

**Testimony to: the Senate Finance Committee,            3/16/21**  
**FY22 Budget: Operating (SB49), Mental Health (SB51),**  
**Capital (SB50)**  
**Committee Members,**

My name is Faith J. Myers. I have volunteered as a mental health advocate for over 10 years.

The Senate is making decisions about the care of acute care psychiatric patients without access to valuable and necessary information. The voice of psychiatric patients can often only be found in statistics: Number of patient injuries during treatment or transportation, number and type of patient complaints and the resolution, number and type of traumatic events experienced by the patients.

As of now the Senate does not have statistical information concerning patient care because the Department of Health and Social Services does not keep those statistics statewide. The first job of the Senate is to write a bill requiring DHSS to keep those statistics and to provide them to the Legislature and the general public annually to help guide successful future programs.

**Reference Information:**

In 2019, the Department of Health and Social Services revised how people experiencing a mental health crisis would be treated in emergency rooms by adopting a “crisis now” model. The multi-million-dollar program is expected to continue and will be funded in part by a 1115 Waiver from Medicaid.

Starting when Alaska was a territory to now there have been multiple plans on how the state would care for acute care psychiatric patients. Almost every DHSS plan had a common flaw: Psychiatric patients were not involved in the planning.

In DHSS’s own words, they want to: “design and implement a behavioral health crisis response system equivalent to the physical health system.” In my opinion, treating mind and body is different. To be successful, a psychiatric emergency room has to be specially designed, from the height of the ceilings to the colors to over-sized space and safety issues. Along with specialized training for attendants and patient advocates.

The document, “A 10-year History of the Alaska Psychiatric Institute, 1962-72” was written by API staff and in the 9 pages there is useful information that for the most part has been forgotten by DHSS, i.e.—“The traditional hospital routine perpetuates the return to hospitalization” and making patients part of the treatment process is important to recovery. It is my personal experience that none of these hard-learned lessons on successful patient release is happening today in Psychiatric ER’s or the hospitals.

Providing Trauma sensitive services is one of the keys to effective treatment in psychiatric emergency rooms. The state of Maine in 1995 was the first state in the nation to begin systematically addressing the interpersonal violence that impacts the majority of people served through their Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services. In 1997 a 75-page book was printed, “In their own Words,” containing stories of what traumatized psychiatric patients locked in institutions.

The unnecessary trauma that psychiatric patients face during treatment or transportation could be greatly limited in Alaska by requiring that hospital and transportation policies are up-dated to increase the possibility of patient recovery. Psychiatric facilities should be required by regulation to adopt hospital policies that recognize and provide treatment for institutional trauma.

In 2010, the CEO of API stated that patients should wait until they leave API before receiving treatment for institutional trauma. Which contradicts most experts that believe that traumatic events should be addressed as soon as possible to reduce the effects.

Too often psychiatric institutions and psychiatric emergency rooms overuse restraints, isolation rooms, takedowns and removal of patient rights to alter behavior and there is very little recognition of the role that sexual or physical abuse in the patient’s past contributes to institutional trauma.

I have to believe that the Department of Health and Social Services, the Mental Health Trust Authority and others want people that are experiencing a psychiatric crisis to be successfully treated and released either with new coping skills or sent on to community care, but for programs to be successful, it will require more statistics of the success or failures of programs.

There are approximately 10,000 people each year that enter an acute care psychiatric facility or unit in Alaska. As of now, state agencies, including the legislature, lack even the basic information necessary when providing psychiatric services: The number of patients injured during treatment or transportation, the number and type of complaints, etc.

For hospitals to successfully release individuals that have been in crisis, and for the legislature to craft reasonable laws, the voice of the psychiatric patients will have to be included and what they consider important: A fair state-wide grievance and appeal process, recognition and treatment of institutional trauma, fair rights, up-dating of hospital patient policies, independent assistance when filing a grievance. As of now, issues that patients consider important are not included in the “crisis now” model.

Mental Health Advocates, Faith J. Myers, [REDACTED],  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Faith J. Myers is the author of the book, “Going Crazy in Alaska: A History of Alaska’s Treatment of Psychiatric Patients,” and has volunteered as a mental health advocate for over ten years.

**Reference Information:** I have a copy of “A 10-year History of the Alaska Psychiatric Institute—1962-72.” If requested I can send it to you.

