

# House Finance Committee

## Public Testimony

### HB 205 – Operating Budget FY21

Emails received to

[HouseFinance@akleg.gov](mailto:HouseFinance@akleg.gov)

Feb 22 after 3:30p – Feb 26 1pm, 2020

**From:** David Sipos <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 21, 2020 7:10 PM  
**To:** LIO Anchorage <[Lio.Anchorage@akleg.gov](mailto:Lio.Anchorage@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** public tv and radio funding

Dear Legislatures on the Finance Committee

Please fund public tv and radio in Alaska. These are important educational and entertainment avenues in our state. Please help them to deliver the best programming possible with proper funding. Thank you.

David Sipos  
[REDACTED]  
Anchorage, AK 99508

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**From:** Jessie Phillips <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 23, 2020 3:43 PM  
**To:** House Finance <[House.Finance@akleg.gov](mailto:House.Finance@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Written Testimony: Addressing Domestic Violence In Alaska

Status of Domestic Violence Awareness 2020

Most concerning:

I fully suggest that [NCADV | National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#) Partner with The Department of Education, to develop Age Appropriate Material, To develop and educate Students on the topics of Raising Domestic Violence Awareness. Age Appropriate Material would look different for:

Kindergarten: Saying things like: "It's not ok to hit or be hit. It's not ok to be bullied at school and at home. It's not ok to be hurt, and if you are hurting, you need to tell somebody. Tell a teacher. Tell a police officer. Tell the school principal." Reinforce that adults are there for the children if somebody needs help to get out of a bad situation. Students of this age would often say they are "hurting", but don't know how to fully express how they feel, or how to say what is going on at home.

First through Sixth Grade: Reinforce what's taught in Kindergarten, plus saying things like: "If you know you are being bullied at school or at home, if you know someone else who is being bullied at school or at home, you need to tell somebody. School bullying is not ok, and we know the hurt that it causes. If you know of somebody who is being bullied, there is a National Bully Hotline to call: (And offer the call resources students can use) [HelpChat Line](#) Of course, children will want local numbers also. Those numbers look differently for someone living in California, than it does for someone living in New York or Alaska. Offer those resources to the children

also. Tell them about domestic violence shelters, if themselves or the parents need as additional take-home paperwork for the parents to sign.

Middle School/Junior High: Reinforce everything taught since Kindergarten through Sixth Grade: Plus we're going to educate students about depression and anxiety because of school bullying. This is the time to educate students about where it is ok to be touched, and not be touched. At this age, students are exploring their sexuality, they're particularly curious around this age as hormones begin to vamp up. We're going to offer them sex education, and teach them about

AIDS/HIV/STD's/Venerial Disease/Gonorrhea/Chlamydia/Herpes/ Herpes Simplex/Herpes Complex. Children at this age need to be taught about alcohol and drug addiction awareness. They see it at home, but they've not fully comprehended what's going on. Teach them that it's never ok to share prescription drugs that their parents take, its never ok to mix drugs (and explain how mixing drugs can be life threatening). Police Officers used to be particularly educated through D.A.R.E. Program in teaching students and to talk about this subject in individual classrooms, plus at a school rally as a large audience. Offer the D.A.R.E. program.

Freshman through Senior Year: Reinforce everything taught since Kindergarten through Junior High: Plus we're going to teach them Online Safety Awareness, explain why it's not ok to talk to strangers and the stranger danger that exists. We're going to educate them about human trafficking awareness and what human trafficking looks like. We're going to tell them if they know of any student that is caught in human trafficking, to tell somebody and help them get out of that situation. Offer the local phone numbers to call, you should be able to expect people calling because this is the ages the perverted adults are looking at to hire for human trafficking. Human trafficking mainly exists online, through chat rooms, we're going to tel them not to talk to strangers. It's ok for students to give parents their online social media passwords, and parents need additional education about human trafficking awareness. Seniors in particular, who are entering into college need to be aware of the statistics for women: Ages 18-24 Freshman Year college students are particularly aware of depression, social anxiety, and that 3 out of 4 Freshman Year college students is particularly expected to experience sexual assault while living on college campus. High School Students need to be told, that because of this, their first years of college need to be taken online in the safety of their homes.

Raising domestic violence awareness through school curricula and adding additional resources for these kids to take home with them needs to be a High School Graduation Requirement, countable with an expected 25-35 credits before High School graduation.

But again, why is all of this important? Why should I care? I am particularly concerned, over the next 30 to 120 years that oil and natural gas is expected to be fully depleted: Here is that online resource: [https://www.ourenergypolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/DNV-GL-Energy-Transition-Outlook-2017-oil-gas-lowres-single 3108 3.pdf](https://www.ourenergypolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/DNV-GL-Energy-Transition-Outlook-2017-oil-gas-lowres-single-3108-3.pdf)

Why should I be concerned? How does this affect raising domestic violence awareness? Oil and Natural Gas becomes fully depleted, the first resource to run out will be food supply. Grocery stores will be the first to experience citizens raiding food, because of the shortage of food supply chain. Think about the foods that you eat today, that comes in plastic packaging material. Rice will become invaluable, just for survival. Oil and Natural Gas are not renewable energies, and we already know that, so how can we move forward without the use of renewable energies? Our first outlook needs to be placed on raising windmills to drive water to the land and feed the crops. We need to be raising crops, starting today. We can't wait another 30 to 120 years down the road before our energy is gone. We need to examine seriously, the possibility of having electricity. The first crops to be farmed will be tree's, because that is going to offer some kind of warmth for homes who probably have some kind of wood stove or fireplace. When tree's are completely gone, the land will be barren, it will become dry land. We need to be planting more tree's in it's place. The use of having clean water will become vastly important, not only for farming, but also for drinking. We have examined what has happened to The Dust Bowl and California as becoming dry lands. We have seen cities go without clean water, such as the Flint Water Crisis that still isn't over. But windmill as a renewable energy is to solve these crises, as it runs clean water, even during dry conditions.

When asked what it looks like without oil and natural gas? There is a true story, that comes right out of Uganda. "The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind". We need to be looking at this, as a real possibility of future America, if we do not act today. [The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind | Netflix Official Site](#)

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From: Anne Brooks <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>  
Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2020 3:28 PM  
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
Subject: Alaska Public Media

I am sorry I missed the committee hearing regarding funding Alaska Public Media and Koahnic Broadcast Corporation I am afraid that we will not serve all of Alaska with important news and emergency information. Our state is

vast, this expense is important to the health, safety of Alaskans and visitors to Alaska. It is also critically important to a democracy to have news and information to aid in decision making at all levels of life. Our schools access the reporting on a myriad of items.

I support this state funding. I am willing to pay property taxes and forgo a portion of my permanent fund dividend to ensure that public radio is funded.

Marka Anne Brooks

[REDACTED]

Anchorage, AK 99508

907-[REDACTED]

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From: Margarete Keicher <[REDACTED].net>

Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2020 12:20 PM

To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

Subject: Testimony

I am a long time subscriber and supported of Public Media. These are the only Media I watch and listen to and I cannot imagine life without them. It would be one of the saddest events if they would ever disappear.

Please keep Public Radio and Public Television fully funded and alive, so many Alaskans depend on it, Quality of Life would be so much diminished without them.

Thank You.

Margarete Keicher

[REDACTED]

Anchorage, Ak 99509

Sent from my iPad

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**From:** 81akkayak@gmail.com [REDACTED].com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 23, 2020 11:34 AM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for Public Radio and TV

I support full funding which:

1. Creates a virtual statewide early learning classroom high-quality educational television content.,
2. Connects, informs, and encourages all Alaskans to engage in civil conversations and participate in the unique civic and cultural activities of our great state.
3. Distributes important news and cultural content.
4. Provides culturally relevant news/talk and entertainment programming to larger and underserved Alaska rural communities by sharing a variety of programming that keeps them connected, engaged, and informed.

Allows public Radio and TV stations to replace aging broadcast equipment while securing the only statewide communications infrastructure that provides potentially life-saving EAS and AWARN alerts, news, and information.

Regards,

Pamela Pope

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**From:** Jennifer Mannix <[REDACTED].com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 23, 2020 11:19 AM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Alaska Budget Priorities for FY21

Hello,

I have been a resident of Juneau for over 30 years and I would like you to please try accomplish the following funding priorities during this legislative session:

- **Please** increase (permanently) the base student allocation. Our schools' expenses increase yearly, and state funding has not been sufficient.
- **Please** restore funding to public radio
- **Please** fix this terrible ferry situation. I recognize that the problems with the ferries include several years of a terribly inadequate deferred maintenance program that has culminated in the perfect storm of no vessels available to provide essential services. This will require making up for these years of poor planning, but our ferry system is worth it! Living in Juneau, at least we have barges and regular airline service. No ferries in Southeast is absolutely devastating to our smaller Southeast communities.

- Finally, **please** figure out how to develop new, sustainable revenue source(s).

Thank you for all the hard work you put in for our state. I know the current state of Alaska's finances present significant challenges.

Jennifer Mannix

Juneau, AK 99801

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**From:** Rene J <[REDACTED].com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 22, 2020 8:09 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Public Radio Dillingham

Hi!

I would like to urge the legislature to continue to fund public radio in Rural Alaska! It's bad enough every other thing that is getting cut or costs an arm or a leg out here. Not funding what little we have left is an insult. Please see that this doesn't happen.

Thank You,  
Rene Johnson  
Dillingham

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Rene

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**From:** kate palmer <[REDACTED].com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 22, 2020 6:54 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; kate palmer <kateypalmer@yahoo.com>  
**Subject:** alaska marine highway

To: the House Finance Committee  
RE: Alaska Marine Highway

I am a resident of Haines, Alaska and thought that having fewer ferries/week would not be a big deal. Now that we have had no service since January, it has become crystal clear to me how critical the ferries are to all lives in Southeast and out west. I never knew how much citizens in small and large towns relied on ferry service to:

- 1) receive essential products including FOOD, prescription medicine, medical equipment,
- 2) ship out products manufactured or provided by local business enterprises such as wood products from a Tenakee Springs business,
- 3) provide essential transportation for individuals who need immediate medical attention, specialty medical services, and regular appointments, who are unable to fly--if there is an airport in the town and IF the weather allows flying--because they must be on oxygen and/or are on an electric wheelchair, or have conditions which do not allow flying,
- 4) provide transportation for workers who commute to and from remote jobs in the state, such as the Kensington Mine,

- 5) provide transportation for school children to participate in activities in other communities, for example, sporting competitions and drama and debate competitions, all of which are essential for our children to develop social, physical, intellectual skills that will help them become good and capable human beings,
  - 6) provide transportation to other communities for cultural exchanges, hunting, fishing, and wilderness experiences, visiting family members,
  - 7) provide servicing of vehicles such as the Haines senior van without which seniors become shut-ins especially in the winter,
  - 8) provide ADA type transportation for citizens who have disabilities and are unable to travel otherwise,
  - 9) USPS mail when there are no planes able to fly,
- ETC.

