

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 2:20 PM
To: Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. DeLena Johnson
Cc: Rep. Alyse Galvin; Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; Rep. Dan Saddler; Rep. Will Stapp; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski; Rep. Mike Cronk; Rep. Julie Coulombe
Subject: ASHBA support for 404 Assumption
Attachments: ASHBA_Letter of Support_State Primacy over CWA Section 404 Dredge Fill Program_3.23.2023.pdf

Dear House Finance Committee Co-chairs,

On behalf of the Alaska State Home Building Association, attached please find a letter of support for an Alaskan 404 Program.

Thank you,

Yuri Morgan
On behalf of the Alaska State Home Building Association
[REDACTED]



March 22, 2023

ELECTRONIC MAIL

Co-Chair DeLena Johnson
Co-Chair Bryce Edgmon
Co-Chair Neal Foster
House Finance Committee

Re: Support for State Primacy over CWA Section 404 Dredge & Fill Program

Dear House Finance Committee Co-Chairs:

The Alaska State Home Building Association (ASHBA) is a non-profit trade organization that represents the residential construction industry in Alaska. The organization serves as a resource for home builders, contractors, and other professionals in the housing industry, providing education, advocacy, and networking opportunities.

ASHBA wishes to express its strong support for Alaska to assume primacy over the Clean Water Act's Section 404 dredge and fill program. This program is essential for protecting the quality of our state's waters, and we believe that Alaska is well-equipped to take on this responsibility.

While the Clean Water Act is a federal law, it is designed to work in tandem with states to achieve its goals. As residents of this state, we are confident in the state's ability to effectively administer the program and ensure that all activities related to dredging and filling are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the goals of the Clean Water Act. By assuming primacy over the program, Alaska will be able to tailor the program to meet the unique needs of our state's waters and provide greater flexibility to businesses and individuals seeking permits.

Furthermore, by assuming primacy over the program, Alaska will be able to exercise greater control over the allocation of resources and provide a more streamlined and efficient permit process. This will not only benefit businesses and individuals seeking permits, but also help to ensure that our state's waters are protected from the negative impacts of dredging and filling activities.

P.O. Box 285 • Soldotna, Alaska 99669
Phone (907) 229-8403
Website: www.buildersofalaska.com
E-mail: alaskastatehomebuildingassoc@gmail.com

ASHBA members understand that assuming primacy over the Section 404 dredge and fill program will require a significant commitment of time and resources on the part of the state. However, we believe that this is a critical investment that will benefit our state's residents and the environment for years to come.

We urge the legislature to take action to enable the state to assume primacy over the Clean Water Act Section 404 dredge and fill program and work with the federal government, local communities, and other stakeholders to ensure the protection of Alaska's unique and valuable wetlands and waterbodies.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,



Eric Visser, President
Alaska State Home Building Association

Cc: Members of the House Finance Committee

[REDACTED]

From: Marianne Mills [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 11:17 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: For House Finance Committee Members
Attachments: House Finance Testimony.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good morning, my name is Marianne Mills and I am the President of AGENet, Alaska's Association of Senior Service Providers. AGENet stands for Alaska Geriatric Exchange Network, primarily made up of private non-profit organizations founded in Alaska.

AGEnet's goal is to help older Alaskans age in place, supporting them to live safely in their own homes and communities for as long as possible and avoid costly institutional care, such as hospitals and nursing homes. AGENet strives to involve senior service providers in every area of the state so that, statewide, older Alaskans receive the local, community-based services they need.

Today, on behalf of AGENet, I urge you support the 13% increase proposed by the Governor to Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS) Community Based Grants (\$1,498.2). Last year, the Legislature supported this increase to make up for years of flat funding and two years of inflation and we were expecting it to take effect July 1, 2022 (but it did not happen).

Since it has been another year with Alaska's increasing senior population plus extreme inflation, AGENet members urge you to support an additional \$700,000 for SDS Community Based Grants for Fiscal Year 2024. The number of seniors in Alaska is growing by at least 10% each year across the state with certain areas such as Mat-Su increasing by 25%.

Community grants awarded by the Alaska Division of Senior and Disabilities Services help Alaska's seniors to age in place. These grants offer a winning solution to our aging population. Older Alaskans prefer to stay in their own homes while these grants offer the least costly type of care.

Last year, 19,000 older Alaskans benefitted from senior community grants at a cost of only \$925 per year per senior. In contrast, only 1,062 patients were served in Alaska nursing homes at a cost of \$159,367 per year per person.

Community-based Services include nutritious meals, transportation, exercise classes. As they age or develop disabilities, seniors may need home-based services such as home-delivered meals, shopping assistance or light-housekeeping. The last phase of services to help older Alaskans live independently can be called intensive home and community-based services, such as adult day services, assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing or dressing, and support services for unpaid family caregivers.

Most of our member agencies depend on grants to pay for staff and other expenses associated with senior services. The Alaska Senior & Disabilities community grants that are critical to helping local seniors remain safe in their own homes and communities include the following:

- Nutrition, Transportation & Support
- Adult Day

- Senior In-Home
- Family Caregiver Support
- Health Promotion & Disease Prevention
- ADRD (Alzheimer's disease and related dementias)
- Medicare Counseling and Outreach
- Center for Independent Living Grants
- Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate our requests and explain the importance of SDS Community Grants. For more information, please contact me at [REDACTED].

House Finance Testimony

March 23, 2023

Good morning, my name is Marianne Mills and I am the President of AGEnet, Alaska's Association of Senior Service Providers. AGEnet stands for Alaska Geriatric Exchange Network, primarily made up of private non-profit organizations founded in Alaska.

AGEnet's goal is to help older Alaskans age in place, supporting them to live safely in their own homes and communities for as long as possible and avoid costly institutional care, such as hospitals and nursing homes. AGEnet strives to involve senior service providers in every area of the state so that, statewide, older Alaskans receive the local, community-based services they need.

Today, on behalf of AGEnet, I urge you support the 13% increase proposed by the Governor to Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS) Community Based Grants (\$1,498.2). Last year, the Legislature supported this increase to make up for years of flat funding and two years of inflation and we were expecting it to take effect July 1, 2022 (but it did not happen).

Since it has been another year with Alaska's increasing senior population plus extreme inflation, AGEnet members urge you to support an additional \$700,000 for SDS Community Based Grants for Fiscal Year 2024. The number of seniors in Alaska is growing by at least 10% each year across the state with certain areas such as Mat-Su increasing by 25%.

Community grants awarded by the Alaska Division of Senior and Disabilities Services help Alaska's seniors to age in place. These grants offer a winning solution to our aging population. Older Alaskans prefer to stay in their own homes while these grants offer the least costly type of care.

Last year, 19,000 older Alaskans benefitted from senior community grants at a cost of only \$925 per year per senior. In contrast, only 1,062 patients were served in Alaska nursing homes at a cost of \$159,367 per year per person.

Community-based Services include nutritious meals, transportation, exercise classes. As they age or develop disabilities, seniors may need home-based services such as home-delivered meals, shopping assistance or light-housekeeping. The last phase of services to help older Alaskans live independently can be called intensive home and community-based services, such as adult day services, assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing or dressing, and support services for unpaid family caregivers.

Most of our member agencies depend on grants to pay for staff and other expenses associated with senior services. The Alaska Senior & Disabilities community grants that are critical to helping local seniors remain safe in their own homes and communities include the following:

- Nutrition, Transportation & Support
- Adult Day
- Senior In-Home
- Family Caregiver Support
- Health Promotion & Disease Prevention
- ADRD (Alzheimer's disease and related dementias)
- Medicare Counseling and Outreach
- Center for Independent Living Grants
- Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate our requests and explain the importance of SDS Community Grants. For more information, please contact me at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Koeneman, Crystal A (DEC) [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 1:18 PM
To: Helen Phillips
Subject: FW: Support for Section 404 Primacy Funding
Attachments: HFC 404 primacy letter.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I didn't see this one in the public testimony file that was uploaded to BASIS. Making sure you got it!