**From:** Santa Claus  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Fwd: FY22 Operating Budget - Corrected to Refer to SB49  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 16, 2021 2:51:21 PM  
**Importance:** High

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**CORRECTED TO REFER TO SB 49**

----- Original Message -----

**Received:** 02:42 PM AKDT, 03/16/2021

**From:** "Santa Claus" [REDACTED]

**To:** <finance.committee@akleg.gov>

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** FY22 Operating Budget - SB8

**CORRECTED TO REFER TO SB49**

**DATE:** March 16, 2021

**TO:** The Alaska Senate Finance Committee (Finance.Committee@AKLeg.Gov)

**FROM:** Santa Claus, North Pole, Alaska ([REDACTED])

**RE:** 2021 Senate Bill 49

Dear Finance Committee Members:

Regarding SB49, I'm writing as a long-term volunteer child advocate and former educator. As an elected official, myself, I appreciate your interest in and support of education.

Although children comprise 25% of Alaska's population, they represent 100% of our state's future. The only collective voice they have in their future and our political arena is presented by organizations, including the Alaska Children's Trust, Thread, and others, who advocate for them and strive to guard their experience, oversee their growth, and improve their future.

SB8 is a comprehensive Bill that addresses early education, eligibility, parent involvement, DOE duties, teacher certification, proactive young reader intervention, and teacher retention.

In particular, those areas include funding for expanded pre-K opportunities for children throughout our state and a reading intervention program for children in kindergarten through third grade.

It is worth noting that investments in early childhood education stimulate substantial tangible returns throughout each child's lifetime; funding increases access to high-quality early education programs and better prepares our youngsters to start school; and, early education support paves the way for students to succeed in school.

In my opinion, approving and funding SB49 would help improve Alaska's extraordinarily poor ranking in education. U.S. News and World Report notes that Alaska nationally ranks #47 in pre-K to 12th grade, #36 in higher education, and #44 overall.  
(<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/alaska>)

I'm certain Alaska can do better and recognize the responsibility and ability your Committee has to ensure that our children benefit from a better education. Ultimately, that will enable our State to prosper.

I urge you to vote YES on SB49!

Thank you for your consideration, Santa

Santa Claus

[REDACTED]

North Pole, AK 99705

**From:** Shirley Pittz  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** FY22 Operating Budget  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 16, 2021 3:35:57 PM  
**Attachments:** image.png

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Thank you for your support of the proposed FY22 operating budget. Parents and child care programs all over the state are hopeful that the existing funding for early childhood programs will remain in place. These funds provide critical support to working families. We need to keep this industry strong so that when our economy rebounds and people are back to work, the early childhood resources they depend on will be there.

Also, I hope you will consider increasing funding for young children and their families as additional federal money comes to the state. There could not be a more important investment for helping our state recovery.

Thank you for all you do.

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*Shirley Pittz, M.S.*  
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(907) 727-9549



Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Institute  
Child, Adolescent & Family Behavioral Health  
2021 VIRTUAL CONFERENCES  
April 7-9 and 12-13, 2021



**From:** Petersburg Children's Center Executive Director  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Cc:** pccen1@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Essential to Economy  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 16, 2021 4:06:06 PM

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Hello,

My name is Sharlay Mamoe. I am the executive director of a nonprofit childcare facility in rural Petersburg. Childcare is essential for a thriving economy; the COVID-19 pandemic has started to shine an uncomfortable spotlight on the many issues with the childcare system in the United States. It truly showed us just how "essential" we really are and how pathetic our wages are.

When you come into the field of childcare, or other types of public service positions, you are not necessarily coming into the field for the money. You definitely come into the field because you love what you do, however for some the pay is a joke. A livable wage is needed, more funding so many childcare facilities, both privatized centers and family in home care do not close their doors. Please help us keep our essential employees working.

I guess my question for society as a whole would be why do we pay the people we entrust with our most precious gem(s) the least we can? Why don't we invest in their careers as we do doctors, teachers, etc? I understand that childcare is expensive and we don't want to pass that onto parents if we don't have to, however with the costs of goods rising every day, the cost of living rising, we have to do something. A friend of mine coined this quote "childcare is like a tattoo, you get what you pay for", and just like the saying "it is easier to build strong children than it is to repair a broken adult" there has never been a more true statement said. PLEASE FUND OUR FUTURE, FUND CHILDCARE!!!

THANK YOU!

