaska's ER doctors participated in Medicaid redesign to help drive down costly, unnecessary ER visits. SB 74 has led to improving primary and specialty care access, behavioral health access, care coordination projects and access to opioid and alcohol abuse treatment to many who were previously uninsured. SB 74 brought the Emergency Department Information Exchange, a powerful tool paid for by

Alaska ACEP | admin@alaskaacep.org

the hospitals, to help ERs avoid duplicate care and smooth access to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program to help avoid excessive or potentially dangerous opioid prescriptions. Newly insured Alaskans have access to primary care, allowing care for and prevention of chronic medical issues, avoiding costly trips to the ER. [Seventy-nine thousand more Alaskans](#) are covered by Medicaid at the same cost to the general fund as in 2015. Just as we start to see the first real benefits of SB 74, these sweeping cuts threaten all of our progress and future benefits from Medicaid reform.

So what happens when one-third of the Medicaid budget is cut? Smaller regional clinics and hospitals will be at risk of shutting down or significantly cutting services. Not only does this threaten both rural and urban access to care for all residents, but it also threatens thousands of health care jobs across the state, destabilizing our economy. Alaska Regional Hospital just announced its plan for a Mental Health Unit is on hold until Medicaid funding is stable and adequate.

Thousands of Alaskans will lose access to primary care, forcing them to seek care in emergency rooms where care is more costly, and where doctors and nurses are trained to focus on the emergent issue, not in health maintenance and preventative medicine. Unpaid ER and hospital bills force us back to the days when more costs were shifted onto the private insurance market, making private insurance premiums even higher.

Medicaid covers 92,000 Alaskans 18 and under, as well as many pregnant women. Cut one-third of the budget and you threaten services to half the children in Alaska. Medicaid covers long term care for seniors. Cut one-third of the budget, and what happens to nursing home and long-term care residents when their Medicaid goes away?

Access to drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs and suboxone clinics is helping bring many Alaskans out of the darkness of addiction. Reentering the workforce becomes possible, families can stabilize and property crime goes down. In the Mat-Su area, ER prescriptions for opioids are down 80 percent in 4 years, and peer-to-peer counseling is available 24/7 for patients who want to stop using narcotics. SB 74 made that change possible. Cut Medicaid and although prescribing will stay low, many treatment options go away, and those committing crimes to feed their addictions will make our communities less safe.

Drastically cutting Medicaid will not only harm the health of many Medicaid recipients, but it will also harm health care delivery to all Alaskans. We recognize there is a debate about how to fund Alaska's future. If we choose not to pay for this healthcare now in a coordinated, planned system, the money will still need to be spent at a higher health cost to those who can't pay, and a higher financial burden to those who can pay. Let's choose to make Medicaid more efficient by continuing the reform process, improving care coordination, access to primary care, behavioral health and addiction services. Let's choose to continue to make Alaska a healthier and safer community for all Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Shelton
Alaska ACEP President



ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Committed to Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

March 14, 2019

The Honorable von Imhof
Chair, Senate Health and Social Services Finance Subcommittee
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator von Imhof and Members of the Committee:

The Alaska Public Health Association (ALPHA) is extremely concerned about the Governor's proposed two-million-dollar cut to the Section of Public Health Nursing's budget. Since 2015, Alaska's Public Health Nursing has sustained significant budget cuts resulting in:

- 21% reduction in staff (41 staff positions).
- The closure of 6 Public Health Centers (from 22 to 16 statewide). Cordova, Ft. Yukon, Galena, Haines, Seward and Wrangell are now only served by itinerant Public Health Nurses on an infrequent basis.
- A 13% decrease (5,376 FY15) and (4,689.5 FY19) in contracted public health nursing services for Anchorage, Kotzebue and the North Slope Borough.
- The elimination of reproductive health, STI screening and immunizations to 30 years of age or older.
- The elimination of Well-Child services for anyone over the age of 6.

Those reductions in services have already had a significant impact on the health of Alaskans.

- The number of immunizations decreased from 33,340 in FY16 to 16,000 in FY18, a 52% reduction. This led to a more than three-fold increase in influenza confirmed cases, from 1,955 between October 2015 and September 2016 to 6,515 between October 2017 and September 2018.¹
- The number of screening and treatment visits for sexually transmitted infection decreased by 30% at the same time that Alaska is seeing rising epidemics both gonorrhea and syphilis.

