

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jacki Makinen <tundrajem@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 1, 2023 9:27 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 132 Testimony

Honorable Senate Education Committee Members:

I am writing to you in lieu of in-person public testimony and asking you to consider opposing SB 132, "An Act imposing an annual educational facilities maintenance and construction tax on net earnings from self-employment and wages; relating to the administration and enforcement of the educational facilities maintenance and construction tax; and providing for an effective date."

Alaska's constitution provides the Legislature with the ultimate responsibility for establishing and maintaining public schools. The constitution also, however, prohibits dedicating any tax to any particular purpose or use. This, alone, is a major red flag for many Alaskan citizens, myself included. Facilities' maintenance should automatically be a part of the education budget, not a separate tax. Construction should be a part of Capital Projects due to their very nature. If ever maintenance becomes a Capital Project, government has poorly executed its purposes.

My children are not enrolled in any Alaska public school, nor will they ever be. I reside within an organized borough that disregards enrollment and takes from my property taxes under the auspices of "the greater good" for "education." From those taxes, the borough should already specify maintenance for educational facilities. My borough, however, has long adopted to the chagrin of its residents this idea of "Deferred Maintenance." The borough, instead of maintaining its facilities in its budget, which includes educational facilities, puts off necessary maintenance for another fiscal year. Several buildings are now in disrepair and are in need of being classified as Capital Projects because the borough does not have the capital necessary to restore and fix them. This has happened with several schools as well. Now, SB 132 wants to do the exact same thing: disregard whether or not a citizen has a child enrolled in a public school and take even more funds from my pocket, claiming it is for education. Yet, those funds cannot be specified or set aside for the purpose of the tax! To add insult to injury, the school district is far from "transparent" on how much it receives and exactly where it is all spent. If the state cannot use a tax for any particular purpose, how then can the state guarantee that boroughs such as mine will use any additional funds for the maintenance of its educational facilities?

Government, as an entity, is never efficient. Just look at the calendar; the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session has passed the 90-day mark. That's efficient? What will the cost be to implement this tax? When all is said and done, the new section of the Dept. of Revenue established to collect and distribute the tax, how much will really end up in the hands of those it claims to benefit? The overhead and administration alone will likely consume all of it and continue to grow state expenses, requiring even more funding from the people. The people, when faced with a budget shortfall, do the logical thing: cut spending. This has been almost every Alaskan for the past year. We have had to cut back and re-examine our individual and family budgets to make ends meet. Yet the legislature decides to increase expenses and burden the people to make up its shortfall. How is that "for the public good"? I challenge that it is not at all for the public good, rather the sole intent is to make as many dependent upon the state as possible.

Back in the 1980s, the local schools in my area were Quonset Huts. And the students that attended those schools received a far superior education than students today. What do you think the maintenance costs of Quonset Hut schools would be compared to brick and mortar schools? The more money that the state has thrown at "education," the worse the performance. Consider an educational use tax instead; tax those that are enrolled and using the schools. Taxes are viewed differently than user fees. I would support a bill like that. Because of the history of government administration, waste, abuse, and inefficiency, as well as the state of public schools not providing the next generations with an actual education worthy of our admiration, I vehemently oppose this bill.

~ Jacquelyn Makinen  
North Pole