## Alaska Finance Committee

To Whom it may Concern,

Explain how during a time of huge job losses, lost insurance, and the pending possibility of people having no insurance to care for their loved ones that this is economical or logical?

We can not continue to rob Peter to pay Paul, and vs. versa.

When the covid funding is gone that you plan to use to backfill the \$35 Million you remove from Medicaid, how do you purpose to replace it? Those who do not even fathom the Medicaid program. It is simple; it is the difference between receiving life-saving services and medications. The very idea that people can say I am sick and tired of paying for other people's insurance is lame. For one. Why do we continue to rob programs that benefit all of us, if not today tomorrow?

Just a heads up, only 1.45% of our federal taxes go into Medicare. Yet we scream at the idea. What is 1.45% approximately for me? \$6.00 a year, give or take. So that someone like me has medical insurance when they need it and can't afford it.

When I had my accident, I was 28 years old, healthy, and in between insurance due to a layoff and taking a job that didn't provide insurance. Between the Medivac to Seattle, 6 surgeries or more give or take, and a month-long stay at Harborview at no fault of my own. I incurred well over 2.5 Million dollars in Medical.

Boy, let me tell you about how I didn't qualify for most or any services due to being young and without children and the hell I went through to be designated as disabled.

I had a 20 Ton Boulder land on me in a beauty shop, and before those wheels in your head start spinning to try to find the fault of it in me. I wasn't a drunk driver, not that that should ever justify treating people like criminals when they need help, but that is exactly what I learned about our systems. You could cut judgment with a knife in all of these areas, and it is criminal.

We treat people who have bad things happen to them as if they somehow did it to themselves or that God was punishing them for past transgressions. Yeah, I heard that a lot after my accident. I suggest if you believe that B.S., you need to read "When Bad Things Happen To Good People." Even if someone makes a bad choice, that doesn't make them a bad person, there are always a lot of stone-throwers in the room.

It has been 26 years since May 31st, 1995, and yet here we are cutting the very benefits that keep many people afloat, or like me, give us a hand up so that we can get back to our lives.

My life forever changed that day, and what I learned won't even fit into a 5-minute speech. I could go on for hours. The last thing we should be doing is cutting the very programs that lift people and give them hope. Yeah, Yeah Yeah, some people abuse them. That might be true, but that number is minimal compared to the number of people who don't. Honestly, it would be easier to rob a bank that fake a disability to get scraps in the end.



We need to implement an income tax. I paid that when I lived in Oregon, where I had to go to get back into the workforce, yeah, and that is another story about the bias treatment of people living with disabilities trying to find work in Alaska.

People need to realize that by paying an income tax, we are putting money into our state and investing in ourselves. So we don't have to rely so heavily on the federal government sending back our money.

I would much rather give the State Some of the money I pay in Federal taxes than give it all to the Federal Government.

Could you stop with the slow pick away at our life-saving services and make the hard choices we need you to make. Even if they are not popular, but because they are the right thing to do.

And another thing, Why are we outsourcing our Birth certificates, how is that even remotely efficient! I wonder who the third party's bestie in the Alaska Government is that landed them that deal.

and for the sake of transparency, and to be clear, I sit on the Ketchikan City Council, and I speak only for myself and not that of the council.

Sincerely, and Respectfully,

Janalee L. Frost, Hunt, Snartamo, Talbot, Church, Wick, Minnich Gage



**From:** Nancy Hillstrand  
**Subject:** Matching grants for Great American Outdoors Act. Land and Water Conservation Fund  
**Date:** Monday, January 04, 2021 10:04:40 PM

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In August 2020 The Great American Outdoors Act was signed into law for full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. LWCF This is a wonderful opportunity for Alaska and Alaskans. The LWCF provides "financial assistance to states" by authorizing a matching grant program to assist states in recreational planning, acquiring recreational lands and waters, and developing outdoor recreational facilities.

[https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL33531.html#\\_Toc12029259](https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL33531.html#_Toc12029259)

There are two components to this "stateside" program: the traditional formula state grants and the more recent competitive state grants. Under both grant programs, states may "sub-award" grants to state agencies, local units of government, and federally recognized Indian tribes. **To be eligible for a grant, a state must prepare and update a statewide outdoor recreation plan.** This plan must address the needs and opportunities for recreation and include a program for reaching recreational goals.