¹ <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/influenza/influenza.aspx>

- There were 1,115 reported cases of gonorrhea in 2015, increasing to 1,454 in 2016 (31% increase), and an additional 1,035 cases in the first six months of 2017.²
- The Alaska Section of Epidemiology issued an update on October 23, 2018 on Alaska's continuing syphilis outbreak, which has now reached the highest level in four decades.³

Across the board there are fewer Public Health Nurses to outreach Alaska's highest risk population. Early intervention saves money and suffering. A healthy population costs less than a sick population. Decreased outreach to the most vulnerable will increase emergency room and health care costs across the state. There is simply no question that reductions to Alaska's public health nursing services are diminishing the health and wellbeing of Alaskans. Alaska's public health nurses and centers play a vital and unique role in preventing disease and promoting health, working with individuals in high-risk groups and those unable to access the primary care system. Keeping them healthy keeps everyone healthy.

The state can't afford for the continued reductions to vital health promotion, prevention and disease control labor force. The ALPHA respectfully requests the Senate Health and Social Services Finance Subcommittee to maintain Public Health Nursing's budget at the FY19 level.

Sincerely,

Patty Owen, Co-Chair
Policy Committee



Jayne E. Andreen, Co-Chair
Policy Committee

² http://dhss.alaska.gov/News/Documents/press/2017/Gonorrhea_pr_10032017.pdf

³ http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/Documents/phan/AKPHAN_20181023_Syphilis.pdf

LIVE UNITED



United Way of the Tanana Valley

P.O. Box 74396

Fairbanks, AK 99707

907-452-7211

brenda.riley@unitedwaytv.com

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March 11, 2019

Senator von Imhof

Senate Finance Budget Subcommittee (DHSS)

Dear Senator von Imhof,

The United Way of the Tanana Valley greatly appreciates your support of the restoration of the Human Services Community Matching Grant funds available to nonprofit agencies who work to serve the neediest among us in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

This funding requires rigorous application and evaluation from each grantee and is an essential source of program funds for those nonprofits. These agencies provide important safety nets in health, housing, and nutrition.

United Way of the Tanana Valley member agencies who have received this funding in the past include the Fairbanks Community Food Bank, the Literacy Council of Alaska, Resource Center for Parents & Children, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club of Fairbanks, Thrivalaska, and the Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living.

Cutting this funding will negatively impact the agencies providing these essential services and directly impact the health and welfare of our citizens. On behalf of the Member Agencies of the United Way of the Tanana Valley, I urge you to support the inclusion of the Human Services Community Matching Grant in the budget.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this funding,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Riley".

Brenda Riley

Executive Director

United Way of the Tanana Valley

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

Doniece Gott

From: Jackie Cortez <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2019 8:46 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Some support for recovering addicts

Hi,

I admire you for all you do to support people with substance use disorder. It's truly a horrible disease, but there IS hope, and good folks like you are out there helping people realize they can overcome it! One thing I've noticed a lot of people in recovery don't consider are the vices they may become addicted to once they've given up drugs and alcohol. Offering information on avoiding a "new addiction" in recovery is the focus of our team's latest awareness campaign (the Prevention Coalition), and we've found some great information that I thought you might like to add to one of your site's helpful informational pages.

[The Ultimate Guide to Quit Smoking, Permanently](#)

[Keeping Kids, Pets, and Seniors Safe from Cigarette Smoke at Home](#)

[How to Handle Withdrawal Symptoms and Triggers When You Decide to Quit Smoking](#)

[Sugar Addiction in Sobriety: Why It Happens + 13 Tips How to Break It](#)

[Establishing a Fitness Routine in Recovery](#)

[7 Signs You're Exercising Too Much](#)

[Managing Anger as a Tool to Maintain Abstinence](#)

It's wonderful if you're able to find a way to use these, and if you do, I truly hope they offer your site visitors even more hope and inspiration. Either way, I truly thank you for all you do!

Best,
Jackie

Jackie Cortez
[REDACTED]

P.S. If you'd prefer I didn't reach out again in the future, please send an email to let me know. Or, if you'd like me to write a more comprehensive post that you can add to your site, please let me know that as well. There is no cost whatsoever. Thank you!