I have only begun to understand how many citizens' lives, well-beings, health, families, pocketbooks, and businesses, etc. depend on the ferries as their lifelines.

The Alaska Marine Highway is not intended to make a profit, just as the paved roads are not intended to make profits. They both provide the essential service of moving and connecting people and essential products and services across the state. Living in Southeast Alaska is **not** what has been called a "lifestyle choice". When I first came to Alaska 40 years ago, there was a functional Alaska Marine Highway which I assumed was provided as a government service to the many towns and villages in coastal Alaska. When my family moved here 30+ years ago, I assumed Haines had ferry transportation and would into the future. I did not anticipate that it would be considered non-essential and put on the chopping block. It is too vital a lifeline for coastal Alaska to do without. Please do not let Alaskan infrastructure crumble, do not allow communities to wither and blow away. Keep coastal communities alive.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Katharine Palmer



Haines, AK 99827

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From: Harry and Jean Holt <[REDACTED].net>  
Sent: Saturday, February 22, 2020 4:08 PM  
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
Subject: 2020 BUDGET

Dear Legislators,

As Alaskans of this Great State we would like to make public comment to the 2020 Budget before you. We are in total opposition of the outrageous amounts of monies wanting to be spent. The lobbyists of the Non-Profits, Universities, Native Corporations, and the Unions are controlling the strings down in Juneau. Totally wrong to have control of power by a few by a binding caucus with the legislators too. This is not representation of Alaskans. We voted for a sustainable budget not giving out to all these lobbyist's special interests. The Alaska we want for the future is a Budget we can live with, a Full PFD to Alaskans and Opportunities of our natural resources for future generations.

Sincerely,

Harry and Jean Holt

Palmer, Alaska

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**From:** Laura Buchheit <[REDACTED].com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 22, 2020 5:00 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** public testimony re: Alaska 2021 state budget

To: House Finance Committee  
Re: Alaska 2021 state budget

I recognize that the state budget is a challenging process. Thank you for your hard and conscientious work.

From my research, it seems as if the Governor's proposed budget is not much changed from the 2020 budget. There are several areas I am glad to see no proposed cuts, such as preKindergarten and K-12 public education, medicaid, Pioneer Homes.

I urge you to continue to prioritize K-12 education, early childhood education, medicaid, Pioneer Homes, public safety, natural resource protection. I am concerned about continued cuts to University of Alaska, even if pre-arranged. I am concerned about the inadequately funded Alaska State Marine Highway System.

However, the amount the Governor proposes drawing on the CBR is too much and too risky. I urge you to reevaluate sources of state income. Consider higher taxes on resource extraction businesses, a reevaluation of the PFD, and a state income tax. Alaskans need state funded public services more than an inflated PFD.

Know that we are paying attention, we support our state, and we value the work of the legislature. We are not budget experts and, while living our busy lives focused on our own jobs and supporting our families, we do not have the time to study the intricacies of the budget - we are relying on you to make wise decisions for the people of Alaska. We will continue to comment through the process.

My family supports Alaska. However, my daughter is looking outside of Alaska for her high school education - with the recent decreases in state investment of public education, she feels that her future is compromised if she stays in Alaska for high school. We hope that the trend of diminishing investment in Alaska's public education will change.

Thank you for your work.

Sincerely,  
Laura Buchheit  
Gustavus, AK 99826

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**From:** Janet McCabe <[REDACTED]@akleg.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 22, 2020 4:59 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Operating Budget Testimony

Testimony on Operating Budget Friday February 21, 2020, 5-6:45 PM

To House Finance Committee

Good evening.

For the record, I'm Janet McCabe Chair of the Board of Directors of Partners for Progress. We are the nonprofit organization that runs Partners Reentry Center in

Anchorage. We work in close coordination with the Department of Corrections, Anchorage Coalition and many others.

First, thank you for current and past years' funding for **Reentry Program Services**. Our contract is with the Division of Behavioral Health, DHSS. For FY 2021 a new competitive RFP will be issued subject to available funding.

Located in easy walking distance from the prison, our Reentry Center helps nearly all of the homeless people with a felony record reentering the community in Anchorage. They are the people who are most likely to commit a new crime and go back to prison.

Our temporary housing, employment assistance and supportive services have been key to closing the revolving door. We have contributed to the state's 5% drop in recidivism since 2015.

I ask that you continue this essential public safety funding for Reentry Program Services in Anchorage.

Thank you,

Janet McCabe, Anchorage

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**From:** Heather Birch <[REDACTED].com>

**Sent:** Saturday, February 22, 2020 4:59 PM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Senate Finance <Finance.Calendar@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jennifer Johnston <Rep.Jennifer.Johnston@akleg.gov>; Sen. Cathy Giessel <Sen.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov>; Sen. Cathy Giessel <Sen.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Please Support Public Education in Alaska through HB 205

Dear Alaska Senators and Representatives,

I am writing to you to voice my concerns with the Governor's proposed operating budget (HB 205) and it's drastic cuts to K-12 public education.

This year's budget is \$1.5 billion lower than where we were 5 years ago which is a 43% cut in state government. I have heard that legislators have proposed adding \$10 million back in for The University of Alaska and added protection for Head Start and traditional pre-kindergarten grants, which is wonderful, however, what is concerning to me, is that **the Governor's proposed budget for K-12 schools next year excludes \$30 million distributed to schools this year. Unless the House and Senate act, next year, schools across the state will face the equivalent of \$30 million in cuts.** This will crush our public school system and is unacceptable.

The primary responsibility of State government should be in maintaining our schools, infrastructure and transportation. Instead, the Governor would like to see everyone receive a full dividend at the expense of everything else. It is our kids, the future of our State, who suffer the most from these cuts to education. I've seen first hand, as a parent of two children, Mason and Ellie, ages 12 and 14, and active member of our school PTA, how teachers have been asked to do more and more with less and it is costing our kids a quality education by eliminating important programs (like Health and IGNITE in the ASD) and increasing class sizes.

How can we expect to have a strong, educated work force in the future if we are failing our kids now? Education IS THE KEY to the health of our State and I sincerely hope you will vote to eliminate these \$30 million in cuts and consider FORWARD FUNDING education for the next year so school districts are able to plan and avoid pink slipping employees every year due to budget uncertainty. If we want to keep good teachers, we need to stop jerking them around every year and show that we value and support them in educating our children.

In short, **please stand up against the Governor's proposed cuts to Education and vote to eliminate the cuts and forward fund education in Alaska.**

Our kids are counting on you!

Thank you,

Heather Birch, Parent and PTA President at Rabbit Creek Elementary

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**From:** kaiya kaltenborn <[REDACTED].com>

**Sent:** Saturday, February 22, 2020 4:58 PM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Written Testimony: Education

Hi,

My name is Kaiya Kaltenborn. I live in Anchorage, Alaska. I am writing in support of forward funding for public education K-12 and raising the BSA. I am also writing to support pre-school education and a comprehensive not component based health curriculum taught by health educators.

Forward funding allows educators to have security in their fields and reduces pink slips. It helps parents know that their school programs are safe and the schools will be able to maintain current programs for the next

year. It also stops the pointless work of our district and school board budget process without the knowledge of state money.

Over the last decade we have made great strides in our Anchorage School District health education programs. There is evidence in our Anchorage YRBS to prove that health educators who are designated specifically to teaching health are making a difference. The CDC also recently released a report stating that a comprehensive health program taught by trained health specific educators is best practice. A comprehensive health curriculum is very important. Health should not be compartmentalized and should not be taught by guest speakers who have no relationships built with students. They do not know best practice for student discussion and are not familiar with educational philosophy when teaching sensitive health topics. Thank you for all the hard work that you do and making difficult decisions. I hope that forward funding education falls into the easy decision category. Thank You, Kaiya Kaltenborn

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**From:** Brittany Sofia <[REDACTED].com>

**Sent:** Saturday, February 22, 2020 4:41 PM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Forward funding education

House Finance Committee Members,

I'm writing to encourage you to support fully forward funding education. The stability it creates benefits communities, families, and schools. Programs need consistent funding to be effective. Think staffing and resources.

Teachers need to know they will have a job. Many leave the state, because of uncertainty. Alaska does not offer new teachers a great retirement plan and it would be beneficial to, at the least, create job certainty.

Please consider these points as you move forward.

Forward funding has helped kids in Alaska in the past. Let's do it again!

Thanks for your time,

Brittany Bauman

[REDACTED]

Anchorage, Alaska

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**From:** Thomas Wilson <[REDACTED]aol.com>

**Sent:** Saturday, February 22, 2020 4:27 PM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Cc:** Sen. Tom Begich <Sen.Tom.Begich@akleg.gov>; Rep. Geran Tarr <Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov>; Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>; skycabinairships@aol.com

**Subject:** Comments on the Alaska Budget

Thomas R. Wilson

[REDACTED]

Anchorage, Alaska 99508

[REDACTED]

February 22, 2020

Alaska House Finance Committee

Legislative Affair agency

Via: e-mail

To the Honorable Members of the Alaska House Finance Committee;

## ALASKA'S BUDGET, COMMENTS BY THOMAS R. WILSON

My primary bias is toward the progress & promotion of the Sciences. Really any and all programs that collect, collate or analyze data are worthy of their own right. Specifically, the Alaska Legislature should seek to protect the seismic stations recently added to the net-work feeding the Tsunami/Earthquake duty station. Long term data from this effort will be invaluable and may help everyone from geologists & miners to structural engineers. Other areas that should be maintained or enhanced are:

Oceanicgraphic studies to track the changes due to the industrial and agricultural power of our civilization that are happening to the global climate.

Fishery management, it is a scientific study with practicable impacts on one of Alaska's larger industries. Sound management will feed millions for generations.

The science & engineering department our our universities are vitally important as are all the other areas of study. A fine "Liberal Arts" education yields a more contented life than most anything else one can think of and tends to allow an individual, so educated, with a wide range of career opportunities.

Education K thru 12 should not be further harassed nor damaged as has been done by the current administration. Maintaining a variety of educational channels from traditional schools, charter schools, language & even science emersion schools will provide the children of Alaska with first class opportunities where-ever they may choose to live.

The all but murderous damage inflicted by the current Governor Dunleavy administration upon the Alaska Marine Highway flies in the face of the future and general progress of Alaska, its economy, access and intra-state transportation. Instead of merely repairing (and in shorter order) the salvageable fleet, a new vision for the future is in order. It is long past time to

order modern Ocean going ferry-ships with all the state of the art bells & whistles. Order them now, pay for them later. Alaska should open up the Bering Sea & the Arctic Ocean plying between all the coastal towns & cities, the island communities and the Russian coastal communities on those waters.

Having a number of new ocean going ships will serve many purposes besides reducing the costs of transporting people, their vehicle and goods, it will allow more effective scientific monitoring of those seas & their habitat, monitor the increased shipping via the now open (summertime/Fall) Arctic Ocean passages and provide rescue capability to any disaster man-made or natural occurrence that will occur in those regions. The State of Alaska having a presence is a value itself.

Those ocean going ferries open up another means of enhancing transportation of people & goods in Alaska and that is by opening up much of interior Alaska by building and operating a fleet of Riverboats. These Riverboats would again be fully modern, equipped with large driven wheels or treads to allow them to overcome sandbars and debris as well as to climb ashore just before freeze-up to serve as a wintertime state office, general hotel (small), restaurant, store, tavern, trooper station with holding. The ship will be adjacent to frozen rivers such as the Kuskokwim, Yukon, Tanana, Nenana and Kobuk. Access via ski plane to the outer Alaska and serve as way stations for the wintertime ice roads.

Really, Alaska needs all of its governmental departments, divisions & sections. It is incredibly presumptuous to even imply that they were established without valid reason or extensive overview and intentional design. Just because some political people choose to hate government does not make their essentially "Know-Nothing" ideology valid. At times one wonders if it is really a systematic studied Know-Nothingism. The state government is not populated with jack-booted thugs & let me include the Troopers and Corrections officers in that description.

The complexity of the multitude of tasks found even within the government of the Municipality of Anchorage far exceeds any private corporation including General Electric & Hughes Aircraft. There are many

hundreds of specialized technical scientific, engineering, health, computer and many other skills, trades and responsibilities involved in a modern government even in a low population state such as Alaska. By the way, they are not as well paid as they ought to be and a return to Tier 1, to help retain institutional memory is a worthy reform to anti-governmental counter-productive 'reforms' of the past. Real open & honest government does not come cheap.

Finally, to finance these suggestions, the Alaska Legislature should devise and enact a truly progressive income tax levied on all who gain money or wealth in our state. This income tax should not be tied to the bowdlerized federal mess administrated by the IRS. All with incomes & especially the very well off should be proud to pay their "Fair Share".

Enact the only use of the U.S. Constitution's single general tax, the "Per Capitation" or Head tax. Say, One Hundred dollars each year from every man woman and child in Alaska for more than, say, three days. Every Citizen, Fisher-person, Oil worker or executive, every soldier stationed in Alaska & their family, every tourist, even diplomats. They would all get a photo ID and for a fee a "Real ID, an Alaskan one but maybe with smart card features if they choose to pay for those added costs, as well. Making the ID photo-computers to serve the million or so tourists would allow State of Alaska officers to go out to villages in the winter and produce Real IDs for the rural population (a problem in need of a solution).

Fully fund the state government, it is a necessity, but not an evil one. Ignor the public desire to veto taxes, just raise the revenue to balance the budget and with that in mind, please heed the First Power assigned by the U. S. Constitution and that is the responsibility of the Congress (our Legislature) to Raise & Collect taxes. Its the top of your 'to do list'!

Sincerely;

Thomas R. Wilson ~ Territorial Lad e.g. 61 year resident, retired scientific & engineering technician, Honorably Discharged Veteran and local University Graduate



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From: Joan Franz <[REDACTED].com>  
Sent: Saturday, February 22, 2020 4:10 PM  
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
Subject: Testimony regarding Proposed Operating Budget

Dear House Finance Committee Members:

I am writing to ask the following regarding the proposed budget:

Reject HB 138. This bill attempts to circumvent the ability of our local government to protect our water from mining. With Brune as DEC commissioner, I feel that we need to be especially cautious about how we protect our air, water and land from pollution. A recent talk at the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce made clear that his and this administration motto of "Alaska is Open for Business" with no clear understanding or plan of how to protect public health or the environment discussed.

Restore the Alaska Ferry System Budget and keep the ferries in good repair.

Reject the lottery as a source of income. This is not a reasonable nor helpful source of revenue.

Propose a Progressive income tax as a revenue source

Support consistent funding for Education across the state

No more cuts to the university and propose restoration of the budget in arctic climate research, air pollution research and other areas relevant to public health

Protect grants available to Alaskan students attending UA.

Develop a comprehensive Public Health Plan that includes protection of all residents from air, water and land pollution. Do not allow resource development and corporations such as oil and gas or mining interests to supersede Alaskans right to protect and have a pristine environment that is not damaged for us now and for future generations. This administration

has not shown an interest nor proper concern for quality of life issues that will effect all Alaskans now and into the future.

Thank you for any work that protects our public health and the environment.

Joan Franz

[REDACTED]

Fairbanks. Ak 99709

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**From:** Stephanie Berglund <sberglund@threadalaska.org>

**Sent:** Saturday, February 22, 2020 4:03 PM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** FY21 operating budget testimony

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the attached testimony for the FY21 State of Alaska Operating Budget.

Thanks, Stephanie Berglund

CEO, thread

[sberglund@threadalaska.org](mailto:sberglund@threadalaska.org)

(907) 265-3101

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February 22, 2020

Dear State of Alaska House Finance Committee members,

On behalf of **thread**, I am writing in support of investing in Alaska's early childhood programs and services and to urge you to continue support for early childhood funding as proposed in the Governor's budget. Please include support for vital early learning services in the FY21 State of Alaska operating budget.

**thread** is Alaska's Child Care Resource and Referral Network, a 34 year old private nonprofit that works across the state to increase access to affordable and quality early childhood education. Decades of research demonstrate that quality early childhood education programs, including child care, PreK and Head Start, make a difference. They make a difference not just in the short term to better support children being more prepared for school, but in the long term as children grow up, become employed and contribute to the strength of our economy.

Early childhood programs provide critical early education and community services for families, and support quality early learning. A strong early childhood sets the stage for success in life. Investments in early childhood support research that Alaska will have long lasting benefits for not only young children, but their families, communities and our state economy. Early and sustained participation in quality early education leads to more children graduating high school, higher lifetime earnings, reduced public spending on remedial education and lower incarceration rates. We can invest now or pay more later. High quality early childhood education programs are among the most cost effective interventions we can make with long term pay- off.

As you make budget decisions, I urge you to think of the long term investment and impact that early childhood programs make and continue to support this important funding.

**Thank** you for your time and support of young children and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephanie Berglund'.

Stephanie Berglund, MSW  
CEO, **thread** Alaska's Child Care Resource and Referral Network  
(907) 265-3101, sberglund@**thread**alaska.org

**From:** Johann Timmers <Johann.Timmers@akleg.gov>

**Sent:** Monday, February 24, 2020 3:14 PM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Steve Heimel HB 205 Testimony

Here's public testimony given by Steve from last Friday's meeting.

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9

# ANCHORAGE LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Anchorage.lio@akleg.gov 907-269-0111/ phone, 907-269-0229/fax

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME: STEVE HEIMEL

REPRESENTING: SELF

BILL#/ SUBJECT: H 205 BUDGET  
COMMITTEE &

HEARING DATE: 2/21/2020

ATTACHED

# State Funding for Public Broadcasting is Essential to Maintain Alaska's Leadership 2/21/20

by Steve Heimel [acme@gci.net](mailto:acme@gci.net)

Very quickly I want to urge the Legislature to restore state funding for public broadcasting. It is an investment in a positive future for us, just as public education is. In fact, the federal licenses for public broadcasting actually call it "noncommercial educational," rather than "public" broadcasting. But we all know that in Alaska, it's more than just educational. It's a cultural resource, a civic asset, an entertainment venue, a catalyst of social cohesion, an avenue of expression for members of the public, and an essential part of our emergency preparedness and resilience.

I say public "broadcasting" rather than public "media" because we pay for our cellphones and I-pads and internet connections, even for cable, but broadcasting is free. All you need is a receiver. That's especially important to rural areas, where bandwidth grows thin and costly. If you have batteries, public broadcasting will at the very least get you through the power outage that often comes with emergencies. You probably already know that locally originated commercial broadcasting is not economically sustainable in rural areas. I want to stress to you that without state funding, public broadcasting as well will decline in Alaska's rural areas.

It seems to me that Alaska has a way of failing to appreciate when it is in a leadership position. This is true in arctic science, cold weather construction, oilfield technology, aviation, telemedicine, and many other fields. It is particularly true in telecommunications, and has been for more than a century. One of the world's first undersea communication cables went to Nome. The military and then Alascom built a high latitude telecommunications network that led the world. But I want to zero in on what I know most about, which was the leadership that Alaska has in public broadcasting. This is something that is well recognized elsewhere. Public broadcasters with Alaska experience are preferred hires throughout the industry. It's said that in two years a young journalist can get experience here that they wouldn't be able to get in five years anywhere else in public broadcasting. This is because, unlike elsewhere, public media are a

primary news source in the state. Alumnae of Alaska public broadcasting are all over the world - in management and technical fields as well as the content field. And I literally mean all over the world, in places like Albania, Mongolia, Ukraine, and many other regions where populations need their own public communication utility.

The state needs to maintain its investment in a positive future for Alaska, and public broadcasting is part of that positive future.

I want to elaborate on this issue of Alaska's leadership in broadcasting. Industry pioneer Augie Hebert said it was the Alaska Public Radio Network and its president Diane Kaplan that did more than anyone else to empower Alaska Natives in the industry. This leadership has now reached all over the continent with more than 200 stations affiliated with Native Voice One, established by Alaska's Koahnic Broadcasting.

The Alaska Public Radio Network and its member stations remains the backbone of the statewide system, with a lengthy list of accomplishments in news and programming that would take many more pages to list. I was a major part of much of that leadership for more than 30 years, and I can tell you that state funding has been absolutely critical to keeping that backbone sturdy and reliable, and innovating.

Here are a few other leadership accomplishments you may not know about.

When the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration established the Public Radio Satellite System, which forced and proved this technology for the entire industry - commercial as well as non-commercial - they decided that Alaska's population was too low and the technology too risky at high latitudes to justify building a regional uplink there. It was up to the Alaska public radio stations to even get downlink dishes installed and demonstrated in Kotzebue and Barrow. And then it took work on the policy front by both the State of Alaska and the state's public broadcasting system, with the support of Senator Ted Stevens to generate separate funding to construct the Alaska uplink, which allowed programming generated in Alaska to reach the rest of the nation. This is what leadership

looks like - the only uplink in the entire system paid for locally instead of by NTIA.

Alaska was also critical to prompting a critical policy change regarding minimum staffing requirements for public radio stations to receive any basic federal funding at all. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting set that standard at five employees, a standard many rural volunteer-dependent stations were unable to attain. Combined with the very few rural local public radio entities in the Lower 48, public radio in Alaska made the case that CPB was under-serving and even impeding rural public broadcasting, and eventually succeeded. This is what leadership looks like.

Alaska pioneered statewide call-in radio shows before National Public Radio did. We still have the most developed regional public broadcasting news operation in the nation. Alaska needs to keep its public broadcasting system, our public media system, in the front ranks in the nation and the world.

Stations throughout the system have done a great job of diversifying their funding sources, but it's important to remember that every project funded by a foundation has restricted funding and does not pay for operating expenses. The listenership of public broadcasting has greatly increased the amount it contributes to our budgets in the 20 years since the state began reducing its support to the Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission. The listeners are carrying their share of the load. The state government needs to acknowledge its responsibility as well.



**From:** Sarah Ferrency <[REDACTED].org>

**Sent:** Monday, February 24, 2020 1:09 PM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins <Rep.Jonathan.Kreiss-Tomkins@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Support BSA Increase

Dear House Education Committee,

I am writing to express my support for any and all increases to the BSA. Annually, the cost of providing a quality education increases, as a result of inflation, health insurance premium increases, and other unavoidable economic factors. This means that a flat BSA is a real annual funding reduction of 3% or more. At the same time, the Legislature imposes unfunded mandates such as the Alaska Safe Children's Act and the proposed mental health education requirement. As a former health teacher, I strongly support these measures, but it is very difficult to simply add in instruction in these areas at every grade level. Small grants to buy curriculum and training do help, but they don't help with the structural changes needed. What do we really need to do this well? A dedicated health teacher at every school. But small grants can't get you there. A BSA increase is the best approach to ensure a quality, well-rounded education.

Thank you for your service in the Legislature and your commitment to Alaska's future.

Sarah Ferrency  
Co-Assistant Superintendent  
Sitka School District  
(907)966-1264  
Fax: (907)966-1260

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**From:** Margaret Oswald <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, February 24, 2020 10:55 AM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Long term plans for revenues are needed for our state.

Long term plans for revenues are needed for our state.

I hear people saying they support many programs, but it is always they support them as long as someone else pays for programs - like the oil companies or Federal dollars. I do not think we can depend on oil revenues as we have in the past. Using the PFD would only provide a temporary fix.

We often expect federal dollars to bail us out. Federal dollars come from tax payers, many of whom already pay state taxes in their own state. I have heard so many people from other states complain about spending federal dollars in Alaska when we don't pay any state taxes. We cannot depend on federal dollars.

***Our state needs to re-establish reasonable state taxes in order to be prepared for the long term future.***

No one wants to pay taxes. It would be very bad to have high taxes - that is not what I am suggesting. Zero taxes with large dividends is obviously not working. Our infrastructure is deteriorating. Transportation systems are failing. (Example ferry systems - people would not expect the road from Anchorage to Palmer to pay for itself or make a profit, but they do expect the ferry system to pay for itself or be profitable. The ferry system is part of the state transportation system, just as the roads are. The ferry system has not been maintained and is failing.) Failure of transportation is creating food insecurity. Education systems are at risk. Communication systems are at risk. Safety is at risk. Alaska is at risk!

We need to be frugal. We need to take care of the tax dollars paid. But, we also need to plan for our long term future. We need to pay our own way. Zero taxes is not paying our own way or planning for the future. ***We need to re-establish a reasonable state tax to prepare for the future.***

Thank you,  
Margaret Oswald

[REDACTED]  
Anchorage AK 99515

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**From:** LIO Wrangell <Lio.Wrangell@akleg.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 24, 2020 10:08 AM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Wrangell written testimony

Please find attached written testimony for HB205, State Budget from Wrangell. Thank you,

# Wrangell Legislative Information Office

Wrangell.lio@akleg.gov

Phone: 907-874-3013 Fax: 907-874-3955

Name: Mama Garmia  
Address: [REDACTED] Wrangell AK 99929  
Representing: Crokins Subststance, TAGING, INFO  
Bill #/Subject: HB 205  
Committee: HFIN  
Hearing Date: 02/22/2020

## Written Testimony

We been an Alaskan Resident since 1991.  
We recently learned our local office will  
close.

We owned Alaskan Business's, This  
will cost the State more money to  
close this office.

All the tags "crokins mail", The Web Site  
will NOT be able to complete many  
types of transactions, and inspections  
and Moose Verification.

We need to save money in our state,  
YES; However this is not business  
minded. Please do not close ~~AB~~

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**From:** Mike <[REDACTED].com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020 2:31 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for Ocean Rangers program

To the Chair and Members.

Thank you for taking my comments. My name Mike Stainbrook and I live in Petersburg. Please move forward on revitalizing the Ocean Ranger program. This program should be maintained and continued it was a success and can continue to be.

Thank You Mike Stainbrook

**From:** Mike <mstainbrookak@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020 2:20 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support for Public Radio HB 205 FY 2021

To the Chair and Members of House Finance,

Thank you for taking my comments. My name is Mike Stainbrook and I live in Petersburg. I listen to KFSK here in Petersburg and when we travel in Southeast I listen to other fine stations. For information, weather, news and emergency notifications, Public Radio is pivotal to Alaska. Especially for immediate community emergency situations Public Radio provides a service that is unmatched and vital.

When the public needs to be notified in short order of a crisis situation Public Radio is the way to do it.

We need Public Radio. Please fully fund Public Radio.

Thank You Mike Stainbrook

**From:** Mike <[REDACTED].com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020 1:50 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support funding for the AMHS HB 205

Greetings to the Chair and Members,

My name is Mike Stainbrook and I live in Petersburg and have used the AMHS for years. I urge the House Finance to move to fund the AMHS to a level that is adequate to provide the necessary services for Coastal Alaska. The need is for regular full time mainline ferry service for our coastal communities. We need car carrying, overnight, meal serving vessels that are maintained and regularly replaced before they are obsolete. Overnight car carrying mainline ferries are required so as they can be replacements for any and all routes. The health and welfare of coastal communities depend on the AMHS as the interior does on the road system.

Thank You Mike Stainbrook

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**From:** Connie A. Newman [REDACTED].com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020 1:22 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Ferry Service for remote alaska

*Honorable Alaskan Representatives,*

*I would like to thank you for your continued hard work to fund essential services such as our public schools and our state ferry system.*

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**From:** MISTY HOLLER <[REDACTED].net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020 12:53 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** BSA

Please help our schools be the best place for Alaskan students to succeed, please increase BSA!  
Thank you,  
Misty Holler

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**From:** emil tucker <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020 11:33 AM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support Public Radio

I am writing in support of support of public radio in Alaska. Public radio is an important part of rural life. It is important for the state to provide funding for public radio because a key part of transparent governance is the ability to disseminate information broadly among the constituency. Public radio in rural Alaska is a working and broadly available method to share all kinds of information including: emergency broadcasts, public health and safety information as well as local news, local weather and community announcements.

Last fiscal year the Alaska budget removed all funding for public radio. While all the stations are still on the air, it is not a sustainable situation. Running a threadbare budget means that there is no ability to act preventatively to replace equipment whether it be the roof of a building, a transmitter or a computer. There is no ability to give employees raises for COLA or performance. There is no flexibility.

Please ensure that there is funding for public radio in the 2021 Alaska Operating budget.

thank you,

Emil Tucker  
Petersburg, AK.

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**From:** Donna Gardino <[REDACTED].com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020 9:38 AM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Cc:** Donna Gardino <djgardino@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** HB205 and HB206

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed operating budget for FY2021. The governor's spending plan is more than \$1.5 billion in the red and he hasn't offered a single big-dollar specific proposal to substantially close the gap for this year's budget deliberations. Budget cuts would have to be too draconian for most Alaskans to do the job alone; dividends would have to be reduced by more than most Alaskans want. Thus, I offer the following:

1. Supplemental PFD of \$815 million: The Governor's proposal would cost \$815.9 million and be paid with Permanent Fund earnings, according to his budget office. He additionally has called for a dividend in line with the formula for 2020, which the Legislative Finance Division has said would equate to checks of about \$3,100 a person. This is unfathomable in today's financial climate and I truly hope **the legislature does not spend their limited time on this bill**. I choose not to waste any more of my time considering this supplemental appropriation.
2. Permanent Fund Formula: Cutting spending on state services is a fool's errand. We have heard the experts state, over four years ago, that you could fire all state employees and still not succeed in obtaining a balanced budget. One of the keys to reducing the state deficit is revisiting the PFD formula. This can no longer be kicked down the road. I am disappointed that this was not one of the first bills to be presented this legislative session. Times change, the fiscal environment changes, the number of people in Alaska changes, the price of oil changes, the quantity of oil changes. The PFD formula must change, too. This is critical to the survival of our state. The biggest reason the governor's budget is \$1.5 billion out of balance is the insistence to pay an unsustainable dividend, at any cost. I urge all the **legislators to agree on a plan to sustainably share Alaska Permanent Fund earnings between public services and dividends and balanced spending**.
3. Oil tax credits: **Return the oil tax rate to an appropriate and deserved level**. This could help solve many budgetary problems, most importantly the budget gap that keeps continuing because **the governor and the Legislature refuse to look to new revenues to solve our budget shortfalls**. It has been widely stated that Hilcorp takes over declining wells, thus the recent departure of BP. Why would one of the largest holders of North Slope assets decided to walk? Because they know the days of increasing production are over. We must raise revenue with the resources we have now, solve today's problem, and move to make a transition to a future we can afford and in which we haven't wrecked what we already have by underfunding it and destroying the state government.

4. State lottery: A state lottery could raise \$8-15 million a year according to a 2015 report. A lottery would almost certainly have some negative impact on current gaming activities such as pull tabs and raffles that support numerous nonprofits in the state. Many of these nonprofits are supporting efforts that would typically be funded by the state. Given the \$1.5 billion deficit, a **lottery is not the solution to the state's financial situation.**

5. Motor Fuel Tax Increase: These user fees have not increased since 1970. The dividend is inflation-proofed but not this user fee. This should be a no-brainer. The DOT&PF has been cut too much already and we, the users, are paying for it through increased maintenance costs on our vehicles and decreased safety on our roadways. The trucking industry supports this increase. **I ask that you support a motor fuel tax increase.**

6. Income tax: A progressive income tax would take much more from the people making the most money in Alaska (both residents or non-residents) and not unduly penalize the poorest Alaskans like what would happen with a dividend reduction or a sales tax. I know the legislators know this. This is not a new concept. **Reinstate the income tax.**

7. **Matching funds for federal dollars:** These should be maximized for every department! Another no-brainer. This is a fundamental way we can continue to provide our citizens the best health, welfare, quality of life, transportation and educational needs.

8. I have chosen to take a 30,000 foot view of the budget but I must emphasize that I support the programs that provide for the health and quality of life to the residents of Alaska and further cuts will do irreparable harm. I want an Alaska that will help children thrive and our elders to be cared for as they age. I want public schools, public broadcasting, libraries, and university level education and research. We need to fund our VPSOs, troopers, magistrates, judges, courts, detention facilities, and rehabilitation facilities. Public health clinics (for physical and emotional health) are essential. Airports, bridges, ferries, roads, docks make our economy work.

Finally, an operating budget must be finalized prior to the end of the fiscal year to avoid losing critical federal dollars that fund many of the services that Alaskans enjoy. These funds cannot be placed in jeopardy like they were this fiscal year. Please take the lead in moving our state in a positive direction.

Thank you. Donna J. Gardino

Fairbanks, AK

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**From:** bo <[REDACTED].com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020 9:26 AM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Daniel Varsano spouting off in support of Ocean Rangers

Hello,

I would like to submit a comment about the ocean ranger program.

I'm in support of reinstating the former ocean ranger program. This program worked well and paid for itself, costing the state nothing. We need to protect Alaska's pristine waters, and this program is an effective way to monitor the cruise ship industry and make sure they are following best practices. The DEC is already stretched thin with reduced funding due to budget cuts. They do not have the time, resources, or expertise to do an adequate job of monitoring the increasing number of cruise ships that are visiting Alaska each year.

Please reinstate the former ocean ranger program funded by cruise ship head taxes!

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Daniel Varsano

[REDACTED]

Petersburg, AK 99834

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**From:** Marja Smets <[REDACTED].com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020 8:55 AM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Ocean ranger program

Hello,

I would like to submit a comment about the ocean ranger program.

I'm in support of reinstating the former ocean ranger program. This program worked well and paid for itself, costing the state nothing. We need to protect Alaska's pristine waters, and this program is an effective way to monitor the cruise ship industry and make sure they are following best practices. The DEC is already stretched thin with reduced funding due to budget cuts. They do not have the time, resources, or expertise to do an adequate job of monitoring the increasing number of cruise ships that are visiting Alaska each year.



Please reinstate the former ocean ranger program funded by cruise ship head taxes!

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Marja Smets

[REDACTED]

Petersburg, AK 99834

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Lisa Bartgis <lbartgis@ci.wasilla.ak.us>

**Sent:** Monday, February 24, 2020 3:53 PM

**To:** Governor Dunleavy <janice.mason@alaska.gov>

**Subject:** Proposed 2021 DPS Anchorage Emergency Communication Center Project

Good afternoon,

Attached please find correspondence for your review and consideration **RE: Proposed 2021 DPS Anchorage Emergency Communication Center Project.**

Thank you for your kind attention regarding this imperative matter.

**Respectfully,**

***Lisa Bartgis***

***Executive Assistant to Mayor Bert Cottle***

City of Wasilla

Office of the Mayor

290 E Herning Avenue

Wasilla, Alaska 99654

Direct: (907)-373-9055

Personal Cell: (907)-830-7662

Fax: (907)-373-9096

[lbartgis@ci.wasilla.ak.us](mailto:lbartgis@ci.wasilla.ak.us)

[www.cityofwasilla.com](http://www.cityofwasilla.com)

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February 24, 2020

Honorable Governor Mike Dunleavy  
Governor, State of Alaska  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Re: Proposed 2021 DPS Anchorage Emergency Communication Center Project

Dear Governor Dunleavy,

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide information and transparency regarding the Department of Public Safety's initiative to move 9-1-1 service and emergency law enforcement dispatching from Southcentral and Southeast Alaska into a consolidated emergency communications center located in Anchorage. Approaching your office with decades of subject matter expertise, experience and front line exposure to public safety and emergency communications from across the state, the Kenai Borough, City of Wasilla, City of Houston, Matanuska Susitna Borough Emergency Services, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, and City of Ketchikan bring forward a collaborative list of concerns pertaining to safety, technology issues, and fiscal impact. This consolidation project will have an enormous negative impact on *safety to responders, safety to the public, emergency communications as a whole*, as well as the impacts to the State's budgets moving forward at a time of historic fiscal challenges.

### **SAFETY ISSUES**

- **Diminished First Responder Communications:** The proposed change heavily risks diminished communications between response agencies, which is the number one cited failure in line of duty death investigations for police, fire and EMS rescuers. Resources on the same scene that can see each other will be unable to communicate in a timely manner if they are unable to do a face-to-face discussion. Incidents like these can be active assailant situations, mass casualty calls, hazmat calls, and railroad emergencies where the noise may restrict the ability to verbally communicate.
- **Delay of Definitive Patient Care:** The proposed change risks delay of definitive patient care for the public in the most at-risk communities for mass casualty and complex calls – the densely populated areas of Southcentral and Southeast Alaska.

- **Underestimated Staffing Needs:** The proposed change woefully underestimates the staffing needs of a dispatch center. The proposed dispatch center would be staffed with only 2 on-duty telecommunicators available 24-hours a day with a floating 3<sup>rd</sup> telecommunicator being available at times. The initiative's goal is to take the hundreds of thousands of calls currently answered by Matcom (which by itself has a minimum staffing of 5 on duty 24-hours a day), Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula, Ketchikan, and any other 9-1-1 center currently contracted by DPS and handle this volume with less staffing than any one of those dispatch centers, let alone the combined complement. Additionally, these two staffed positions would be tasked with fielding the one million plus push to talk transmissions over DPS ALMR radio systems while simultaneously juggling those emergency and non-emergency phone calls, updating records management systems for DPS, and providing judicial service and other administrative support after hours, on weekends, and holidays. This raises enormous concerns for the workload being placed on the telecommunicators, combined with the obvious risk to both public and first responders who may be calling for help and not receiving adequate attention while the telecommunicators are fielding radio traffic while on the phone and updating records management systems.

- **Lack of Medical Director Oversight:** The project summary indicates that the telecommunicators will be processing calls through Emergency Medical Dispatch and Emergency Fire Dispatch protocols. With a lack of a medical director with State oversight, the question is forced of who will be covering not only the responsibility, but the enormous liability for properly authoring, authorizing, installing, training, use and misuse of these protocols? What will these telecommunicators be doing with the medical emergency, CPR instruction, or bleed control in a rural community that has no emergency medical service provider? How would medical direction be given to an entry-level telecommunicator on when to cease CPR instructions because no emergency services will be responding?

Most importantly in the interest of emergency telecommunicators health and well-being, what toll will these traumatic calls with no emergency response capability ultimately take on the telecommunicators mentally? As it stands today, recent studies have shown an overwhelming mental health impact on emergency telecommunicators with approximately 73% suffering from anxiety and another 49% suffering from depression. The structure and direction of this project seems it will only continue to bog down and negatively impact these current findings.

- **Continued Diminished Communications:** Local municipally operated 9-1-1 centers would remain as the primary answering point for emergency calls, and would continue dispatching Fire/EMS after gathering information from the caller, at which point, when law enforcement is also needed (which happens very frequently), the caller would then be transferred to the DPS center. This would undoubtedly result in a safety issue and communication gap if information were to change after the caller was transferred, but prior to other emergency responders arriving. Local responders essentially lose access to that timely sharing of information. It also removes the regional knowledge that a local dispatch center would have,

- **Lack of Emergency Response Resources:** While this initiative to provide 9-1-1 services to the rural areas of Alaska is reasonable and the need undisputed, these areas would still be without the resources needed for a public safety response. Providing enhanced 9-1-1 service comes with a public perception that the caller will receive an emergency response. A centralized DPS center does not improve response times for the Alaska State Troopers. What would an Anchorage based emergency telecommunicator do with an urgent, high-priority call from a rural community that will have no response? Additionally, does the staffing model allow for that telecommunicator to be tied up on that call for an extended period attempting to give bleeding control, childbirth instructions, or CPR protocol while their one other partner in the room attempts to get a first response while fielding other emergency calls?
- **Non-Compliance with NIMS Standards:** The proposed change is not compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). According to the most recent standard for NIMS and the Incident Command System (ICS), "Leadership at the incident level and in EOCs facilitates communication through the development and use of a common communications plan...Integrated communications provide and maintain contact among and between incident resources, enable connectivity between various levels of government, achieve situational awareness, and facilitate information sharing (source: National Incident Management System, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, FEMA. [October 2017])

## **TECHNOLOGY ISSUES**

- **Substantial Increased Risk of Failure:** Safety as it relates to potential failures in the telecommunications network – as it pertains to a 1,500 mile "network-loop" consisting of multiple layers of technology provided by multiple telecommunications providers required to 'transport' a 911 call from Southeast-to-Anchorage-to-Ketchikan for ultimate dispatch is one of several primary concerns in this initiative. In the Southeast, Ketchikan dispatch, for example, currently dispatches Ketchikan based Alaska State Troopers. While this call is currently transferred from a Ketchikan dispatcher to an AST dispatcher at the Ketchikan post, it is the best possible solution as it involves a maximum of approximately 20 'route miles' of fiber optic cable, supported by an advanced all-IP network, all under the control of one company (KPU Telecommunications). This methodology ensures immediate response and a focused timely resolution should any aspect of the dispatch-network fail.
  - DPS's initiative intends to relocate the dispatch function to Anchorage. Regardless of any timing delays in relying upon a system that transfers 911 calls to Anchorage, another concern is the additional technology and network topology that is being placed in the middle of the 911 call transaction (roughly 1,500 miles roundtrip).
  - The concerns are obvious in this scenario – DPS would be inserting the technical vagaries and risk of relying upon a network consisting of an additional 1,500 route miles and multiple layers of electronics owned and operated by a variety of



companies, none of which is controlled or operated locally, and all of which have failed in the past.

- The various past outages were not anomalies. The various outages represent 'the way things are' when complex networks (spanning thousands of miles) operated by multiple companies (traversing thousands of miles of mountain top, submarine and other challenging conditions) are tasked with interconnecting and operating 24/7 without fail. All 'works', but it never consistently works without fail.
- The concern cannot be stressed enough relative to the risk of off-island network outages delaying or preventing the completion of 911 calls and related attempts to dispatch a local Trooper.

- **Current Network Failures:** As recent as December 28, 2019, a serious network issue became relevant in Southeast Alaska wherein 911 calls from cell phones were failing to complete, and wherein 911 calls from cell phones to the local Ketchikan PSAP either contained incorrect telephone number information, or no telephone information at all. In short, cell phone calls to the local PSAP did not contain name, number or address information. After an hours-long troubleshooting with ACS, the company confirmed their network was 'OK' and that the network failure must be a result of issues in the lower 48. It was determined a fiber line for CenturyLink had been severed which ultimately resulted in a nearly 24-hour outage to 911 services for mobile callers spanning from Southeast and all the way up through Anchorage. These issues are prevalent, and they are ultimately unavoidable. As much as the State would like to think they can control the private telco providers in the state, this is a grossly misguided mentality; aside from the fact the State may think they would have any kind of oversight or control over providers nationally.

- **Lack of Oversight on Technological Installation, Costs & Maintenance:** Acquisition, installation, licensing, programming and implementation of radio networks, telephone networks, dispatch equipment and software, ALMR, microwave technology, CAMA phone trunk lines, databases, etc... are all areas which would undoubtedly fall on the State's Office of Information Technology (OIT). This department seems ill-prepared to absorb an additional project workload that will be ongoing annually from this initiative forward. A major concern as evidenced in the State of Alaska FY2021 Governor's Operating Budget: "Information systems: Significant reductions in experienced programming staff due to turnover and low compensation has resulted in knowledge gaps which is expected to continue throughout FY2020. Increased risks in managing legacy technologies with Alaska Public Safety Information System (APSIN) and other back office process automation software will continue to limit efforts to modernize the department..... technical staff within the department lack processes to work within the OIT structure."

- With the Department of Public Safety requesting excess of \$800,000 for personnel costs, it begs the question of status on the capitol project overall. Has the 911 phone system

been purchased, configured, and integrated with surrounding communities? Has the system proven itself to meet all needs and functionality for providing caller street addresses in communities where no addressing systems exist? What is the overall cost associated with radio equipment, phone equipment, CAD purchase and installation, ARMS, telephone demarcation equipment, and aside from all of this, what is the annual cost associated with maintenance and upgrades moving forward?

## LOCATION/ADDRESSING ISSUES

- **Absence of Current Addressing and Geographic Information Systems:**

DPS's initiative is to bring "Enhanced 911 to communities that don't currently have this service".

- Enhanced 911 is defined by providing selective routing of 911 calls based on the caller's location. Selective routing requires the addition of three components to those required for basic 911:
- A Master Street Address Guide, the translation of the address of the caller to an Emergency Service Zone, and Selective Routing Database which can translate the street address to the proper Emergency Service Zone – in essence, routing to the correct 911 center based on caller's location
- The Master Street Address Guide includes all street addresses assigned through the local Geographic Information System. Unfortunately, every single unincorporated or "Rural" areas which DPS is pursuing to provide Enhanced 911 service to currently does not, and have never had, any sort of organized addressing or GIS information. This portion of the project alone would require construction, translation, and ongoing maintenance, with additional quality control of submitted databases of subscribers, working with data provided by villages, cities, and telephone companies in all areas of the proposed system. None of these aspects have been started, solved, or vetted. It seems evident that this initiative directed at DPS is to build and turn on, only then problem solve after the fact while people's safety and lives are unquestionably at risk.

- **Ongoing maintenance and Costs for GIS:** Compiling, constructing, translating, validating, and maintaining all these databases which currently do not exist will undoubtedly take years and potentially millions of currently unbudgeted funding combined with integration of these databases into a brand new and totally separate 9-1-1 call handling system.

## FISCAL IMPACT ISSUES

- **Grossly Underestimated Costs:** DPS has repeatedly underestimated or misrepresented the costs associated with an emergency communications center. There are inherent costs relating to personnel, equipment maintenance, software upgrades, equipment replacement and other operational necessities that are continuous and will inevitably rise annually. To imply there will

be a cost SAVINGS is unrealistic. The scope of work DPS claims they are going to provide is absolutely not possible with the number of positions they have forecast to staff this new center.

- Were this initiative to move forward, it would be of great wisdom to conduct an in-depth analysis of the full, long-term, real costs associated with the new Anchorage based emergency communications center prior to any additional funding being appropriated or spent.

- **Fiscal Impact on Local Companies:** Local telephone providers will be forced by DPS initiative to provide technological transport over the course of a thousand plus miles to a demarcation point in Anchorage. These circuits can run upwards of \$8,000 a month which could bankrupt some of the locally owned and operated providers. Aside from this, many of the local providers have had zero communications from the DPS sponsored project managers other than a brief press release in January of 2020.

- **Current Funding Struggles:** According to Commissioner Price's testimony to the House Finance Sub Committee in early February 2020, DPS has expended approximately 50% of their allocated \$3.5 Million and are approximately 60% complete with the "engineering phase" – or putting ideas on paper. Associated costs which will undoubtedly soar over budget for the State include

- Increased Staffing – as the current staffing model will undoubtedly fail
- Build/Create new dispatch center in Anchorage
- Develop, implement, purchase, consolidate
  - New Software
  - New Hardware
  - Dispatcher Terminals
  - Building Maintenance Costs
  - Technology costs which increase annually
  - Integration with surrounding municipal PSAPs

It can be easily assumed that the annual operating budget for this emergency communications center will exceed \$3.5 Million each year, not as a one-time startup cost followed by \$870,000 annually for staffing as is being projected.

- **Economic Stimulation Shifts from Rural to Urban Communities:** Current contract fees being paid to local jurisdictions to encourage wider economic development of those municipalities would be spent solely in the Anchorage and Fairbanks areas which have strong economies. The move could devastate the ability of some agencies to maintain the high level of success and safety that is currently performed daily. Many dispatch centers would lose several employment positions resulting in more burden on those that remain and a less diverse economic investment in public safety statewide. Although DPS is encouraging that the current dispatch employees

would receive opportunity to move to Anchorage, this is directly contradicted by DPS response to Representative LeBon dated January 25, 2020: *"The cost savings are found primarily in the marginal costs of local-agency provided services and recruitment of entry-level dispatchers. Local agency services to DPS come at a higher cost due to several factors; ... DPS has already experienced attrition of existing Emergency Services Dispatcher positions, so that their replacements will likely be entry level employees starting at a lower salary level."*

It is accurate to say that the proposal, as currently drafted, could result in a more efficient 9-1-1 system for DPS in remote areas of Alaska, but that efficiency will come at the enormous cost of dispatch capabilities for local municipalities and a cost to safety, risk, and potentially life. Emergency services and their activation MUST be built for resiliency, not efficiency, if we are to provide an adequate service that our residents expect and deserve. This proposal, a carryover from Governor Walker administration, mainly focused on cutting service, and being an apparent knee-jerk reaction capitol project thrown onto DPS with inadequate foundation, must be terminated and replaced with a proposal that bolsters local dispatch centers with increased cooperation, improved reliability, and insulated resilience to disaster and failure.


Public Safety is always best handled at the lowest level of government possible. Between the MatSu, Kenai, and Southeast areas, these local 9-1-1 centers currently operate in the most effective, efficient, and life-saving manner possible as it is within their own community that they are providing service and obtaining funding. To disrupt and divide this service would not only be irresponsible, but could dangerously affect each community's emergency response in the worst way.

Combined opposition to the construction and implementation of the Anchorage Emergency Communications Center under the management of the Department of Public Safety has been resounded from the Mayors of the City of Wasilla, City of Houston, Kenai Peninsula Borough, MatSu Borough Emergency Services, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, City of Ketchikan, Matcom Public Safety Dispatch, and Soldotna Public Safety Communications Center. State representatives and Senators for their respective communities are also disheartened to hear of these proceedings on behalf of their constituents. Combined professional experience and subject matter expertise of this level must be heavily weighed and valued on a matter that will negatively affect the emergency call processing for hundreds of thousands of people.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.


Sincerely,



  
for Kenai Borough Mayor Pierce

 1  
Ketchikan Borough Mayor Dial

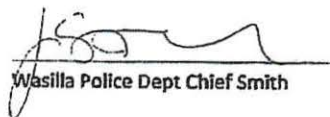
  
City of Wasilla Mayor Cottle

  
City of Houston Mayor Thompson

  
Matcom Dispatch Manager Butcher

  
Houston Fire Dept Chief Hartley

  
Ketchikan City Public Utility Manager

  
Wasilla Police Dept Chief Smith

  
Mat-Su Borough Emergency Services Director Barkley

<sup>1</sup>The Ketchikan Gateway Borough issued a media release on November 29, 2019, highlighting the need to retain AST services in Ketchikan. A resolution voicing concern over the proposed consolidation of dispatch services is scheduled for consideration by the Borough Assembly on March 9, 2020.

**From:** Nils Andreassen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 12, 2020 2:01 PM  
**To:** Brodie Anderson <[Brodie.Anderson@akleg.gov](mailto:Brodie.Anderson@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** Public Testimony

Attached from AML.

Nils Andreassen  
Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League  
One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 200, Juneau, AK 99801  
Direct (907) 790-5305 or Cell (907) 351-4982  
"Strengthening Alaska Municipalities"

FY21 Operating Budget – Proposed

Sec. 1, Page 4 – Motor Vehicles – additional amount to enroll rural residents in REAL ID  
Sec. 1, Page 4 – Community and Regional Affairs – express concern for any additional reductions to DCRA after last year's \$1 million unallocated reduction, which resulted in loss of 6 local government specialists  
Sec. 1, Page 8 – Regional and Community Jails – recommend increasing to \$10 million for critical improvement needs in local jails, which are operated on the State's behalf but identified by communities as in need of additional funds  
Sec. 1, Page 26 – Village Public Safety Officer – increase to FY20 Conference Committee level  
Sec. 1, Page 32 – Marine Highway System – increase by \$20 million to meet service needs of communities  
Sec. 19, Page 61 – (n) – these amounts should reflect the State's total contribution to School Bond Debt Reimbursement  
Sec. 21, Page 62 – (g) – not sure where this belongs but if the Community Assistance Fund is not recapitalized within the Supplemental, recommend an additional \$10 million to be included in the FY21 operating budget to ensure a payment similar to FY20, of \$30 million  
Sec. 23, Page 67 – Retirement System Funding – the additional state contribution may only need to be applied to the pension liability

FY21 Capital Budget - Proposed

Sec. 1, Page 9 – Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Fund – amount available for match by communities is \$12,145,312

Undetermined

HB528 Municipal Capital Bond Reimbursement

- State commitment in 2003 to fund DOT port and harbor projects, and AEA projects, transferred by the State to municipalities but requiring substantial investment in capital maintenance and upgrades.

Alaska Public Broadcasting?  
OWL reduced?  
Ocean Rangers?

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KATIE BOTZ testimony 2/19/20

GOOD EVENING M CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF  
THE FINANCE COMMITTEE. MY NAME IS KATIE  
BOTZ AND I AM SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF  
MYSELF!

ONE DAY BEFORE MY 30TH BIRTHDAY I WENT  
TO MY DOCTOR'S OFFICE REQUESTING FOR  
EITHER MRI OR CAT'S SCAN OF MY BRAIN. TO  
BE FAIR, I MAY HAVE PLACED MY DR THRO  
A BIT OF SHOCK, AT LEAST SURPRISED. MENTAL  
HEALTH IS REAL. IT'S FORCING MANY  
CONSTITUENTS AROUND THE STATE TO STRUGGLE  
DAILY, HOURLY EVEN EVERY SECOND OF THE  
DAY AND CONSTITUENTS OFTEN SUFFER ALONE!  
I, NEVER DID GET MY MRI, BUT WAS  
DIAGNOSED WITH MAJOR DEPRESSION DISORDER  
ONE DAY BEFORE HITTING THE BIG 3-0.

SO, WHAT DOES THAT INTALES FOR ME?  
I HAVE GONE ONE WEEK WITH ONLY 6-7  
HOURS OF SLEEP. CORRECT ME IF IM WRONG  
BUT THAT'S ABOUT 160 HRS OF NO SLEEP  
BEING IN CHARGE OF DRIVING A BUS. IVE  
FORCED MYSELF TO EAT ONE MEAL A DAY  
FOR 4 DAYS DUE TO LACK OF APETITE. IVE  
CRIED MY EYES OUT FOR NO ~~SEE~~ CONCRETE  
REASONS, AND WOULD NEVER KNOW  
WHEN I WOULD CRY. MY CLOSEST FRIENDS  
CLAIMED I WAS BIPOLAR: GOING FROM CALM  
TO FIERCE ANGER OUT OF NO WHERE. THEY  
REFUSE TO DEAL WITH ME AND CLAIMED I  
WAS JUST SEEKING ATTENTION. BY THE WAY  
I HAVE WRITTEN COUNTLESS EMAILS PAST 1 AM.

SO WHY AM I COMING TO FINANCE



GOOD EVENING M CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, MY NAME IS KATIE BOTZ AND I'M SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF MYSELF.

ONE DAY BEFORE MY 30TH BIRTHDAY I REQUESTED EITHER AN MRI OR CAT SCAN OF MY BRAIN TO MY DOCTOR. THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT MY DOCTOR WAS SHOCKED WITH THE REQUEST! AS A PATIENT, I DIDNT WANT MY 1ST DAY OF BEING 3D BROKEN. LET ME EXPLAIN.

I FOUND MYSELF TO GO ~~WITHOUT SLEEP~~ A WEEK WITH ONLY 6-7 HOURS A SLEEP. CORRECT ME IF MISTAKEN, THAT'S ~~160~~ ABOUT 160 HRS OF NO SLEEP. I'VE GONE ABOUT 4 DAYS FORCING MYSELF TO EAT ONE MEAL A DAY BECAUSE THAT'S ALL THE ENERGY I HAD. ~~THERE WERE NUMEROUS OF DAYS WHERE MY CLOSEST FRIENDS~~

STIGMATISM SEEM TO FOLLOW ME EVERYWHERE I GO!

**From:** Malan Paquette [REDACTED].com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2020 3:30 PM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Operating Budget/Mental Health

Hi House Finance!!!! Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the Operating Budget of Alaska. As I recall, "loans" was in there again, and I'd like to remind you all that our Governor, Honorable Dunleavy budget detailed the cut to ACPE/Student Loans as "duplicative". It seems many of you do not understand the magnitude of the mismanagement at Alaska Student Loan Corporation and why it should be expeditiously dissolved in Sunset, this Legislative session.

Exemplars of Mismanagement: The ACPE has failed to deliver fruitful information about the successes and failures of Ak Student Loan Corporation to the Legislature. Stephanie Butler fails to deliver data without imposing her own bias' and she consistently files IRS Student Loan Interest Paid Tax Credits by providing false loan origination data.

- 1) ACPE fails to account for total borrowers incarcerated/on probation and covers up how her account holders/borrowers are a compounding fiscal burden on the State Operating Budget.
- 2) ACPE fails to account for irreconcilable loans due to morbidity, admitting no measuring but the number is likely 1.7 percent quarterly, that is an awful illustration of suicide in Alaska.
- 3) ACPE uses IRS Student Loan Interest Paid Tax Credits unlawfully garnishing entire incomes of some Alaskans while NO IRS event shall include the total loss of income.
- 4) ACPE has several vacant boards seats, 2 vacant of 5 years, 2 well past term limits and 3 more past term limits March 2020.
- 5) ACPE consistently shows signs of databreaches while mailing massive change of address updates statewide as recent as 2019, while borrowers had made no changes to their accounts.
- 6) ACPE has statutory obligation to disclose financials and currently has posted AK Student Loan Corporation financials since 2017.
- 7) ACPE currently failing public notice on their next quarterly meeting, while responsible for posting public notice on AK Student Loan Corp meetings, hasn't done so since July 2019.
- 8) When ACPE defaults and attaches income of impoverished, public assistance is made to calculate that dividend garnished as income disqualifying Alaskan borrowers at an exponential rate over non-resident borrowers.
- 9) ACPE does not work with medical community, OCS or Therapeutic Courts in producing borrower debt burden as normal multi-axial diagnosis, accurate GAF scores would be massively impacted by the courts' knowledge/response to client/defendants' socioeconomic challenges. Debt burden matters and Stephanie Butler has been defaulting Alaskans specifically to attached PFD and she is doing it UNLAWFULLY, right under the nose of the elected while she fails to present objective data.

UNFUND ALASKA STUDENT LOAN CORPORATION.

Also see my comments on a higher expectation of administrative ethic, end suicide, end overpaid executive salaries who have been non-performers for too long. at hashtags Investigate Butler Internal Auditor CEO on my handle malan\_paquette

Sincerely,

Ms. Malan N. Paquette, MA

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**From:** Molly Carver <mcarver@alaskachildrenstrust.org>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2020 1:20 PM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** HB 205/206 Written Testimony

Good Afternoon,

Trevor Storrs requested I pass along this letter of support for funding the Suicide Prevention Council. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind regards,

Molly

Molly Carver  
Interim Policy Specialist  
(907) 248-7376

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## Wrangell Legislative Information Office

Wrangell.lio@akleg.gov

Phone: 907-874-3013 Fax: 907-874-3955

Name: Marisa Fulgham  
Address: [REDACTED], Wrg, AK, 99929  
Representing: Self  
Bill #/Subject: HB205  
Committee: House Finance  
Hearing Date: 12/22/2020

### Written Testimony

To whom it may concern,

I am writing you today on behalf of my support for keeping the Wrangell Dept of Fish & Game office. I am a former employee of the State of Alaska, more specifically the ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division. I have witnessed firsthand not only how essential the office is to the people of Wrangell but also to the remaining Commercial Fisheries and Sport Fisheries employees. Closing the Wrangell ADF&G office will make it difficult to fulfill the mission statement of the Dept of Fish & Game. And this is a big concern for the management our local fisheries as well as the fact that we share a fishery boundary with the Canadians. I hope you will reconsider closing the Wrangell ADF&G office so that they can continue to uphold the mission statement of the department.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this.

Sincerely, Marisa Fulgham

Marisa Fulgham

**From:** [REDACTED].net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2020 12:06 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** FY 21 Operating Budget

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed FY 21 Operating Budget.

As a 50-year resident of Alaska who, along with my wife, chose to retire in Petersburg, I would like to go on record as supporting full funding for the Alaska Marine Highway system. It has saddened us to see southeast Alaska's only intercity and even interstate highway get virtually run into the ground through a series of political decisions over the years.

With health issues that make flying extremely difficult for me I have come to rely on the ferries for my travel to doctor's appointments. Thus cutting ferry options directly affects my ability to get needed medical treatment when it is not available locally as well as take in and out-of-state vacations.

Secondly I would like to support restoration of full funding for public radio. Alaska relies on public radio to provide emergency services such as Amber alerts and tsunami warnings, yet last year Governor Dunleavy cut State support those services. Additionally, public radio is one of few links that connects people in all corners of Alaska. It unifies us and keeps us abreast of what is going on in the rest of Alaska. Fox television does not do this. Through it's volunteer programs public radio provides opportunities for individuals who might not otherwise get involved in civic activities to be part of our community -- including bolstering self confidence in our youth. In Petersburg we even have individuals who have been on both sides of the bars in jails volunteering at KFSK. You don't see that on commercial radio -- which isn't even available here anyway. So please restore full funding to public radio for the health of rural Alaska.

Finally, I urge you to fully fund the Ocean Ranger program. It is paid for and works. Why adopt some less efficient program to replace it? I suspect the cruise industry considers it inconvenient because of nefarious reasons.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Don Cornelius  
[REDACTED]  
Petersburg, Alaska  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Michelle Coombs <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2020 11:56 AM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Rep. Zack Fields <Rep.Zack.Fields@akleg.gov>; Sen. Tom Begich <Sen.Tom.Begich@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Increasing education funding in operating budget

Dear House Finance Committee,

I'm writing to express my strong support for increase in education funding in the State operating budget. I am an Anchorage resident with two children in school, and have watched with dismay as the ASD and School Board have had to institute cuts to health instruction to meet budget shortfalls. They were able to recently keep the IGNITE gifted program funded for one more year, but that is also in peril. The newly instituted policy of having weekly one-hour late start or early dismissal, also implemented to address budget shortfalls, is going to disproportionately impact lower income families who will struggle to adjust their schedules. My school's librarian position is being reduced by 50% to half time.

I believe the district has done a significant amount over the past several years to cut administrative and non-instructional costs to preserve classroom instruction, but they are now at the stage where key instructional programs are being cut. This is bad for our children, bad for our economy, bad for our state. We cannot provide a quality education to our children without adequate funding, and we cannot attract and retain a strong workforce without decent schools.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Michelle Coombs  
Anchorage

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**From:** Orin Pierson <[REDACTED]@akleg.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2020 11:50 AM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Written comment on fy21 spending priorities

To the House Finance Committee,

Your work is appreciated. These are difficult times to lead. Thank you for your commitment to serve Alaska. I received news this week that, thanks to this governor's cuts to education in Alaska, the degree program in which I am enrolled at UAA is being deleted. Throwing away all these dedicated teachers. That is a disgrace. And why? So the notoriously excessive oil and gas tax credits can remain as bloated as ever?

Then today, even as a freshly demoralized college student, I chipped in to help buy fresh fruits and vegetables, set to be delivered by a temporarily available volunteer commercial fishing tender to our neighboring villages where, because the ferry, their one lifeline, has been unnecessarily severed, their grocery stores are bare of food and their children are going hungry. This should not be happening in Alaska. We are better than that.

Please work to restore/increase funds to the schools and university and invest in the ferries. Isn't it a fundamental state duty to deliver a dependable state highway/ marine highway? Pay for it by reigning in the corporate welfare to oil companies; the current arrangement is inflating those transnational profits while depriving the people of Alaska, the owners of those resources, of their due and necessary portion.

Thank you,  
Orin Pierson  
Petersburg, Alaska

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From: Leo Luczak <[REDACTED]@net>  
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2020 11:29 AM  
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
Subject: Public Broadcasting

Good Morning,

I would like to encourage the committee to support additional funding for public broadcasting in Alaska. Our local Public Radio station provides vital services for our community such as weather updates, road closures, ferry schedule changes and cancellations, school closings, etc. They also have provide immediate news warnings regarding accidents, police warnings, storm warnings and fishing condition updates (to name just a few). In addition, our local public radio station is currently notifying the public of a local food drive to provide needed food supplies to Kake and Angoon as their grocery stores have suffered from extreme shortages due to the cancellation of Marine Highway sailings.

I was encouraged to discover that you are considering restoring additional funding for these vital services.

Thank you for your support!

Leo Luczak - Petersburg

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**From:** karin mccullough <[REDACTED].com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2020 10:40 AM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** HB 205 Fiscal Year 2021

HB 205 fiscal year 2021

My name is Karin McCullough. I have lived in Petersburg, Alaska, 99833 since 1972. I raised my children in Petersburg, and now delight in two grandchildren who live in Petersburg

The fishing industry sustains my family, and contributes greatly to the economy of Petersburg. Having benefited from the oil industry in Alaska I understand the impact of declining oil revenue. I do favor a state income tax.

Re funding:

Public Radio: Important to fund. When an emergency happens it is the radio I turn to for information. There are times we have no electricity. We have gone days at a time without ATT cell phone service. Radio is our emergency communication system for school closures, sunami alerts and other vital information.

Alaska Marine Highway System: I do use this system for transportation. We need overnight, mainline ferries in our system. We need to fund it, and also manage it better (under continued state management)

Ocean Ranger Program. Fund this as it is important to our Commercial Fishing Fleets to have clean ocean water.

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**From:** Rainy Diehl <[REDACTED].com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2020 10:25 AM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** ASD Budget re: Health Educators

Hello,

I am a parent of a child in the 1st grade program at Government Hill. I recently learned of the ASD budget proposal to cut the health education classes. I am a physical therapist by profession, and through my professional training feel that I am fairly well versed in overall health and wellbeing. Yet, the lessons my son has learned via health education are lessons that either I have not thought to talk to him about, or have not been able to communicate in a manner appropriate for his age group. Each time he has health class he comes home with new knowledge that he is excited to use immediately, whether it be safety or body awareness. Last night I sat down with my son and asked him some of the important lessons he remembers from his last year and a half of health class.

"Smoking causes chemical changes in the body. Good Touch, Bad Touch" were what he said first. He followed with alcohol use, bicycle safety, household hazards, never taking medication alone, never sharing any of your medication, taking care of our heart by exercising, amongst others. After he went to sleep I thought about all of these subjects that his kindergarten and first class health education class has covered. Alaska is has high rates of smoking, alcoholism, and sexual abuse, and I was happy to hear those subjects were covered in a child appropriate manner, thanks to his health educators. While I do my best to try to provide these lessons in my home to my children, I personally had not thought of them all and I would Not be surprised if there are other households who may not be able to provide the education at home for various reasons. I hope that the funding for our health educators is reinstated as these individuals have the proper training to teach our children about their own health and wellbeing and to reinforce healthy lifestyle habits that can last a lifetime.

Thank you,

Rainy Diehl

Anchorage

Sent from my iPad

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From: Walt Weller <mayorweller@pelicancity.org>

Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2020 10:03 AM

To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

Cc: Cityclerk <cityclerk@pelicancity.org>

Subject: Priorities for the FY 21 Operating Budget

House Finance Members,

I am Mayor Walt Weller commenting for the City of Pelican. This statement is regarding the Alaska Marine Highway System.

My request is that interim financing for contractors to service the 35 communities previously supplied by the ferry system be approved before these short term service interruptions and budget issues result in long term damage to our communities.

The contractors will be competitive and out there and ready to help.

Issuing one and/or two year services contracts will enable the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to fulfill their stated mission to "Keep Alaska Moving" while allowing the DOT time to get the fleet back in operation.

Thank you for your efforts on our behalf.

Walt Weller, Mayor

106 Salmon Way, Pelican AK 99832

Office 907-735-2202

Fax 907-735-2258

Check us out at [Pelican.net](http://Pelican.net)!

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**From:** petra.wilmworks.com <[REDACTED].com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2020 9:57 AM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Why doesn't the government value education in Alaska?

Dear

Dear House Finance Committee

School Funding in Alaska is at a crisis point. Alaska must Increase the Base Student Allocation if we want to retain any quality in our education system. We are at a tipping point. The fat has long since been eliminated and we are carving away the meat now. More cuts mean more quality teachers looking elsewhere for more supportive communities. More cuts mean more parents with money pulling their students out of public school. More cuts mean parents of high achievers pulling their students out of public school. More cuts mean program quality decline, fewer students graduating, and on and on – a downward spiral that will be harder to reverse each year.

I am a lifetime Alaskan, a business owner, an Anchorage resident, and a mother of two at Inlet View Elementary school. I attended K-12 public school in Fairbanks. My husband went to private school in Minnesota. He regularly questions whether we are doing right by our children sending them to public school. I have always argued emphatically "YES!", but I am running out of steam. He watches me spend hours at school board meetings each fall testifying on behalf of our neighborhood school and its teachers. Each school year brings different but critical budget cuts to fight. Things would be easier if we just sent our kids to private school, he says. Yes, I am starting to agree. The cons of Alaska's public school are starting to pull ahead of the pros.

Why doesn't the government value education in Alaska?

Why is a big PFD more important than educating our kids?

How is education NOT the most important budget item?

These are questions my kids will ask me sooner or later. I'm asking you now.

Petra Wilm

Architect

Mother of 2 elementary students

Anchorage resident

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**From:** Treece Hanley <[REDACTED].com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2020 9:01 AM

**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Rep. Matt Claman <Rep.Matt.Claman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mia Costello <Sen.Mia.Costello@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Operating Budget

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to respectfully request that you increase education funding in the operating budget. The recent flat funding has resulted in our district being forced to make choices that impact the learning of our students. Programs that are vital to our children's success are being "redesigned" and professionally trained educators are being told they must be absorbed into other positions to make room for budget cuts.

Please do the right thing for our communities and increase education funding in the operating budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Treece Hanley

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**From:** Emilie Frisbie <[REDACTED]@et.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020 8:03 PM  
**To:** LIO Glennallen <[Lio.Glennallen@akleg.gov](mailto:Lio.Glennallen@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** HB 205 Written Testimony

Please forward my testimony to the House Finance Committee and to Rep. Rauscher, Rep. Talerico, Senator Bishop, And Sen. Shower.

Thank you,  
Emilie

Members of the House Finance Committee,

I ask that each legislator look at the budget as if they were having to pay for it from their own pocketbook. Doesn't look very good from that perspective, looks like we need more money (income) for we are living outside of our means. Taxes is always the easy and first response everyone has, but you cannot get your way out of this mess with taxing the individuals that you have asked to take cuts for services, pay check cuts, and stealing their pfd's. Yes I did say steal for it is written in statute and who is the lawmaker? It was in your power, you could have changed the law and taken it legally from the beginning.

We all need to take cuts and stop asking for more money for programs that are not or should not be the expense of the government. The funds budgeted for tourism have been seen as easy prey, yet we have lands and views that inspire awe. We have fishing streams and hiking trails that give the adventure of a life time. So let's look at selling our state and getting some much needed revenue before any new programs get a kick start. Let's hold education accountable and make sure the students are learning how to be successful adults and not being educated by technology alone. And how about looking at your own budget harder and take a hit with the rest of the departments. There are many Legislative Information Offices (LIO) around the state that are not utilized by the Legislators as they could be, and it would save money. One example is the town hall meetings held in communities/cities where an LIO is available but not used over another location, that cost another stipend and these stipends add up.

So my testimony isn't to request funds be add for any program or cut from any program. Our Legislature has been spending all the state's savings and it is time to get responsible, time to push up to the table and make hard decisions not based on re-election. The people of Alaska have put their faith in you and

you have been letting them down. It is getting down to the bottom line for the accounts are getting used and not replenished. Let's not count on another oil boom.

Thank you for your time,  
Emilie Frisbie  
Gakona, Alaska

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**From:** Eric Grundberg <[REDACTED].com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2020 7:43 AM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** House Finance Committee-State Operating budget

Good Morning,

I would like to take this moment to thank you all for your service and energy sorting out the state operating budget. Its a messy situation and many services in Alaska have changed drastically in the last few years.

I am a very strong supporter of public radio. I would encourage the committee that investing in public safety, local news, and community announcements has many benefits and returns for the state. Our local station in central southeast is the hub of the town. Many would contend the heart and soul of whats happening in our region. State funding will help keep service viable. This is a good investment, with millions of dollars coming in from the private sector to the support the service as well. Thank you for your time,

Eric Grundberg  
Petersburg, Ak

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**From:** Crystal Seeman <[REDACTED].com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020 9:27 PM  
**To:** House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Education Funding

Good Morning,

My name is Crystal Seeman. I am a registered voter. I have 2 children who attend public school in the Anchorage School District. My children are in 5th and 3rd grades. They have many years of public schooling ahead of them. I am writing you today to ask that you please increase education funding in the operating budget. Please increase our public education funding, and keep forward funding education.

The years of flat and reduced funding we have endured in public education are taking their toll. It is time that we, as a state, take account of what is truly important. We have a responsibility to our future to educate our children so that we will continue to have a stable, educated society. We need a strong workforce in the future. Why do we need more money to educate students today? The basic reasons are the same as for business. Basic expenses (fuel, electricity, health care, wages) all go up. They don't stay stagnate. Students continue to need books, paper, desks, and buildings. Over all -



they need quality folks who are willing to dedicate their careers to teaching our children to read and interact with one another successfully. When the average years of service for teachers in Alaska is 5 years or less, I start to get very worried! We are not giving our students the best education they can get, or even an adequate one, if they get new teachers year after year. New teachers, even the amazing ones, do not know the quirks of our schools and communities. They aren't a part of our traditions and society. Teachers do great teaching when they are in a school and community long enough to get to know families, culture, and the way things work around here.

Other specific problems, here in Anchorage, I am worried about include: The elimination of important programs to save money including IGNITE and Health/SEL specialists. Our children in Alaska have higher than normal risk for suicide and students in general are showing higher levels of depression and anxiety. Why on earth would we get rid of Health teachers? Schools do not have enough money to pay for technology. As items like classroom projectors break, the teacher is required to pay for a new one, or find funding through PTA, PTO, or some other grant. Our teachers are not fundraisers. They should be taking time to care for student learning not finding ways to get money so they can have basic supplies required by the curriculum. Students make do with decades old furniture that is often broken. New furniture just doesn't exist. Teachers turn again to sources like PTA or Donors Choose to buy student chairs, mailboxes, tables, or bookshelves. PTA is not an ATM! It should be supporting the school community and families, not buying furniture and Chromebook computers for students. Anchorage School District cannot pay for these things when they spend all their money paying for increases in basic costs. I am also very concerned about class sizes sneaking up. This is especially a problem in grades k-3 when students are learning foundational reading skills. We expect teachers to make modifications for student learning and teach every student. How on earth can they teach individualized lessons when there are 27 seven year olds in the room all day? Let's stop and try to digest that idea for a minute. Not only do the teachers have to keep all these kids safe, but they also need to get them excited about something besides Minecraft or hockey, and teach them to read!

Please, please, give educators the money they need to do their jobs. Let us value and support our children. They deserve better than 27 seven year olds in a room with broken chairs, broken technology, and a new teacher who doesn't understand them for the 3rd year in a row.

Thank you,  
Crystal Seeman  
(House district 21, Senate seat K)

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