Crystal.

From: Steve Pannone [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2023 8:55 AM
To: Edgmon, Bryce E (LEG) <representative.bryce.edgmon@akleg.gov>; Foster, Neal W (LEG) <representative.neal.foster@akleg.gov>; Johnson, Delena (LEG) <Representative.DeLena.Johnson@akleg.gov>
Subject: Support for Section 404 Primacy Funding

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Honorable Representatives;

Please find attached a letter expressing my support for funding of the Section 404 Primacy adoption.

I can be reached at this email, or the number below. I appreciate your consideration and work you all do for our great State.

Steven R. Pannone, P.E., F. ASCE
Pannone Engineering Services, LLC
Office: (907) 745-8200
Fax (907) 745-8201
www.Panengak.com

Pannone Engineering Services LLC

Steven R. Pannone, Principal
Registered Professional Engineer
E-mail: steve@panengak.com

March 17, 2023

Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Neal Foster
Representative DeLena Johnson
House Finance Committee

RE: Statement of Support for Section 404 Primacy Funding

Dear Representative Edgmon, Representative Foster, Representative Johnson, and members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my support for funding for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) to assume Primacy over Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Pannone Engineering Services, LLC (PES) is a privately owned Engineering Company that has been doing business in Alaska for 33 years. I am the Owner of PES and a lifelong Alaskan. I have interacted with both the State and Federal Regulator Agencies while working to obtain a Section 404 Permit over the past 33 years. The process of obtaining a Section 404 Permit is cumbersome and expensive and requires the Engineer to work with Federal and State agencies to obtain the permit. It seems logical from an engineering standpoint to consolidate this process under one regulator agency.

Like other states, Alaska has assumed primacy over multiple federal laws, including the Clean Air Act in 1972; the Safe Drinking Water Act in 1978; Section 402 of the Clean Water Act (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) in 2012; and is in process of assuming primacy over the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. In 2013, the Alaska Legislature passed legislation establishing primacy over 404. It is now time for the funding to be approved so the State can assume primacy over this program which is currently managed at the federal level by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Including the requested funding in the FY24 operating budget will allow the State to begin the application process as authorized.

The value of primacy is a more efficient and cost-effective program with regulatory decisions made by Alaskans who best understand our state's unique conditions. Primacy does not weaken oversight: the programs are required to follow federal law and cannot be less stringent. A program run by the State is accountable to Alaskans and the State Legislature, assuring that Alaska will have control of its permitting priorities.

PES has a long history of supporting agency cost-recovery for the State's primacy of the Clean Air Act, the Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program, and other permitting through reimbursable service agreements with the State Office of Project Management and Permitting. Fees

for service are an expected part of doing business and we are prepared to discuss fees with ADEC. PES also supports efforts by the State to secure federal funding for the Section 404 primacy program since it is the only primacy program that is not partially funded by the federal government.

Thank you for your consideration of funding a program that will strengthen the State's permitting oversight while delivering greater efficiency and stability. These are valuable steps to attract investment and ensure that projects are developed responsibly for the benefit of Alaska and Alaskans.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (907) 745-8200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SRP', with a long horizontal line extending to the left and right.

Steven R. Pannone, P.E., F. ASCE
Owner/Civil Engineer

[REDACTED]

From: Keeley Olson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 1:23 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Letter of Support - CDVSA funding in DPS budget
Attachments: CDVSA Budget LOS.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good Afternoon,

Attached, please find a letter of support for CDVSA funding in the Department of Public Safety's Budget. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions. Thank you for your hard work on the House Finance Committee, and for the opportunity to provide public comment.

Keeley Olson
Executive Director
Standing Together Against Rape (**STAR**)
1057 W. Fireweed Lane | Suite 230 | Anchorage, AK 99503



Office Line | 907.276.7279
24 Hour Crisis Line | Relay Friendly | 907.276.7273
Fax | 907.278.9983

[REDACTED]
www.staralaska.com

STAR's mission is to prevent sexual trauma and provide comprehensive, collaborative crisis intervention, advocacy and support to victims/survivors, their families and our communities.

This email, including attachments, is intended for the use of the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain CONFIDENTIAL or privileged information that is protected by federal and state regulation. If the reader of this email is not the intended recipient or his or her agent, the reader is notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this email is prohibited. If you think you have received this email in error, please advise the sender by reply email.

March 23, 2023

Dear House Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this letter in support of adequate funding for the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in the Department of Public Safety's budget.

STAR began serving survivors of sexual trauma forty-five years ago, employs an active Prevention and Education Department, dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and harassment. Our Direct Services Department responds with law enforcement and forensic nursing to every sexual assault crime reported in the Municipality of Anchorage. Moreover, STAR Advocates provide necessary resources, emergency financial assistance and emotional support to survivors from all over the state. In 2022, over 100 program participants were from rural areas of Alaska.

Victims' services are a necessary function of Public Safety. Yet, the Council is funded much differently than, say, Department of Corrections. It's as though one is considered "required" operations while shelters and victim services will "find a way to make do". Each year for the last five years, the Council has received one-time increments to help maintain the same level of funding. Without the one-time increments in this year's budget, funding for victims' services would face a \$6.5 million shortfall. I am truly thankful for that support. However, it is obvious with inflation the same amount of funding over that time period results in decreased funding.

Our services are required to be available 24 hours a day, adequately staffed by trained professionals, and performed in collaboration with law enforcement, medical professionals, courts and prosecutors. We are required to collaborate with all manner of social services, schools, and hospitals. We need to consistently perform outreach activities to make people aware of our services and promote personal safety and violence prevention strategies. Then, we are required to fundraise. We write multiple grants each year to fund every piece of our victims' services organization, from employee salaries, volunteers' training and in-school presentation equipment. STAR juggles multiple funding sources, which operate in different fiscal years with a broad variance in reporting requirements. We submit nearly 100 reports on grants each year. Most funders want to support a new project, not fund keeping the lights on or paying staff a living wage. So, we host fundraisers and an annual Masquerade Ball, begging businesses around the community for items we can auction off to raise money. When was the last time DOC had to hold a charity auction in order to maintain staffing levels?

Yes, we are nonprofits, not one of us a government agency. I venture to say you will never get more value and utility than by using a mission-focused nonprofit to provide necessary services. That is, as long as that nonprofit can maintain staffing levels, recruit qualified employees, and offer competitive benefits. That certainly is more challenging when trying to hire for a position requiring 24 hour in-person response, which occurs on average once a day (or night, as the case may be) in Anchorage. On top of salary and benefits, you have to attempt to create a work culture for your staff that encourages self-care and minimizes vicarious trauma. We bear witness to experiences most people don't want to imagine or think about, and they stay with us long after a shift, a pay period, or a career.

Add to that the necessity of maintaining response during a pandemic, from which staff have lasting injury and personal losses.

So, the budget “cuts”, as we should call them, have an impact. I’m not sure how much longer statewide victim services can continue to provide quality response with necessary positions left unfilled and unable to pay enough to find qualified candidates.

I urge the legislature to not only support the current budget of CDVSA, but to find consistent funding for victims’ services moving forward. Prioritize the safety, support and healing offered by victims’ service programs throughout the state.

Sincerely,



Keeley Olson,
Executive Director

[REDACTED]

From: Ronnie Leach [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 9:38 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Victim Service Program Funding

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Currently in the budget there is an amount of 3 million dollars from a One Time Increment of General Funds and 3.5 million federal appropriations through a request from Senator Murkowski. Without these one-time increments, services for victims would be 6.5 million dollars short from previous years' funding. We support this funding.