Doniece Gott

From: Bruce Van Dusen [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 10, 2019 2:57 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: From Polaris House

To the Esteemed Members of the Senate Finance Committee, Thank you for the hard work you do in these times of fiscal challenge. I am writing concerning the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery (CBHTR) grants that are administered by the Alaska DHSS Division of Behavioral Health.

These grants allow us to provide much needed mental health services to adults in Juneau, AK. With this financial support we can provide services with no out of pocket expense for the persons we serve. The market rates for these types of services is very high. Many of the persons we serve are living in poverty and are not able to afford these supports. These funds ensure no one we serve endures homelessness, or experiences a lack of support to re-enter the work force to achieve paid employment. We also deliver services to assist persons complete educational goals. Another set of services we call community supports allow us to provide access to all services a person is eligible for in the community outside of Polaris House.

It is our hope these funds will remain available to us. These funds are vital.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Bruce Van Dusen
Executive Director
Polaris House, Inc.

[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99801
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Carol Carman [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2019 10:12 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee; House Finance
Subject: education

Are you going to address the overabundance of Superintendents in Alaska? We have 55+ with half the population of Hawaii, but Hawaii has only one superintendent for the entire state. Cutting the superintendents and their support staff would save millions in education. This is wasteful.

Carol Carman
Chair, ARP District 9E
[REDACTED] - [Facebook](#)

Doniece Gott

From: Laura and Jason Aigeldinger [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 31, 2019 10:59 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Closure correspondence

Hello Senate Finance Committee! I really hope you all know that the majority of Alaskans really want you to fully fund k-12 and university education programs throughout the state.

I'm writing you today as an unofficial representative of Moose Pass School. I'm just a parent there and a volunteer.

Below is an email I sent the state Senator who tasked with representing my interests. I have a feeling there is not one among you who would subject a six-year old to two hours of bus time per school day only to receive instruction at a school that currently has a student to teacher ratio of 30 to 1. All in order to save money? That's pretty ridiculous.

*Specifics are located below and if you are on the east side of the Kenai on Wednesday afternoon please attend and if you have any friends in the media, please spread the word.

Hello Senator Micciche,

My name is Jason Aigeldinger and I am the parent of two children who attend Moose Pass School.

I'm writing to you this morning to personally invite you to attend a meeting at Moose Pass School on Wednesday, April 3 at 5 pm. The meeting is an attempt to establish a dialogue between students, parents, residents and school district officials regarding the prospect of Moose Pass School closing. I think that it would be really great if you had the time to attend. I know it's a lot to ask, but I also think that it would be good for you to hear directly from community residents of all ages about how the closure would negatively effect our student's academic life and how closing the school, which is the heart of the community, would effect resident's lives.

Sir, we run a lean program over here at MPS. We currently have 16 enrolled in instruction, our test scores and assessments are above boards, and more importantly the kids are safe, happy and healthy.

A closure would mean that the student body would then be bused to Seward. This would increase the kids time on the south end of the Seward Highway between the Seward/Sterling wye and Seward. Eight of the 16 students would be on the bus for roughly an hour one way, each day. A lot of us don't think that that is the best way for a small child to start their morning, each morning, for 180 days. On the bus for ten hours a week instead of the current stretch on the bus for five hours per week. How do you feel about that? The kids would be bused down to Seward, where the teacher to student ratio is currently 1 teacher to thirty students with no aides and some say if the district exacts the proposed 22,400,000.00 cuts to their budget, it would balloon that teacher to student ratio on up to 1 teacher to 40 students again, with no aides.

Currently, the MPS student body has a teacher to student ratio of 1 to 16 with a full time aide who has teaching experience and credentials, a part time para-aide, a part time custodian and an office administrator/librarian/food service staffer. Total allocation to operate MPS from KPBSD for FY19 is \$321,567. If you divide that number by 16, you'll find that the Borough is spending a little over \$16,000.00 per student here at Moose Pass School. That's about \$2000.00 less per student then the average cost of \$18,400.00 per student statewide (state dept. of education.) Cuts and closures would force our kids to spend a lot more time on the highway in order to be transported to a school that is currently overcrowded and morale is at an all time low.

In short Senator Micciche, we have a great school here at Moose Pass and I really need your help to keep it open. The only thing I can offer you is a personal invitation to Wednesday's meeting so you can gather information for yourself and make an informed decision regarding this issue.