Our ADNR Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation are well versed to guide this statewide outdoor recreation plan

The states award their grant money through a competitive, open project selection process based on their recreation plans and their own priorities and selection criteria. They can use the money for state projects or for pass-through to localities or tribes.

Please accept Receipt Authority so local governments/tribal governments or the state itself can have the chance to come up with a match.

This is a great opportunity for the State of Alaska. Lets learn about this and get on board.

Thank-you kindly  
Nancy

Nancy Hillstrand





Please Support the governor's two budgets – 2020 supplemental, and

proposed 2021 and receipt authority for LWCF. Half the LWCF dollars are typically made available to local/tribal governments. It's critical for the state to accept Receipt Authority and allocate enough funds to run the program

**From:** Thomas Remaley  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Revenue  
**Date:** Sunday, March 14, 2021 10:38:54 PM

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You have an obligation to fund public safety, roads, etc. No one likes taxes, but with the oil shortfall it's time for either an income tax like we had in the 70s or a sales tax. The rage to cut sounds great until the Troopers can't get to your call or you are in the ditch because DOT hasn't plowed yet.... Time we accept that we need to pay for the services we enjoy.

Thomas Remaley

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Barb (QasuGlana) Amarok  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Testimony  
**Date:** Monday, March 15, 2021 2:34:08 PM

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Finance Committee Members,

Thank you for your commitment to and support of all levels of formal schooling in Alaska. I would like to ask you to support full funding for public education.

I would also ask that you support a state fiscal plan that creates adequate, equitable and predictable funding for education, and which includes funding for Pre-K programs and supports increased broadband capacity throughout the state.

Barb (QasuGlana) Amarok  
Director, UAF Northwest Campus  
[REDACTED]

*We acknowledge the Indigenous peoples upon whose customary lands our campuses reside. In the Bering Strait region, the Northwest Campus is located on the customary lands of the Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, and Yupik peoples.*

**From:** Gregory Fast  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** How to to pass a balanced budget  
**Date:** Monday, March 15, 2021 10:48:45 PM

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Please support Senate Bill 106 and Senate Bill 107 to significantly reform taxation of oil and gas legacy fields and address loopholes within Alaska's corporate tax structure. The two measures will resolve a long outstanding imbalance between Alaskans' share of the resources they own and the proportion the oil companies take, while substantially closing Alaska's fiscal gap.

Senate Bill 107's structural changes include altering Alaska's 2013 SB 21 "More Alaska Production Act" tax code for legacy fields that produce over 40,000 barrels per day by increasing the gross minimum tax. The legislation will also seek to remove the per-barrel tax credit for legacy fields, and "ringfence" Alaska's three major oil fields so only those costs directly incurred in those fields are eligible to offset a producer's tax liability. **It is estimated that this reform would raise \$1 billion per fiscal year.**

It is crazy that we are paying the oil companies to take our oil!

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Gregory Fast

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Cindy Lelake  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Budget thoughts  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 16, 2021 12:16:35 PM

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Dear Finance Committee members:

Having listened to numerous hours of testimony, both from the administration and other stakeholders and organizations, I find myself returning to the 100,000 foot view:  
the parts don't add up.

In my opinion, the administration has not presented a workable, sustainable set of tools for resolving the budget crisis. Relying on a patchwork of overdraws from the Permanent Fund ERA, bond proposals and suggestions for voter input on new revenue sources, dividend amounts and spending caps to be incorporated as amendments to the State Constitution is simply not a comprehensive fiscal plan.

Honestly, I don't know where this leaves us. I do appreciate your willingness to take on the tough decisions with a non-existent roadmap as your guide.

Sincerely,

Cindy Lelake  
Anchorage

**From:** Dave Nebert  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Saving the State  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 16, 2021 12:38:09 PM

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Dear Legislators,

Alaska is in a crisis mode and changes must be made. The large PFD withdrawals are draining our reserves and should be minimized or eliminated. We need to increase our profits on all mineral extractions that leave the state to maximize profits for Alaskans as directed in the State Constitution. And we need to consider a state income tax to collect income from the many folks who make significant income in this state but live elsewhere. There are no other states that will allow Alaskans to work in their state and not pay income taxes in that state. We should do the same.

Why is it a problem for individual Alaskans to help pay to help support our States government that supports our needs? Please stop the drain on our resources! The governor won't do it so it's up to the legislature to save us. Please do something!

Thanks, Dave Nebert  
Fairbanks, AK 99712