While we appreciate that one-time increments allow victim service providers the same amount of funding as previous years, this is not a given and we don't know what next year will bring. With the increased cost of utilities, food, and transportation, as well as the increase in employee pay, the dynamics for victim service providers is no longer the same as it was pre-pandemic.

On the Southern Kenai Peninsula, it has been extremely difficult to compete with other entities regarding pay. For example, McDonald's beginning wage is \$20.00, as a non-profit, without guaranteed funding we are unable to pay our advocates the new competitive wage. We can only afford to start advocates out at \$16.00 an hour. Safeway's starting pay has been reported to be between the \$18.00 to \$20.00 range. Again, we cannot compete with this as we are a non-profit and our victims service funding amounts aren't guaranteed from year to year. The funding instability makes it difficult to maintain a long-term staff.

We greatly appreciate that the legislature is trying to address the issue of one-time funding and the lack of additional funds to meet the increased costs of providing services to victims *and* we hope they are able to find more so services can continue.

~Best

Ronnie Leach, MHRM
Executive Director

--

Ronnie Leach, MHRM
Executive Director
South Peninsula Haven House

3776 Lake Street
Homer, AK 99603



Statement of Confidentiality

The contents of this email message and any attachments are confidential and are intended solely for addressee. The information may also be legally privileged. This transmission is sent in trust, for the sole purpose of delivery to the intended recipient. If you have received this transmission in error, any use, reproduction, or dissemination of this transmission is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please immediately notify the sender by reply email or phone and delete this message and it's attachments, if any.

[REDACTED]

From: Taylor Buotte [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 10:14 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Childcare funding

To whom it may concern, I work at a childcare in Petersburg, AK and I'm writing on behalf of all members who work in childcare. My two children attend Petersburg Childrens Center where I work, and I get a small discount on one of my children but that still ends up being about \$300-\$350 that gets taken out of every check. At \$15/hr that doesn't leave me with very much money and with inflation everything is costing more to have a decent living. I'm asking that childcare workers get paid much more for the job that we do. We have children full time for 10 hours a day; we raise children for families. People think we are glorified babysitters and that's just the opposite. We have one of the toughest jobs in the world, so much so that we get parents on the daily telling us that they couldn't do our job. This increase in wages would exponentially huge for all workers in childcare, especially those of us that still have to pay for our children to be here while working at the same place that they attend. Please heavily consider these wage increases! Thank you!

Taylor Buotte

[REDACTED]
Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

From: Emily Berg [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 10:35 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: FY24 State Operating Budget

Hi my name is Emily Berg. I am a teacher at bright beginnings early learning center. I would love for you guys to add 15 m\$ to the budget to increase childcare grant for wages. Adding this money will help out with our childcare center and family's who have children in our center. Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

From: Gayle Wilson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 11:01 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Testimony Alaskans with Disabilities

Hi! My name is Gayle Wilson. I live in Soldotna and Rep. Fields and Senator Bjorkman represents me. I currently work with people with intellectual disabilities and am very concerned about the stability of the community providers. It is very important to me that Alaskans with disabilities have adequate work force to support them. This will only be accomplished if the rates of reimbursement to providers providing critical services are sufficient to attract and retain workforce. In addition to what the Governor has in his budget -I fully support additional funds being added to the budget to provide funds to accomplish this task. If the network of community providers fails, the options for people with disabilities is far more restrictive and expensive impacting not only the person but the state budget as well.

Thank you for prioritizing these critical services.

Thank you for listening.

Gayle Wilson
Offical Staff Manager



This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. Should you receive an email with an attachment, this attachment is accessible through our secure email provider, Mimecast.

Alaskans share a Vision of a flexible system in which each person directs their own supports, based on their strengths and abilities, toward a meaningful life in their home, their job and their community. Our Vision includes supported families, professional staff and services available throughout the state now and into the future.

This message, including any attachments, is intended solely for the use of the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain CONFIDENTIAL and/or privileged information that is protected by federal and state regulation. If the reader of this email is not the intended recipient or his or her agent, the reader is notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this email is prohibited.

If you think you have received this email in error, please advise the sender by reply email and delete this email immediately.

Visit us at <http://www.hopealaska.org> or on our [Facebook](#) page.



Helping Alaskans with Differing Abilities Experience Hope since 1968.

[REDACTED]

From: Erica Otten [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 11:12 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: FY24 State Operating Budget

Hello,

My name is Erica Otten. I work in accounting at NeighborWorks Alaska, a non-profit housing provider, and my partner is a firefighter with AFD. We have a wonderful 2 year old daughter who attends day care at Bright Beginnings.

Please add \$15 million to the budget to increase the childcare grant for wages. This increased investment will truly help our childcare program. I've seen our childcare provider struggle with staffing and providing decent wages. I've also experienced dealing with wait-lists when trying to enroll our daughter in day care. I know our center currently has some wait lists for different classrooms. It is a real struggle for parents to try to continue to work and find good and reliable child care. Increased investment in child care will improve the staffing situation at day care centers, hopefully helping them be fully staffed and able to decrease wait-lists across our community. It will help parents get back to work to provide for their families.

Thank you for taking my testimony,

Erica Otten
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: LIO Mat-Su
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 11:13 AM
To: House Finance Legislation
Subject: FW: Budget: Please Support Direct Service Professionals

From: Alumni - jjswanberg [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 11:10 AM
To: LIO Mat-Su <LIO.Mat-Su@akleg.gov>
Subject: Budget: Please Support Direct Service Professionals

Hello, I live in the Mat-Su Valley and am represented by Representative Cathy Tilton of District 26. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor in Alaska and specialize in working with individuals who experience co-occurring mental health and other disabilities. Historically, individuals who experienced mental health and co-occurring disabilities were hidden away, locked away, unseen and/or institutionalized. These are not historically remote practices; they have been general practices within my lifetime. With supports in the least restrictive environment, their homes and communities, individuals who experience these co-occurring conditions can live full lives. They are able to learn, practice, and master important life skills so important to mental health and well-being, and are able to live their own best lives. Not only do our communities benefit from their full participation, but it is also far less expensive to support an individual with these direct services than to fund for repeated Emergency Department visits, hospitalizations, and institutionalization where individuals tend to seek support, help, and human connection when they feel alienated, unsupported, or are perceived to be incapable of contributing to their communities. Please consider increasing budgets to provide adequate financial and other supports for direct services work. This is vital for our most vulnerable human family members.

With sincere regards,
Jennifer J. Swanberg
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Jake [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 11:14 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: In Support of Early Childhood Education

Good Morning,

I am writing today to encourage your continued financial support for early childhood education and childcare in the State of Alaska. As a father of two beautiful little Alaskans under the age of 6, I know firsthand how challenging it is to raise a family, make enough money to survive and have accessible and affordable early childhood education and child care resources. Especially for children in small, off road communities with developmental disabilities. Because of shortfalls in these resources in our town, my family has had to make difficult decisions, which have included stopping even part time employment due to lack of child care.

With a declining population of working aged adults, Alaska should strongly consider supporting our littlest residents. In doing so, we could retain the working aged residents that we have and attract newcomers to our State.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jake Eckhardt

[REDACTED]

From: Megan Turnquist [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 11:43 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: FY24 State Operating Budget

Good morning,

My name is Dr. Megan Turnquist. I am writing to you as a working veterinarian as well as a mother living in Chugiak. My husband and I dreamed of living here in Alaska and raising our family here since we got married in 2014. My husband grew up in Anchorage and could not wait to return. Following graduating from vet school, I found a job at a local general practice veterinary clinic where I have been since 2016. We welcomed our first child in 2018 and our second last year in 2022. As a full time doctor, I am only able to do what I do in my practice for our community because of our daycare, Bright Beginnings. Knowing that my kids are safe and cared for every day allows me to focus on caring for my patients. Our daycare costs for 2 children is over \$2000 per month, and that is almost not doable on my family's two parent income. I cannot imagine trying to afford this on anything less. And even with this type of payment, our daycare cannot afford to pay our teachers/caregivers/educators what they need to be able to retain them.