I really hope that you can attend.

Thank you for your time,

Jason Aigeldinger, parent, volunteer MPS
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Laura Johnson [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2019 7:21 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Moose Pass School

Dear Finance Committee Members,

Please take our entire PDF and create new revenue sources (sales/revenue tax) before cutting funding to small schools. My daughter is a 4th grader at Moose Pass School. Busing elementary age children to Seward for over an hour in the morning and the afternoon is not a healthy option.

Thank you,
Laura Johnson
Parent of Moose Pass Student

Dear Alaska Legislature,

I am writing in concerns to the recent budget discussion and proposal from the Governor. I understand that you are receiving letters regarding this issue and other issues of our State on a regular basis, but I ask that you permit me the honor of reading my letter to you.

I am an Alaskan. Yes, I am a legal resident of the state and currently residing in the great place we all call home. However, being an Alaskan to me means more to that as I'm sure it does to you. It is the trappers, the bush pilots, the fishermen, those that gather to watch the Yukon Quest and Iditarod cheering their hometown hero, the families that pick fireweed in the fall, the hunters that provide for their families, and the Native Alaskans that have had the honor of living in this Great Land long before it was even considered a State. When I say I am an Alaskan, I am proud to say I am a member of the community mentioned.

I understand that our State is seeking to repair the budget problems that have plagued us for years. This has affected everyone across our State. With this, I do understand that a cut in expenditures must be made somewhere. To this I argue that the education, healthcare, and state service systems are not worth taking the brunt of this cut. Education across our great nation already suffers from low pay, not enough resources, and the pressure to perform to a high standard. This is uniform from kindergarten to graduate level students. Alaska suffers no differently but faces the existing problem that graduating high school and college students are leaving the State in search for better opportunities. Alaska's academic programs have worked diligently to mitigate the damage but cutting the education program hinders our ability to foster growth and development in this State. No one knows Alaska like Alaskans. Cutting the education makes it harder for Alaskans in the most diverse high school district in the nation, leading Arctic research universities, and developing rural villages to teach our future generation about this great state.

This cut is not worth having our future generation leave Alaska for a pursuit in better opportunities out of state. We rely on our future generations to build upon the legacy we have left them. This legacy has been built on from the Klondike days, to the Rush to Nome to save a community, from defending our land from Japanese Invasion in WWII, to gaining statehood, and building an engineering marvel of a pipeline. It is up to us as Alaskans to continue building this legacy and cutting the education, healthcare, and other state systems is not the answer to continuing to better our future.

Respectfully,

Stephen Newman

Doniece Gott

From: Stephanie Presley & Nate Crossley [REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2019 7:07 PM
To: Sen. Peter Micciche; House Finance; Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Gary Stevens; Rep. Sarah Vance; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Rep. Louise Stutes
Subject: Governors budget

Our names are Nate Crossley and Stephanie Presley, 34009 Orlander Avenue, Seward. We are the proud parents of a 4 year old girl currently attending the Title 1 Pre-Kindergarten class at Seward Elementary School. We are caregivers to my father who was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's. We are active with the Civil Air Patrol and the Seward Prevention Coalition. We are public sector and oil field employees. We believe in providing excellent services to our community. We moved to Seward ten years ago because of the exceptional people, the wonderful sense of community, and the excellent reputations of the schools and educators. Basically because we felt Alaska, Seward and the Kenai Peninsula would be the best place to raise our children, care for our parents, and provide our family with the education and experiences they will need to be successful, productive members of our community and society.

The governor's proposed budget cuts are despicable. We expect our elected leaders, including our State legislators, to provide the people of our great state and our children the services needed to achieve this goal. Cuts proposed by the governor will shed thousands of jobs and drive families such as ours to leave the state. They would jeopardize the futures of our children and the health and well-being of thousands.

We expect our elected officials to prioritize our children and the future of our communities. We ask the finance committees to **fully fund, to the maximum cap, for K-12 education**. For small communities like Seward, we request a base level of acceptable staffing be included in the formula for funding.

We expect our legislators to **maintain levels of healthcare funding to care for our children and elderly**. We are in support of a reasonable state tax *for all industries* if it means funding for services for our most at needs populations such as our elderly.