In the last few years, I have noticed that we are not retaining high quality instructors and caregivers. There have been several 100% staff turnovers in the last 2 years at our daycare. This is not only occurring at our daycare, but is happening in nearly all areas of Alaska. When I have spoken with those who work in daycares and preschools, the largest hurdle identified is the lack of support and pay for the staff. They are often making barely above minimum wage, and lose the day's (or weeks) pay if the school has to shut down for Covid or weather. Those who work in these facilities must have a wage that will support them as well as reflect their level of experience and education. We cannot expect to retain high quality educators and caregivers paying them what they could make in a fast food gig or driving for Uber. We absolutely need more funds for our daycares and early education to help set up Alaskan kids for success and to continue to help families be able to work and provide for themselves.

Being able to have consistent day care and preschool will keep me working. I can continue to pay for food and housing for my family. If I did not have daycare that I could afford, I would need to quit my jobs - not only reducing my family's income by over half but also reducing the ability for my veterinary clinic to provide for patients. Being able to have affordable day care will enable my children to do better long term in school and life. It will ensure that children love to go to daycare and preschool. You cannot expect families to continue to pay higher and higher bills for preschool education and continue to work. It will not happen. You will have people leaving the work force to stay home with their kids, you will continue to see families choose to NOT come to Alaska or choose to move out of Alaska to be able to afford a basic need like childcare. Increase the budget for the childcare grant. Keep me and other families like mine working and safe. Keep our babies and children safe and happy.

I hear politicians claim how important children and families are to them and to the state. Please show Alaskan families that we do matter.

Thank you for allowing this testimony,

Dr. Megan Turnquist
Veterinarian
Chugiak, AK
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Sonja Paul [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 11:55 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Child Care Funding Support

To whom it may concern,
Childcare funding is an essential need for families within Alaska. Childcare is a necessity for many. Currently my family has two children in daycare while two parents are in the workforce. If it were not for childcare our family would be without health insurance and would struggle on the income of one working adult. Our children at times spend more hours with childcare providers than they do at home which is sad but is the way society is today. Childcare facilities teach and love our children when we are at work providing for them. These employees and facilities deserve to be compensated for their work and make liveable wages as employees as well. Our children deserve to be in facilities that meet their daily needs. Childcare is vital and we need to support it to keep families living in Alaska.

Thank you,
Sonja Paul

[REDACTED]

From: Lindsay J [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 12:10 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for early childhood programs

Hello to whom it may concern,

Haines Headstart and Parents As Teachers programs are valuable assets to our community here.

At headstart, not only is my daughter learning and having fun with her peers, the time she spends there enables me to work. As a self-employed person, that makes me more productive as well as a more patient, present parent when she comes home.

My son is following daughter's footsteps with the Parents As Teachers program, which provides great ideas and resources for teaching I would be unlikely to come up with on my own.

Both these programs have boosted my kids' development in multiple dimensions as well as made my husband and I more productive in our work.

Please fund early childhood education to the fullest extent possible.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Johnson

[REDACTED]
Haines, AK

[REDACTED]

From: Stephen Sorensen [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 12:15 PM
To: House Education; House Finance
Cc: Stephen Sorensen
Subject: HB 65

As an local Juneau attorney and father of a son who graduated from the Juneau School District, I believe that my son's education was better funded, hence he had access to more and better educational opportunities during his school years; than a student who is currently matriculating though the Juneau School District. The cost increases to the Juneau School District, as many other school districts throughout Alaska, has to do with items out of the control of the local school districts, such as:

1. The huge increase in liability insurance, even though the risk has remained the same;
2. The cost of goods has increased and inflation has taken a toll on school districts' purchasing power;
3. The personnel cost from health insurance increase and wages of school district employees continue to increase;
4. And, finally, the ongoing cost for recruiting and training new teachers to replace more experienced teachers, who seek employment elsewhere for more pay and better benefits.

This means that practically every school district in the State is experiencing a severe deficit for the first time in many, many years. This also means less money for school districts to well resources high quality programs, hence reduced student opportunities for excellent educations. Increasing the Base Student Allocation is required in order to salvage, the decades of neglect by the Legislature regarding meaningful increases to the Base Student Allocation. HB 65 does increase the allocation, but it must be amended to over \$1,000 to adequately compensate school districts so that more money can be applied to student education.

Stephen F. Sorensen
Juneau Mediation Center, LLC
6903 Sunny Drive
Juneau, Alaska 99801

[REDACTED]

Providing arbitration, mediation & facilitation services

Experienced in using online platforms including Zoom. Willing to conduct arbitration and mediation via videoconference or teleconference.

[REDACTED]

From: Elijah Rodriguez [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 1:00 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Budget increases

Hi, my name is (Elijah Rodriguez), I am a friend of Rebecca Butikofer. They work at Discovery preschool. When Blue ran discovery her monthly child care grant amount was approximately \$1000. 1000. If the \$15M increase is added to the budget, Discovery's monthly grant award would instantly be \$10,000 per month. With 9 employees at Discovery, the extra \$9,000/month would mean they could give each employee a \$5/hour pay increase and still have funds left to cover the payroll tax increases. That would put starting wages at \$18-20/hr for assistant teachers and \$23-25/hr for lead teachers. So, basically, multiply your current CCG by 10 and that would be your new grant amount if this funding was added to the budget.

Please I am asking, to increase the grant amount. I have witnessed the passion Rebecca has for their work, and all the hard work they do. If the funding is not increased they would have to find other employment because they and many of their coworkers simply cannot afford to live. The child care system is crumbling, and will continue to crumble if funding isn't improved.

Thank you for reading my testimony

Sincerely,

(Elijah M. Rodriguez)

[REDACTED]

From: Robin Siverson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 1:16 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Public Testimony - Budget

Hello~ my name is Robin Siverson. I live in West Anchorage and Representative Drummond and Senator Gray-Jackson represent me. I have spent my entire career working with and supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I am very concerned about the long term sustainability of our community providers and their ability to meet the needs with the resources available. When I began my career I was able to do this work I loved and still afford to meet my living needs. That cannot be said for the young people who choose to do this very important work. The cost of living and expenses in our community post pandemic have increased dramatically but the wages have not. They say a community can be judged on how they treat their most vulnerable and our community is not doing their best. Every recent report that has come out addressing the shortcomings of our Alaska systems has failed to note the overwhelming workforce shortage throughout our community and state. The community providers continue to do their best but without sufficient reimbursement rates and without an increase for community providers the outlook over the next several years is bleak. If the community network of support providers collapse, the options for people with disabilities become limited, reactive and even more costly taking an even bigger toll on our community. Please prioritize these critical services. Thank you for your service.

Sent from [Outlook](#)

[REDACTED]

From: Daniel & Emily Hjortstorp [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 1:48 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Fwd: Head Start needs your help!

Dear House Finance Committee,
Please make the availability of high quality, affordable child-care a high-priority this coming year. Child-care is getting harder and harder to find child-care making it difficult for both parents to work in this challenging economic environment we're currently in.

Sincerely,
Alaskan Parents

----- Forwarded message -----

From: School Message [REDACTED]
Date: Wed, Mar 22, 2023 at 11:50 AM
Subject: Head Start needs your help!
To: [REDACTED]

Alaska has lost more than 20% of its childcare providers since 2018, which has resulted in the state only having enough childcare slots for 29% of all children ages 4 and younger. Please take a minute to send the House Finance Committee an email explaining the importance of Early Childhood Education funding is to Alaskans! house.finance@akleg.gov

Thank you in advance!

Beth Klein

RurAL CAP Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Manager

[REDACTED]

From: McKenna Slivensky [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 1:56 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Child care grant funding increase

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to express my support for increased funding to the Child Care Grant program. The reasons I think increased funding is needed are numerous, including:

- Childcare workers do not make a living wage. I've seen childcare worker job postings with wages from \$13-22/hr, often with little to no benefits. You cannot survive on this in Alaska, so many of these positions are going unfilled. For context, lawmakers have recently expressed that their \$50k salary with \$30k in per-diem are not living wages. Do the math.
- Because these positions are going unfilled, there is a child care crisis happening. I live in Anchorage and have seen it firsthand. When the city decided to close schools for almost 2 weeks in December, many of my friends and colleagues were forced to take time off of work (sometimes resulting in lost wages) to care for their children because daycare is not even an option here with the long waitlists.
- The cost of childcare itself is outrageous and presents barriers to many people who desperately need it.

Bottom line - people like me (a 30 year old state employee who wants children) are extremely hesitant to start a family or keep their family in Alaska in such a hostile, underfunded environment. If lawmakers want to support Alaskan families, the very least they could do is support grants that increase childcare workers' wages.

- McKenna Slivensky

[REDACTED]

From: Travis Williams [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 2:04 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Funding

Hi my name is Travis Williams and I currently work for Bright Beginnings Early Learning Center. I am the maintenance technician in charge of keeping up with the everyday tasks. I am hoping that funding goes through for all daycare services. The biggest problem I see is the wages and the revolving door of employees. The pay is not what it should be for the providers in the state of Alaska. It will help us retain valuable employees and allow us to hire better employees. Please consider this when making your decision. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Our children are our future and should get the best providers available.

[REDACTED]

From: Saralyn Tabachnick [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 2:12 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: DPS-CDVSA essential budget support

Dear Reader,

I'm writing regarding the DPS- CDVSA budget, which provides essential funding for programs like AWARE, serving survivors in Juneau and nine rural communities in Northern SE Alaska, as well as serving men through our Juneau Choice & Accountability Program and offering prevention planning and programming.

Currently in the budget there is an amount of 3 million dollars from a one time increment of General Funds and 3.5 million federal appropriation through a request from Senator Murkowski. Without these one-time increments, services for victims would be 6.5 million dollars short from previous years' funding. This funding is critical for us to maintain the same level of service we are currently providing.

While we appreciate that one-time increments allow victim service providers the same amount of funding as previous years, the costs we are experiencing are not the same – rising fuel costs, utility increases, food costs, and starting wages require additional funding for us to provide the SAME level of services as in the past. Our utility bills increased by 131% over this time last year. Additionally, services for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence are an integral part of the criminal legal system, as we support people navigating both civil and criminal issues, and through their individual processes of working to create safety and stability for themselves, and often for their children/families as well.

Thank you for helping stabilize funding for AWARE and like programs supporting some of Alaska's most vulnerable people.

Additionally, AWARE is in the unique position of also offering services through our Battering Intervention Program (BIP) for men who have abused power and control in their intimate partner relationships. JCAP, the Juneau Choice & Accountability Program, routinely receives referrals from the court, probation and parole officers, Lemon Creek Correctional Center, and other community agencies. During COVID, the program moved to meeting on zoom, however with the increase in referrals from all over Southeast, we are maintaining a Zoom class while also adding an in person class. The growing need continues to stretch us. JCAP provides men with the opportunity to hold themselves accountable and to make changes in their lives for the benefit of themselves, their partners, and their families. At the same time, AWARE advocates routinely provide safety checks for victims and partners of men in the classes. This violence is 100% preventable. Again, our fixed costs are growing. Additionally funding will

support our ability to meet the need for BIP services, helping men move the needle in changing their abusive and controlling behavior.

AWARE's comprehensive programming also includes prevention strategies. AWARE oversees Haa To'och Liche'esh, Juneau's Violence Prevention Coalition. With increased funding, we'll be able to continue and grow empowerment and wellness programs for school age children through Girls on the Run and Boys Run/i Toowu' Klatseen. These programs instill healthy life skills and resilience through place based curriculum and safety and life skill development. Trained volunteer coaches guide participants through activities that creatively teach teamwork, self-confidence, decision making and communication skills, and at the end of the program, the ability to run a 5K. I urge you to fund the increment for BIPS and Prevention.

Together we can make a difference and create safer, stronger relationships for Alaskans. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Saralyn Tabachnick

--

Saralyn Tabachnick, she/her
Deputy Director
AWARE, Inc.
PO Box 20809
Juneau, AK 99802



All that we are arises with our thoughts.
With our thoughts, we make our world.
~ Buddha

From: Amie Collins [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 2:50 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: FY24 State Operating Budget Testimony

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good afternoon. My name is Amie Collins. I live in Anchorage, and am the Executive Director of Best Beginnings. I want to thank the House Finance Committee for their work and support of the FY24 operating budget, which we know includes critical funding for early childhood services such as PreK, infant learning programs, and resources for families. I want to especially thank the members of the DEED subcommittee for recommending increased investment in early literacy through Imagination Library in Alaska.

In its current capacity, Imagination Library serves 13,382 children across the state through the monthly home delivery of high quality, age appropriate books, parent education resources such as newsletters and activity guides, and local family engagement events. But we know that there are over 48,000 children in Alaska who would be eligible to receive these services if they were available. This funding will allow us to expand our services to new Alaska communities and reach more children in the approximately 130 communities Imagination Library currently serves, as well restore service to areas cut from the program in recent years due to a lack funding including Anchorage hillside, JBER, Chugiak, Eagle River, and stabilize other areas at risk of closure, such as the entire Mat-Su Imagination Library which we received word this week is also considering closure due to limited funding.

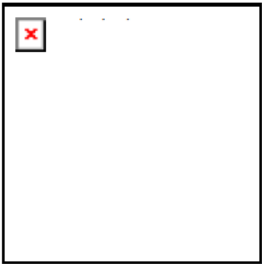
As the state continues to invest in ensuring the right of every child to read, we know that coming to school ready to read is critically important. Yet less than a third of Alaska children are starting kindergarten with the skills they need to succeed. The simple, repeated act of a parent reading to their child from birth is one of the absolute best things a parent can do to impact their child's education.

It strengthens neuro pathways in the child's developing brain, increase the parent-child bond, and sets a foundation for learning for both the child AND for the parent to be an engaged partner in their child's education. Ask a kindergartener teacher in the first few weeks of school, and I guarantee they can tell you which children were exposed to reading and books from a young age because the difference in their abilities and developmental baseline is often palpable. And the research supports that finding. Not only is there a plethora of research demonstrating the positive educational benefits of Imagination Library programs nationwide, but locally, research shows that children who participate in Imagination Library score higher than their peers not only show substantive gains in kindergarten readiness areas, but score higher on 3rd grade reading and math assessments, have higher rates of school attendance than children who are not

enrolled in the program. Family engagement, home literacy environments, and changing reading behaviors are low-cost, powerful tools in a whole child approach to reading proficiency.

I'd like to continue to offer myself, on our office as a resource to you all should you have any questions, as you continue to work to advance the well-being of families and young children in our community. Thank you for your service and partnership in strengthening early childhood in Alaska.

Warmly,



Amie Collins Executive Director Best Beginnings

[Redacted] %
[Redacted] %

Address: 3350 Commercial Drive, Suite 104A
Anchorage, Alaska 99501 %

Website: BestBeginningsAlaska.org %



Our Mission: *To ensure all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed.*

[REDACTED]

From: Kim Rogers [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 4:00 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: FW: Testimony Alaskans with Disabilities

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From: Kim Rogers
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:51 PM
To: housefinanace@akleg.gov
Subject: Testimony Alaskans with Disabilities

Hi! My name is Kim Rogers. I live in Soldotna and Rep. Fields and Senator Bjorkman represents me. I currently work with people with intellectual disabilities and am very concerned about the stability of the community providers. It is very important to me that Alaskans with disabilities have adequate work force to support them. This will only be accomplished if the rates of reimbursement to providers providing critical services are sufficient to attract and retain workforce. In addition to what the Governor has in his budget -I fully support additional funds being added to the budget to provide funds to accomplish this task. If the network of community providers fails, the options for people with disabilities is far more restrictive and expensive impacting not only the person but the state budget as well.

Thank you for prioritizing these critical services.

Thank you for listening.

Kim Rogers
Administrative Assistant
[REDACTED]



Alaskans share a Vision of a flexible system in which each person directs their own supports, based on their strengths and abilities, toward a meaningful life in their home, their job and their community. Our Vision includes supported families, professional staff and services available throughout the state now and into the future.

This message, including any attachments, is intended solely for the use of the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain CONFIDENTIAL and/or privileged information that is protected by federal and state regulation.

If the reader of this email is not the intended recipient or his or her agent, the reader is notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this email is prohibited.
If you think you have received this email in error, please advise the sender by reply email and delete this email immediately.

Visit us at <http://www.hopealaska.org> or on our [Facebook](#) page.



Helping Alaskans with Differing Abilities Experience Hope since 1968.

[REDACTED]

From: Cliff Monk [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:23 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Waiver Direct Service providers

Elvi Gray-Jackson, D, AK-G (Senate)
Andy Josephson D, AK-13 (House)

My name is Cliff Livingston

I work as a full time direct support professional and have for XX years.

I support adults who experience intellectual disabilities to learn skills of everyday living in the community.

I have found that many people who don't do this work or who do not have a family member with a disability do not know what I do to help others. I work to support people who, without my help, would be residing in a nursing facility or in an institution due their needs created by their disability.

In the course of any regular day I am needed to provide the following kinds of help:

delegated nursing tasks, concierge, food and nutrition counselor, educator, body guard, chauffeur, cook, laundry services, personal care aide, first responder, mental health counselor, speech/language assistant, personal advocate, community disability advocate, occupational therapist, personal assistant, personal shopper, housekeeper, and clinical note writer.

I must have all these skills, and know about the kinds of help my client needs. I also need to be able to work the schedule that my client needs, many times not within regular work hours of M-F 9-5.

Yet I am paid the same and in some cases less than a fast food worker or entry level retail clerk like Target. Unlike the workers at fast food and retail, I work on my own without the presence of a direct supervisor on site. So I must also be independent and able to make good decisions on my own.

The aging and disabled population in Alaska is growing. There are less workers than can do the care. I am asking for you to help by advocating for higher pay for people doing this important work which is considered "unskilled" but in reality is a very high level of skill and responsibility. Home and community care like what I do costs far less than a nursing home or institution. We must be paid a higher wage than fast food. We are caring for the most vulnerable Alaskans of all of us.

[REDACTED]

From: Jenna Hamm [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:14 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Testimony on Operating Budget

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

My name is Jenna Hamm and I live in Denali Park with my family and have served on the school board of the District for 10 years. I wrote to some of you earlier this session urging you to take up HB 65, the bill to increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA). As you deliberate the Operating budget, I urge you to include additional funds in the budget to support an increase the BSA.

Last month I wrote about our board's recent decision to continue to fund and staff, however minimally possible, our two smaller schools in the communities of Cantwell and Anderson. Because *a* school is better than *no* school, however meager the offerings, or how few the teachers, or how stretched-thin the maintenance staff.

Continuing to operate schools this way is unconscionable. Without a minimum of a \$1100 BSA increase, we may be unable to support student transportation, unable to support CTE offerings at all sites, be without critical support staff, and somehow maintain the integrity of school infrastructure with only part-time maintenance and custodial staff. Our four Cantwell high schoolers are without a high school math and science teacher. The teacher at one of the larger sites must teach Cantwell students virtually and Healy students in-person simultaneously, or vice versa. While a creative solution, this is not what best serves students.

I described in earlier letters how closing down two of our smaller schools would be a death knell for these communities. Without a substantial BSA increase, this might be necessary. Schools are the lifeblood of Alaska's small communities--they are the public libraries, the community gathering spots, the emergency shelters (yes, this happened this summer during the Clear Fire), the gymnasiums in the middle of winter, the ball fields and playgrounds in the summertime. Schools are critical to Alaska's communities, and Alaska's communities are the lifeblood of the state's economy.

We cannot continue to serve our children well by continually underfunding public education. Some among you have advocated for a slow deliberation during this session and the next in order to fully evaluate the merits of any education funding increase. I would challenge you, just as we school board members ask ourselves at each and every school board meeting: "what is best for students?"

Flat or minimal funding another year will indisputably shortchange our students' learning opportunities. Year after year districts have been faced with doing less with less. Teachers are already seeking work elsewhere, knowing that their jobs are on the chopping block. Families are already moving out of state for better educational opportunities for their children. Communities are losing the strength and vitality of young, working families who contribute to the state's economy. Teachers, families and our state's communities need the security of knowing our state is fully committed to fully funding public education in a sustainable way that keeps pace with inflation. What business doesn't raise their prices, and have to increase their wages, to keep pace with expenses and the cost of living?

Please fulfill your obligation to invest in Alaska's future by including additional funds in the Operating Budget to directly support a meaningful and sustained increase to the BSA for public K-12 education. Please reference the bipartisan fiscal policy working group of prior sessions for pathways to achieving this critical state service. Thank you for your service to Alaskans.

Respectfully,

Jenna Hamm

Jenna Hamm

she/her

Co-owner

[Camp Denali and Parkside Guest House](#)

PO Box 67, Denali Park, AK 99755

907-683-2290-office

[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Blog](#)

Providing active learning experiences and fostering stewardship of the natural world through a tradition of community, excellence and place.

[REDACTED]

From: Catherine Sullivan [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:09 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Childcare Grant Budget

Good afternoon,
My name is Catherine Sullivan. I am a mother of a preschooler in Anchorage. I fully and wholeheartedly support adding \$15 million to the budget to increase the child care grant for wages. This is a much needed and far overdue adjustment to allow for the needs of childcare providers in our state. Without it, the childcare system in Alaska will crumble.
Thank you for your time,

Catherine A. Sullivan
[REDACTED]

From: Pamela Kelley - ARA Executive Director [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:01 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for Amendment - Dept. of Health Budget

I'm writing to ask that you support the budget amendment to add a small amount of funding to the Department of Health / Division of Senior & Disability Services budget to establish a Participant Directed Care program. Participant Directed Care would allow older Alaskans to directly hire family, friends, or neighbors allowing them to continue to receive homecare services instead of being forced to seek costly institutional care in the face of the direct care workforce crisis that is threatening Medicaid Home & Community Based waiver services.

Participant Directed Care is a HCBS option in which the individual who receives services decides how, when, and from whom their services will be delivered. Self-direction is a flexible alternative to "traditional" HCBS, in which a person receives services from a worker employed by a home care agency and the person generally has less control over how his or her services are delivered. Paid family caregiving through participant-direction addresses multiple needs: the person who needs care can age in place among friends and family; the family caregiver can earn modest income for the difficult work he or she performs, which lessens the impact of the caregivers' lost job hours; the homecare workforce is expanded; and it facilitates the use of lower-cost HCBS while delaying or avoiding costly institutionalization.

Thank you for your consideration,

Pamela R. Kelley
Executive Director

Main: [907-561-3313](tel:907-561-3313)
Toll-free: [1-800-478-1080](tel:1-800-478-1080)
Fax: 907-561-3315

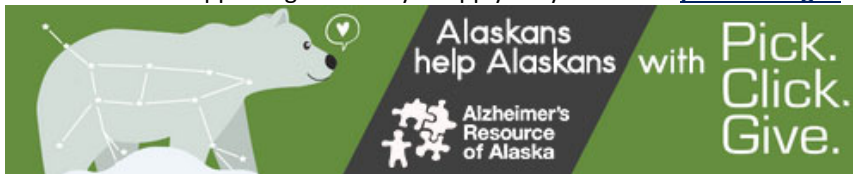


**Alzheimer's
Resource
of Alaska**

www.alzaska.org



Please consider supporting us when you apply for your PFD at pfd.alaska.gov.



[REDACTED]

From: Laura Norton-Cruz [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 2:55 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Testimony in support of increasing the Child Care Grant Program

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear members of House Finance Committee,

I have called to testify during today's hearing, but have been on hold for 30 minutes and am unsure if I will have the chance, so I am also writing to urge you to vote for a \$15 million increase to the Child Care Grant Program (CCG), to provide quick relief to the childcare sector and to the workers, families, and children who depend on it, and stabilize the industry. It is one of many needed steps, and the quickest way to ensure that the childcare workers who provide essential work for child development and to support the economy and all essential services, so that people can work, are able to stay in the industry and make ends meet.

I was on the board of my children's childcare for 3 years, have been working recently on trying to help the Northwest Arctic create licensed childcare, and am working on a documentary about the lack of childcare in the Northwest Arctic. The situation is dire, and children, parents, and all industries are suffering daily as a consequence. The Alaska Chamber of Commerce has chosen this as a priority focus for good reason; it is affecting all of Alaska.

The CCG has not been raised since 2012, and we all know how much costs have increased since then. It is far past time to raise it now.

Thank you,
Laura
--
Laura Norton-Cruz, LMSW

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation [Culture of Health Leader](#)

[REDACTED]

She/her/hers

I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina in Dgheyay Kaq [Anchorage]

[REDACTED]

From: Kayli Dollard [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:32 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Child Care Grant Money

Hi,

My name is Kayli. I am a friend of Rebecca Butikofer, an employ at Discovery preschool.

When Blue ran discovery her monthly child care grant amount was approximately \$1000. When the \$15M increase is added to the budget, Discovery's monthly grant award will instantly rise to \$10,000 per month. With 9 employees at Discovery, the extra \$9,000/month would mean they could give each employee a \$5/hour pay increase and still have funds left to cover the payroll tax increases. That would put starting wages at \$18-20/hr for assistant teachers and \$23-25/hr for lead teachers. So, if you multiply the current CCG by 10 that would be your new grant amount under the new budget.

I understand the phenomenal impact the increase in grant money would make and am please asking for it to become a reality. I have witnessed the passion Rebecca has for their work, and all the hard work they do. If the funding is not increased they would have to find other employment because they and many of their coworkers simply cannot afford to live. The child care system is crumbling, and will continue to crumble if funding isn't improved

Thank you very much for reading my testimony.

Sincerely,
Kayli Dollard

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

From: bill holton [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:32 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: AMHS funding

Dear Alaska House Finance Committee(s),

As the highways and roads of Alaska, the Alaska Marine Highway needs adequate funding for vessels, terminals and websites. Schools, keeping families connected, healthcare, economy, growing communities and basic transportation for everyone from law enforcement to fire fighters are reasons for keeping up on maintenance to the AMHS. Ferries are the most reliable mode of public and private transportation for Southeast Alaska. AMHS service needs to be maintained to keep up with demand. With more sailings economies will grow.

Thank you for your work and for the opportunity to comment to the Finance Committee.

Bill Holton

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows



Virus-free www.avg.com

[REDACTED]

From: Marta Kumle -formerly Krynytzky-[REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:28 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Public Testimony: Increase Child Care Investment in Proposed FY 23 Operating Budget

--
Sent from Gmail Mobile

[REDACTED]

From: Heidi McCroskey Heimerl [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:34 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support increase to the Child Care Grant Program

Hello,

My name is Heidi Heimerl and I am a working mother of three children. I have only been able to maintain my work outside the home throughout the past three years because of access to quality child care!

Our child care provider has become our family -- an extension of the love and care we show our children. We need to become a community again and help take care of one another. Our children, their families and our community are not OK.

One thing you can do to help our community and the amazing child care providers we have is to add \$15 million to the budget to increase the child care grant for wages! Our child care workers deserve higher wages so they can take care of their own families. Too often child care workers work multiple jobs to put food on the table or pay for rent. The child care system (and our economy) will continue to crumble if something is not done to improve wages this year.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration,

Heidi M Heimerl

--

Heidi McCroskey Heimerl
[REDACTED]

"May we not just grieve, but give; May we not just ache, but act; May our signed right to bear arms, Never blind our sight from shared harm; May we choose our children over chaos. May another innocent never be lost. Maybe everything hurts, Our hearts shadowed & strange, But only when everything hurts, May everything change."

-- Amanda Gorman, Hymn for the Hurting

[REDACTED]

From: Maria [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:34 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Update Testimony for HB 39 & HB41

Hello Madam/Mr. Chair and members of the committee, my name is Maria Legend. I am Tlingit/Inupiaq from Unalakleet currently residing in Anchorage, Alaska. I represent myself, my children, my beloved daughter Ashley Sagoonick, son KeAndre Saena, son Javon Frederick Uipou Saena, son Tilo Saena and daughter Aaliyah Saena who also reside in Anchorage. I would also like to speak on behalf whom are Alaska Native American Indian tribal people of Alaska who are not able to call nor speak on their own behalf for unforeseen reasons.

Thank you for this opportunity, your time and for hearing my testimony. My son Javon Saena was diagnosed with Schizophrenia and parasychosis in 2015. Javon has been in and out of psychiatric hospitals and jail. (I was fortunate enough to drop all 3 felonies on my own without any help from his public defender and/or doctors) I feel if he and I had correct help, guidance, education and resources we wouldn't have dealt with a lot of unnecessary issues that happened in his and my life. I am proud to say today he is doing well. In fact he recently admitted to wanting to get his GED so he can pursue a job to be self sufficient. But he is still in need of continuous of care, a IDD, housing along with help filling out his heath care directives and guardianship papers. He also needs resources in these areas so he can be self sufficient and successful.

I, myself dealt with alcohol addiction, grief and depression but now in full and in continuing recovery. I see the bigger picture now and would love to advocate not just for myself and for my family but on behalf of Alaska Native people of Alaska who are struggling with resources and education to overcome the burdens of mental and behavioral health issues who are also or in need of assistance in housing and supportive services especially in mental and behavioral health.

I am asking, Madam/Mr Chair and members of the committee to please support and finance GCDSE in Central Accommodation Fund, Division of Behavioral Health Crisis Now continuum of care grants GF/MH , Division of Public Health Now Continuum of Care Grants, GF/MH to also match the funds of Peer Support Certification DOH GF/MH, the Homeless Assistance Program (AHFC) GF/MH, Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery Grants DOH GF/MH, Infrastructure to support IDD waitlist eradication DOH/SDS GF, Senior and Disability Services Grants DOH GF, Special Needs Housing Grant AHFC GF/MH, Aging and Disability Resource Centers DOH GF/MH, the Senior and Disability Services Grants GF/MH funds especially in the areas where our Alaska Natives people whom are most under served and unheard. Especially if we are self advocating and self determining.

PLEASE INCREASE FUNDING FOR CULTURAL BASED ACTIVITIES TO THE MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ALASKA Native American INDIAN Community.

Along with asking for support is these areas, I personally would love to help serve our most underserved and most vulnerable people of Alaska our Alaska Native American Indian people of Alaska. Alaska is a tribal land. We are the original people of Alaska.

Any questions , recommendations, suggestions please feel free to contact me.

Quyanna, Gunalcheech.

Respectfully,
Maria Legend
[REDACTED]



Testimony for HB39 & HB 41 GCDSE DD Act

[REDACTED]

From: Momodou Mboob [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:43 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for Mental Health Associates

“Hi! My name is Momodou Mboob. I live in Barrow, Alaska. I currently work with people with intellectual disabilities (the first home supporting people with mental illness and substance abuse) and am very concerned about the stability of the community providers. It is very important to me that Alaskans with disabilities have adequate work force to support them. This will only be accomplished if the rates of reimbursement to providers providing critical services are sufficient to attract and retain workforce. In addition to what the Governor has in his budget -I fully support additional funds being added to the budget to provide funds to accomplish this task. If the network of community providers fails the options for people with disabilities is far more restrictive and expensive impacting not only the person but the state budget as well.

I support six adults with living in their home together with my wife who works as a Mental Health Associate and also The Compliance Manager for North Slope Borough Integrated Behavioral health. I work with non-profit Hope Community Resources. I have been here for almost ten years and have seen so much success with the Individuals I support. Some of them completed their high school Diploma, some maintain full time job, some work at the Heritage center performing cultural art. As you can see this accomplishment and experience, I would cherish for the rest of my life. However, the nightmare is maintaining staffing. Most of the staff I trained, end up leaving to work for companies that pays more money. Sometimes, I work for sixteen hours a day with my wife to provide support for our clients. I have cancelled almost all the vacation trips with my wife due to staffing challenges. Sometimes, I feel so guilty and would tell my wife to go while I stay with the clients I support. This had happened repetitiously on Thanksgiving, Christmas and many holiday times. Lack of staff affects the Treatment programs we have in place and I fear for myself that the rate I am working may end up detrimental to my health or affect my relationships. Thank you for prioritizing these critical services.” Thank you for listening.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

[REDACTED]

From: Donna Piper [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:44 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Waiver Funding

Good afternoon Alaska House a finance Committee.

My name is Donna Piper and my representatives are Bill Weilechowski and Stanley Wright.

I am writing today to ask you to increase the money in your operating budget for waiver and disability services.

I have an 18-year-old daughter that has delayed development and is on the autism spectrum. In the past I have seen benefits in her ability to be in public, to self regulate and feel more comfortable around strangers by having a support person in her life. However, since 2020 she has not had a continual support person. The reason being they do not have enough support staff. This has had a negative affect not only on my daughter, but also on our family and I am sure I am not the only one that this has happened to. Please increase the operating budget so not just my daughter and our family but other people and families can get the support that they need.
Thank you

[REDACTED]

From: Cliff Monk [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 4:18 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Waiver Direct Service provider

Elvi Gray-Jackson, D, AK-G (Senate)
Andy Josephson D, AK-13 (House)

My name is Cliff Livingston

I work as a full time direct support professional and have for 27 years.

I support adults who experience intellectual disabilities to learn skills of everyday living in the community.

I have found that many people who don't do this work or who do not have a family member with a disability do not know what I do to help others. I work to support people who, without my help, would be residing in a nursing facility or in an institution due their needs created by their disability.

In the course of any regular day I am needed to provide the following kinds of help:

delegated nursing tasks, concierge, food and nutrition counselor, educator, body guard, chauffeur, cook, laundry services, personal care aide, first responder, mental health counselor, speech/language assistant, personal advocate, community disability advocate, occupational therapist, personal assistant, personal shopper, housekeeper, and clinical note writer.

I must have all these skills, and know about the kinds of help my client needs. I also need to be able to work the schedule that my client needs, many times not within regular work hours of M-F 9-5.

Yet I am paid the same and in some cases less than a fast food worker or entry level retail clerk like Target. Unlike the workers at fast food and retail, I work on my own without the presence of a direct supervisor on site. So I must also be independent and able to make good decisions on my own.

The aging and disabled population in Alaska is growing. There are less workers than can do the care. I am asking for you to help by advocating for higher pay for people doing this important work which is considered "unskilled" but in reality is a very high level of skill and responsibility. Home and community care like what I do costs far less than a nursing home or institution. We must be paid a higher wage than fast food. We are caring for the most vulnerable Alaskans of all of us.

From: Reinhart, Patrick (DOH) <patrick.reinhart@alaska.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:01 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education Budget items of interest

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Centralized Accommodation Fund (CAF) (DOA) + \$100,000 (GF) Adding this proposed increment to the state Department of Administration would establish a Centralized Accommodation Fund to hire and retain qualified employees with disabilities in state government jobs. This recommendation was one of the major solutions developed by the state's Work Matters Task Force and would improve employment opportunities for Trust beneficiaries in state jobs, helping them to be more independent from other state services and benefit programs. *Our understanding this item is not in the current version of the budget.*

Infrastructure to Support IDD Waitlist Eradication (DOH/SDS) + \$647,800 (GF) This proposed increment to DOH/SDS is the amount cited in the state's [Plan for Eradicating the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \(IDD\) Wait List](#) for structural changes needed within DOH to replace an antiquated consumer needs assessment tool with a more modern and accurate tool that can better assess service needs and costs, as well as allow for self-directed IDD. *Our understanding this item is not in the current version of the budget.*

IDD Waitlist Eradication Year 1 Costs + \$16,160,500 (\$6.4 mil GF/\$9.69 Federal) Per the Legislature's request in 2022, Senior and Disability Services (SDS) developed a five-year plan to eradicate the waitlist, which calls for \$6.4 million in State general funds to be matched with \$9.69 in federal funds for the first year of their five-year plan. Services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are critical for every aspect of their lives and are also important for families and caregivers. HCBS grants pay for home care, assisted living, transportation, social support, medical care, and more. These services help ensure that Alaskans who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities have access to services they need to lead full lives across their lifespan. *Our understanding this item is not in the current version of the budget.*

Infant Learning Program (ILP) Program Expansion + \$3,666,600 (GF) The ILP serves approximately 1,633 children with a medical diagnosis of a 50% developmental delay. The early intervention services provided by ILP providers across the state are often credited with success later in life for children with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Currently, Alaska has one of the more restrictive eligibility requirements in the nation. Therefore, the Interagency Coordination Council (ICC),

which is a part of the GCDSE, asks the Legislature to expand eligibility to include a diagnosis of a 40% developmental delay in 1 area or 25% developmental delay in 2 areas. This change in eligibility and funding request will serve approximately 450 additional children services annually. *Our understanding this item is not in the current version of the budget.*

Aging and Disability Resource Centers + \$250,000 (GF/MH) ADRCs provide support and resources for older Alaskans, persons with disabilities, family caregivers, and community members, and offers a reliable resource for information, referral, and access to services. ADRCs provide help navigating health systems, finances, housing, transportation, and more. *Our understanding this item is not in the current version of the budget.*

Senior and Disability Services Grants + \$1,498,200 (GF) Senior grant services administered by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services provide critical supports for Older Alaskans (60+) throughout the state. Grant funds provide meals, transportation, household assistance, health promotion, adult day programs and other services that allow individuals to remain in their homes and communities. These grants also fund Alaska's Centers for Independent Living to provide information, referral, and assistance with accessing senior services by community. *Our understanding this item is in the Governor's version of the budget.*

Patrick Reinhart
Executive Director
Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
550 West 7th Ave, Suite 1230
Anchorage, AK 99501
907-269-8999 desk
907-301-0728 Cell
Patrick.Reinhart@alaska.gov
<https://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/Pages/default.aspx>