We are in support of the new tax base from the cannabis industry being used to **fund education and programs for youth and young adults**. We are in support of smaller PFDs if it means greater support for early childhood, K-12, and college level education.

These are decisions that will impact our children and our future for years to come. As elected officials representing the people of our great state, we expect you to prioritize our children and the educators who guide them through this journey, health care and services for those unable to care for themselves, and not the big business that has dictated policy for so many decades.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

--

Stephanie Presley & Nate Crossley
[REDACTED]

"Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the things you did. Explore. Dream. Discover."

Doniece Gott

From: Gregg Kowalski >
Sent: Wednesday, March 06, 2019 6:17 AM
To: Sen. Bert Stedman; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins; House Finance; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget Bungle and Bruises

Dear Esteemed Colleagues,

An excellent education of Alaska's youth should be a priority of our great state. These children hold our future, our state's future, and our joint economic future in their hands. Any short sided, draconian cuts to education will hollow out the very substance of our life blood, draining our potential, capabilities and possibilities. We will then become dependent on outsiders, pawns of the privileged and minions of the government. Our proud spirit of independence as citizens of the Last Frontier will seriously be compromised.

I'll limit my permanent fund so quality education can still be done!

Respectfully,

Gregory Kowalski
Petersburg, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Carla Jenness <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 04, 2019 11:18 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Schools over PFD's

I vote education funding over a back PFD payment.

Please fully fund schools in Alaska. Shortchanging our kids is a failure of leadership and will result in an economic slowdown that no amount of oil taxes can fix. The PFD is not worth sacrificing kid's futures and eventually, the state as well. There are talented teachers all across Alaska googling, "Teacher salaries in....." anywhere but here. Please take a stand for Alaska's kids.

Thank you for your work.

Carla Jenness

Nikiski, Alaska

99635

Doniece Gott

From: Devin Drake <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2019 4:02 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Prioritize Education

Please prioritize education in this years budget cycle!

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: fam randall <907randalls@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 15, 2019 5:00 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Proposed Education cuts will have negative ripples for years to come

From: fam randall <907randalls@gmail.com>
Date: February 15, 2019 at 4:27:10 PM AKST
To: Sen.Mia.Costello@akleg.gov
Cc: DAVE <6drandall@gmail.com>
Subject: Proposed Education cuts will have negative ripples for years to come

To Finance committee,

I am a past Elem Educ teacher and current stay at home Mom of 6. I am also in the process of going back to school to get my Masters in social work.

To say I am alarmed and horrified at the proposed budget cuts to education is an understatement. Especially if the logic behind the cuts is that schools need to raise test scores to merit more \$. That thinking is backwards and naive.

The reality is that not only is ASD one of the biggest school districts in the nation, it is also the most diverse. Along with this diversity comes children who don't speak English at home nor are read to at home so naturally their reading scores are going to be lower than average especially for k-2 until they catch up with ELL services and other school resources. Further more our state has some of the highest rates of sexual assault and domestic violence- high ACEs scores that negatively affect learning, testing and focus abilities for children. Thus another valid reason why test scores are low but also a cry for help to pay for the needed resources/staff to support those children not take their funds away. Not a reason to stretch teachers further with more behavior problem/traumatized kids added to each classroom.

Alaska also has the highest rates of FASD especially in the villages. Alaska needs education on prenatal care and alcohol abuse and support for those fasd kids whose brains are permanently damaged because of their mother's alcohol consumption. Schools need money to support these FASD kids who yes also have lower test scores regardless of how good their teacher is because of their brains incapacity to think long term cause/affect or retain facts long term. GOv Dunleavy could spend \$ to proactively educate and rehabilitate alcoholic adults which then would increase their children's test scores but cutting funding to their schools certainly won't.

Finally for many kids in Alaska, school is their only safe place and way for them to have any hope of breaking the cycle of poverty. Part of that hope comes from extracurricular activities including sports which give them a positive outlet for their stress instead of drugs etc. as well as scholarship opportunities.

So is it possible to educate our kids with 300\$million less if we cut any services that support diversity or special needs or mental health? Yes, If gifted Educ "ignite" along with English language learner programs are cut, if sports and other extracurricular activities along with school counselors are reduced or cut along with special education. If mental health services, librarians, and custodians are cut than yes, quite possibly we could educate the children that don't have any mental, emotional or academic needs with Gov Dunleavy's proposed budget cuts. If we also increase class size from 30-40 kids across the district so that maxed out teachers who already can't meet the diversity of their students needs, can further fall behind, and then we could fire 25% of those teachers, then yes I'm sure we can educate our children with less money. Basically what I'm hearing from Gov Dunleavy is that if schools will take away the

diverse needs of its students and make them all the same, while asking teachers to do more with less time and money, then yes we can educate our children with 300\$million less.

For many kids, school with all its diverse services and extracurricular activities is their only source of hope. If that hope is cut down to a skeleton of what it was then the ripples of cutting education this drastically will be seen and felt for years to come in increased drug abuse, crime, violence, suicide, and homelessness and the highly educated leaving.

Personally I don't want to take away the diversity of our district, I want to support it. I don't want to ignore the children dealing with trauma on a daily basis, I want to nurture them to heal through trauma informed services that myself and other parents have proposed and are working with ASD to incorporate and yes, pay for....

I also don't want to see the loss of the love of learning or for some, the only reason why these bright kids want to come to school to go to ignite and honors and AP classes. I don't want to lose those kids who are our future problem solvers. If we take away the challenging classes to force them to mediocrity in a bigger class size of average learning and teaching material then they will have no reason to stay engaged in school and lose their potential to better the world OR their families who pay high property taxes and are strong educated workers in our community will move away.

Schools should be our top investment. There can be priorities of HOW to better allocate those resources to meet children's needs in the budget but to simply cut off the funds to meet those needs is unacceptable, appalling and thoughtless! Especially if the rational is because our states test scores are too low.

I am and always will be a defender of children. They deserve our best not our bare minimum!

Sincerely,

Sarah Randall

Alaska resident of 8 years

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Shonti and Bill [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2019 4:57 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Senate Education
Subject: support education funding!

Governor Dunleavy's proposed cuts are unthinkable.

Both the University of Alaska and K-12 schooling need more funding, certainly not less! Alaska has a duty to its citizens to provide an excellent education. That provides opportunity for our youth to be trained for Alaskan jobs.

Reduce the Permanent Fund giveaway for a few years, increase taxes on oil and gas, or create income taxes on the higher salaries to create more state revenue to make up for oil revenue losses. There are sensible ways to balance the budget. Dunleavy's proposal is unacceptable!

Doniece Gott

From: LIO Mat-Su
Sent: Friday, April 05, 2019 3:35 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School budget cuts

From: leanne brooks <jeanlean24@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 05, 2019 9:53 AM
Subject: School budget cuts

Thank you for taking time to read this email. I was writing to encourage you to please help find another route to the budget than by cutting school funding. My daughters both go to Academy Charter in Palmer where they receive an amazing education. A budget cut would directly effect my girls and their education by either reducing the teaching staff or increasing classroom size. Either of these changes would result in children falling through the cracks. Volunteering in the kindergarten class I can see firsthand how some students need more help than others and increasing class size or getting aides would cause these children to be left behind. Please consider alternate routes for budget cuts. Or children are our future and we cannot afford to let them down.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Leanne Brooks


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Doniece Gott

From: Shayla swain [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 07, 2019 11:37 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Save our Schools

Dear Finance Committee

I am writing this letter in support of the Moose Pass School, but also I support of all of the rural schools in the KPSD, and In support of our children's education.

How can our motto be "North to the Future" if we are taking the future away from our children, the future of this state?

How are we to believe that cutting all extra curricular programs in the KPSD provides an "adequate" education. How will our children stay mentally and physically healthy with no extracurricular activities?

The closing of the rural schools will decimate their communities. My family will be forced to leave the state, as I know many other families are looking at the same option. Our children's education is too important. What will this do to our local economy?

If our school closes, our children will be forced to ride the bus for over 2 hours a day, on a treacherous stretch of highway, to a school that is understaffed and over filled.

We currently have a great school with great educators. We have a low student to teacher ratio and individual learning plans. Which I believe the state of AK spent millions of dollars over the past few years trying to achieve these conditions in their schools.

I am not in support of the Moose Pass school closing.

I am not in support of the cuts to education.

I am in support of funding our school district with alternative funds. What about the reallocation of the marijuana Tax revenue? What about a sales tax or seasonal sales tax?

Thank you,
Shayla Swain

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone