

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Sharlay Mamoe [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 11:14 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY24 State Operating Budget  
**Attachments:** HB 39 Testimony letter.pdf

Dear Representatives that make up the Finance Committee,

My name is Sharlay Mamoe. I am the Executive Director of the Petersburg Children's Center, however I am sending testimony on behalf of myself. I humbly ask that you fund childcare in the amount of \$15 million dollars to the childcare grant and increase the cap to \$500 dollars per child.

Attached to this email you will find my official testimony letter. I thank you so much for the time you have taken to read this email as well as my testimony letter.

If you have questions you are more than welcome to email me, or call me at [REDACTED]. Thank you so much. Have a wonderful day.

~Sharlay Mamoe

Dear Representatives of the Finance Committee,

My name is Sharlay Mamoe. I am the executive director of the Petersburg Children's Center; however, I am writing to testify on my own behalf. I am writing to ask that you all consider putting more funds to the childcare grant in the amount of 15 million dollars and raise the cap to \$500 per child. If more funding is put toward the childcare grant the staff at the Petersburg Children's Center would be much better compensated.

I have been associated with the early childcare industry since 2015 when I came back to Alaska with my family for work and I put my daughter in care; I distinctly remember the director at the time telling me I got lucky that I was able to immediately enroll my daughter, and that typically families stay on the waitlist for a few years. I then became the president of the board of directors. During my years as a board member, I wanted the compensation for my daughter's caregivers to be higher as their work is so important; being brain builders.

In 2018 I had decided to make a career change and then became the executive director of the Petersburg Children's Center; I have since been working hard to try to get my staff the compensation they deserve. I truly believe that our career is super important; it is only second to the work of a parent in the child's life; research proves this point. In my five years of working at the Petersburg Children's Center I have had turnover just as everyone else has, and almost EVERY time the staff member found a higher paying job. Childcare staff cannot make enough money to properly care for their family with the wages we are offering, and we cannot offer higher wages without pricing out the parents.

Our staff are currently being paid \$13.00 an hour starting; a local cannery in my town is paying \$18.06. \$18.06 to clean a fish versus \$13.00 to build the brains of the children in our care and allowing their parents to work. As a result of the cannery paying so much, I am losing staff to work at the plant this summer; this staffing loss scares me for the families we provide care for because we may have to close classrooms leaving families without care. This loss in staffing also puts undue pressure and stress onto an already stressed staff, and could lead to more staff loss, and perhaps even a closure of the entire center, God forbid.

Losing staff from not paying them enough is incredibly stressful because I am not able to fix the problem without consequence. I believe I am right where I need to be in life. I love my career choice; I love the children I care for; however, I am very tired of watching them cry when their caregiver leaves, and my staff being stressed from being so short staffed. I am extremely tired of being extremely stressed all the time by toxic stress if you will. I truly believe that if the childcare grant is funded with the \$15 million dollars and the childcare cap is \$500 childcare staff will see an immediate increase in their pay which would be a wonderful first step to showing the childcare staff that they are appreciated and essential for Alaska. Thank you for your considerations and time to read this letter.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Bryan Haugstad [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 4:16 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** Rep. Andy Josephson  
**Subject:** AWAIC Support Letter  
**Attachments:** 2023.03.20 AWAIC Support Letter.pdf

To Whom It May Concern,

Attached please find today's letter regarding AWAIC.

Sincerely,

Bryan D. Haugstad  
Haugstad Advocacy & Litigation Office, LLC  
12350 Industry Way, Suite 203  
Anchorage, AK 99515  
(907) 202-8888

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# Haugstad Advocacy & Litigation Office, LLC

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March 20, 2023

House Finance Committee  
c/o: [housefinance@akleg.gov](mailto:housefinance@akleg.gov)

Dear Committee Members,

This letter is sent to state my support for the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) program through Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC). Specifically, I support: 1. moving the recommended one-time funding for FY24 to the base for CDVSA; and 2. increasing funding to cover increasing costs, particularly those associated with inflation.

AWAC is worth the investment. AWAIC is the only domestic violence emergency shelter in Anchorage. It provides a 67-bed emergency shelter, 24/7 crisis line, and other core programs. It also provides essential services to those not residing in our shelter including case management, support, and groups, and has two transitional housing programs. These services are funded through local, state, and federal grants.

AWAIC's funding from CDVSA combines a mixture of state and federal funds but neither have been consistent over the last several years. It has received flat funding for the last 5 years. Such flat funding causes major problems particularly associated with inflationary changes. AWAIC has experienced significant challenges providing competitive wages due to such flat funding. Recruitment and retention are essential to ensure victims are provided the necessary services to keep them safe.

CDVSA funds are the primary source of funding for AWAIC's emergency shelter. The state's investment in victim services around Alaska has been critical in maintaining operations for domestic violence shelters and ensuring the safety of victims fleeing violence.



Federal funds saw a significant dip in their ability to continue with ongoing support to shelters in the last three years and as such there has been a need for state funds to continue their support and increase funding. The state has stepped up these last three years to provide flat funding to CDVSA. We encourage the state to continue and increase this support.

In this year's proposed budget for CDVSA there has been an increase suggested as well as a transfer of funds to the baseline which will create stability for the future of CDVSA and victim service programs. I urge you to support these measures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bryan D. Haugstad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bryan D. Haugstad

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Rachel Boudreau [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 4:55 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Budget Amendment for Head Start

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hello,

I am emailing you to ask you to please bring this amendment to come in front of the committee and vote in favor of adding \$5 million to Head Start funding. Head Start is valuable to the state of Alaska.

-Head Start's comprehensive services are unique and support parents as well as children -Head Start is high quality and that quality is guaranteed by intensive federal monitoring that doesn't cost the state of Alaska a dime -Head Start has been flat funded by the state since 2010 even as inflation continues its steady upward march -Head Start needs resources to recruit and retain essential workers who provide one of the most vital services imaginable—educating and caring for Alaska's youngest children

As a former employee of Head Start and now a current board member of Kids' Corps, Inc. now, I was recently at a parent night where parents shared about their experience and it was encouraging to hear their stories of how they have found community through the Head Start program (something which was significantly challenging to do in a pandemic). They also shared stories of how they have learned how to be a better parent and be there for their children in meaningful ways. It was very humbling to be apart of.

Again, I ask you to please vote in favor of a budget amendment of \$5 million for Head Start funding.

Best,  
Rachel Boudreau, LMSW  
Kids' Corp, Inc. Board of Directors  
Anchorage, AK  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Megan Peltier [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 1:21 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Increase School Funding

Dear House Finance Committee,

I am writing to ask you to support increasing funding to Alaska's public schools in order to better support our children.

I have lived in Alaska since I was 3 years old and attended and graduated from Anchorage School District schools. I have 3 children - the older two are currently in ASD's French Immersion program and the youngest will enter Kindergarten next year. Due to the flat funding ASD has received from the State (no increase to account for inflation really means it was a cut in funding) the language immersion programs, as well as many other programs which make our schools special and provide important opportunities for our children, were facing elimination and major cutbacks. Thankfully the language immersion programs received a reprieve - at least for now.

Our consumer price index has risen by more than 15% in the last five years while the Base Student Allocation was raised by only 0.5% which is unacceptable. Increasing the BSA to at least \$5960 to help offset that inflation and also "inflation proofing" the BSA for the future are key steps to providing our children with quality education.

I know some legislators are hesitant to increase funding without seeing improvements in student test scores. But how can we expect to increase test scores with funding that has essentially been cut by not keeping pace with inflation? For my family in particular, the language immersion program was at risk, and immersion programs have been shown to improve student test performance. Cutting language immersion programs and increasing class sizes across ASD would be a major detriment to student instruction and test scores. We need proper funding to attract quality teachers, keep class sizes manageable, and retain programs that make ASD a stand out school district - all of which will contribute to improving student test scores.

Your constituents and all Alaskans are relying on you and your colleagues to make the right decision and increase funding for our schools.

Children are our future, please invest in our future.

Sincerely,  
Megan Peltier

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Ashley Dewey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 24, 2023 12:19 PM  
**To:** Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Mike Shower; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. David Wilson; Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Jennie Armstrong; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Rep. Ashley Carrick; Rep. Julie Coulombe; Rep. Mike Cronk; Rep. Maxine Dibert; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Zack Fields; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Alyse Galvin; Rep. Andrew Gray; Rep. Cliff Groh; Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. DeLena Johnson; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Kevin McCabe; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Donna Mears; Rep. Genevieve Mina; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; Rep. Josiah Patkotak; Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. George Rauscher; Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. Dan Saddler; Rep. Calvin Schrage; Rep. Laddie Shaw; Rep. Will Stapp; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Jesse Sumner; Rep. Cathy Tilton; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski; Rep. Sarah Vance; Rep. Stanley Wright; Senate Education; Senate Finance; House Education; House Finance  
**Subject:** What's the Point?

What is the point of anything?

What is the point of eating?

What is the point of working?

What is the point of exercising?

What is the point of educating?

What is the point of learning?

What is the point of building?

Building our homes, our families, our communities?

The point is tomorrow. People carry on, to be ready for tomorrow. Tomorrow is the immediate future, but there is a distant future. That distant future has our Kindergarteners grown and running businesses and towns. They will be your medical providers, your military members, your teachers...

Is the future important to you? Do you care about the place you call home? The country as a whole? It all starts with that Kindergartener. And every day and every year- counts. It is not just about SEEING the value. You must INVEST in the value for it to reach full potential.

Alaska schools are sorely under-funded. Inflation hasn't been considered. It doesn't matter who you are, what you do, your future will be impacted if we don't take the investment in our children's education seriously.

Basic Student Allotment needs to be raised.

--

Ashley Dewey  
Fawn Mountain Elementary - Health Aide  
[REDACTED]

*Gunalcheesh, to the first people of this land. We pay respect to those, past and present, who have stewarded Tlingit Aanii since time immemorial. I respectfully acknowledge the traditional first people of this land, the Saanya Kwaan and Taanta Kwaan.*

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Stephanie Rhoades [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 15, 2023 11:01 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Full Funding for Crisis Now

I am writing to urge that you fund Crisis Now at the full level of \$5M. It is impossible to tell you how significant this service will be. In every area in which it will serve it will be the first crisis stabilization point available for many people who otherwise would left to suffer on the street, swept to jails that are not funded nor staffed to deal with mental health crisis (ergo the many deaths in DOC the past years) or subject to suicide by cop. This is THE most critical new service that will save many upstream costs to other systems. API is consistently full, human beings suspected of being a danger to themselves or others are stacked up like cord wood in hospital emergency room beds awaiting access to basic psychiatric evaluation for whether they even need hospital treatment or just referral.

Mental health crisis are so much more common after Covid than at any other time in our history. The time is now to fund Crisis Now fully and fairly. Don't ask a program that is not fully funded to tackle a true statewide crisis.

Stephanie Rhoades  
[REDACTED]  
Anchorage, AK 99501

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Nina Faust [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 18, 2023 9:13 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Education Funding

I firmly believe that providing a pension for our education employees will help alleviate the problem in finding qualified people to staff our schools. Right now there is not even the option to participate in Social Security. Without a defined benefits program for retirement, Alaska is not a desirable place to work for teachers, principals and other support staff. I would like to see this supported in the budget.

I also support raising the BSA for all the reasons I state in my letter below.

Respectfully,  
Nina Faust

[REDACTED]  
Homer AK 99603

March 17, 2023

Legislators  
Alaska State House and Alaska State Senate  
Juneau AK

Dear Legislators:

As a retired high school teacher, I have watched the slow dismantling of Alaska's once celebrated and proud, quality educational system that attracted excellent educators from all over the country. Now I think our schools are less than constitutionality adequate. Funding for Alaska's educational system, K-12 and university, has been cut and underfunded for years and is now showing just how inadequately funded our schools are.

One of the first things to go was the employee pension system. Now the State's school districts are finding it very difficult to attract certified teachers, principals, and support staff. Alaska can no longer compete for the best candidates because we have no pension system nor are teachers allowed to participate in Social Security. Furthermore, salaries are no longer competitive.

Deferred facility maintenance is crippling school districts and causing unsafe conditions, as well as serious damage to facilities (roofs leaking water into school libraries). In many communities, school closures are under consideration. Counselor and nurse positions have been cut when our children are at serious risk for suicide and other mental health problems or are vulnerable to drug and alcohol addiction. Many families are still dysfunctional due to the pandemic, job loss, and financial woes. To be adequate for the level of student needs, schools should be adding counselors and nurses, not letting them go.

Wildly fluctuating energy costs have strained school budgets. Inflation has made the cost of classroom supplies, books, computers, and all that is necessary to keep up with technological changes beyond currently funded budgets.

We cannot keep cutting programs or staff after all the past cuts and the lack of any increases to keep up with cost of living and inflation. The Kenai Peninsula School District, once a district with nationally distinguished schools of excellence, is now contemplating cuts to theater programs, pools, music, art, and sports. I believe that if these cuts stand, the State will be violating the constitution. Surely we should be teaching the whole student and be including life skills like swimming and providing for those students who are artistically inclined or kinesthetically talented. For these students, the classes now on the chopping block are the reason many even come to school.

The State of Alaska is constitutionally required to provide Alaskans with an adequate educational system, not a diminished, struggling, underfunded system as we have now. We should not be having to choose between offering just basic academics or a full curriculum that includes arts, theater, swimming, and sports. We need to education the students in all areas because if we do not, those who are motivated by their artistic and kinesthetic talents that are met by these so-called "expendable classes" will be left to fall through the cracks. These cuts will be countered by higher costs to the community from increased crime, drug and alcohol problems, mental health issues, and domestic violence.

We also cannot keep increasing class size. Smaller classes means that a teacher will not have time to work individually with each student. Having worked in a classroom with more than 30 students, I know how difficult it is to even have a chance to talk individually with each student during a classroom period. Increasing class size reduces quality education.

Additionally, our university system needs to have funding restored. Scholarship programs should be fully funded and need to be predictable. Students cannot plan their educations if we keep cutting programs students need for their degrees. We should beef up our

nursing program so we have more locally educated nurses here in Alaska. Provide scholarships or grants that will be forgiven if they work in state. A good university system will help bring in young people who will want to work here, especially if we make sure our system is competitive with other state universities.

Rather than continuing to avoid making the hard choices, it is time for the Legislature to devise a plan to provide stable revenue sources to fund needed state services, especially education. The out migration of skilled workers should be a warning to Legislators that folks want good schools, and they must be funded fully to meet the standard of an adequate educational program. We are at a point where we have fallen far short of that.

So I urge you to increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA). Given all the monetary shortfalls, inflation, and continuing increased costs due to supply chain issues, energy, labor shortages, and more, I suggest raising the BSA to \$1000. To pay for this, I recommend a modest PFD because good adequately funded schools benefit each community. Change the oil tax system so the oil and gas industries pay a fair share back to the state. Institute a flat rate income tax based on a percentage of how much a taxpayer pays to the federal government. Increase the tax on vaping. We cannot cut our way to a balanced budget on the back of education or other necessary community services. We need to contribute to maintaining and providing services.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Nina Faust

[REDACTED]

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**From:** andrew haas [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 19, 2023 11:26 AM  
**To:** House Finance; Rep. Sarah Vance  
**Subject:** upcoming budget

Good morning,

I have lived in Alaska since 1986 and in Homer since 1992. And I am increasingly angry about the lack of funding that is provided for essential services. Every year we hear that there is fat to be trimmed. That language is bleeding our systems.

During all of those years I have been a lawyer and seen all the services connected with the court system being bled dry. I have raised three children in the school system that does not have funds to be effective.

Education is somehow a low priority for financing, and I simply do not understand it.

I also volunteer with the library and in the school system, even though all of my children are grown up. There are homeless children and abused who become a burden to the state through OCS and the legal system.

Should I tell you the stories about the resulting drug abuse, suicides and fatal DUIs? Because the only excuse is that you do not know them: I can only assume that you do not go to their funerals; and that you do not help their children and grandchildren.

And the others are not receiving a good education.

I would testify at the public hearing (really you expect to fully hear from 12 communities in merely 90 minutes?) but I am volunteering in the school system, making up for lack of funding.

I (of course) do this for free. And now you are about to give yourself a pay raise?

Please fund schools, OCS, and attorneys. I am retired from law, so your funding does not affect me. But you must know the impact for failure to do otherwise.

Sincerely,

Andrew Haas



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](https://www.avast.com)



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Nancy Lehnhart [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 10:36 AM  
**To:** House Education; House Finance  
**Subject:** education funding

Dear Education and Finance Committee members,

Please consider the consequences of a public school system that is not well supported. I strongly urge you to be bold in your support of education funding, raising the BSA to the level requested in HB 65. During online learning due to Covid, we all saw how much children need the personal contact that schools offer, and no form of online, cheaper education can take it's place.

The funding level we are at presently is so dire that teachers are leaving and children are feeling the effects of large class sizes and loss of quality programs. If you spend time in schools it is so apparent how important it is for children to have talented teachers who can give them individual attention, which is getting incresasingly more difficult each year with funding not keeping up with inflation.

I am a teacher and am aware of many young teachers thinking about going elsewhere because they do not see a secure future in their retirement in this state. The loss of defined benefits for our teachers, unheard of in any state besides ours, is really paying a toll on recruitment and retention of teachers. Our support for teaching as a career must go beyond bonuses, it must reflect a deep and continued commitment to our teachers, children and programs.

We all want to support children and families, and strong, well funded public schools has far reaching implications for healthy communities.

Thank you for putting children first,  
Nancy Lehnhart

[REDACTED]  
Juneau, AK

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Michael Adams [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 3:03 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** My testimony on behalf of those who I serve.

“Hi! My name is Michael Sean Adams I am a career Social worker who recently moved to Anchorage to serve the IDD population. I am proud to be a part of Hope community Resources, a known leader in IDD/Waiver services.

I 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. I can personally attest that other states have stepped up and are leading the way: Why can't we also?

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 are extremely limited.

All of us deserve a quality life, one of inclusion and love. It is our Moral responsibility to care for those who are in need, so let's be HUMAN together, please and thanks!

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Leslie Davis [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 3:49 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Add additional funds to assist disability providers!

Hello,

My name is Leslie Davis and I live in Wasilla and am in Senator David Wilson's district and David Eastman's district. My son experiences Autism and major depressive disorder and receives services on the IDD waiver. Without the services he currently gets, he would most likely be in an expensive residential treatment facility or an API like institution. Because of the Medicaid wavier he now has a supportive place to live, getting weekly mental health services and is soon to be getting a job. Please, please in addition to what the Governor has allotted, support additional Medicaid dollars added to the current budget so that we can assure community-based services can continue like those my son receives. We do not want him or others to backslide into expensive institutional care. Thank you for your time!

[REDACTED]

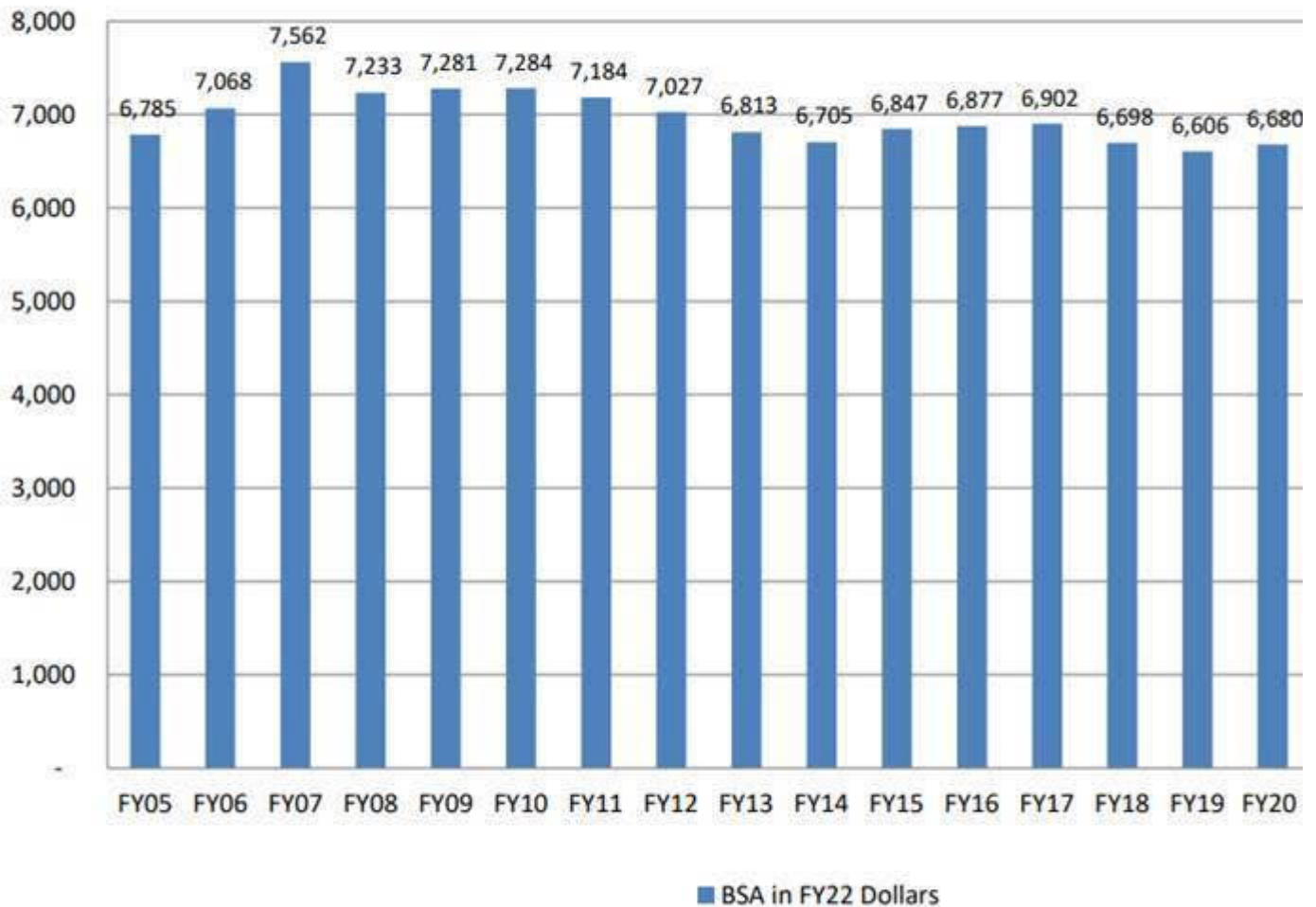
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**From:** Kirk & Jenn DesErmia [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 3:53 PM  
**To:** Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Senate Finance Committee; House Finance; Senate Education; House Education  
**Subject:** Support HB 65/SB 52 - Increase the BSA!

Senators and Representatives,

I am writing today in support of HB 65 and SB 52 to increase the BSA for Alaska's public schools. Our schools and students desperately need more resources to be successful. They haven't seen any substantial or lasting relief since 2017, and when adjusted for inflation, the statistics are even more bleak. It is unreasonable to think that schools can operate today on less money than they did in 2005!

# Base Student Allocation Hist (FY22 dollars)



Legislative Finance Division

When budgets don't increase while costs continue to rise, the easiest place to make cuts and balance budgets is directly in the classroom. Here in Seward, what that looks like is cutting 5 teachers in our schools. That's where the dominoes start to fall...increased class sizes (some classes are already over the set PTR), less offerings for core classes (this drives students to distance education classes), minimal elective offerings (no art/music/library teacher at all for our 3 schools), no Student Success Liaison (making distance education/OJT/internships difficult), closing our pool (which has produced an Olympian),...the list goes on. This is too much for our community to carry. We need an increase to the BSA to happen now, so that we can keep our teachers, class offerings, electives, pool, and keep our students interested in going to school.

I am the parent of a Seward High and Seward Middle School student. I've had my kids enrolled in public school for their entire educational careers. That's 10 years of watching their schools be systematically dismantled to the point of barely being able to offer the bare minimum needs to their

students to graduate. I wonder what it will be like by the time my kids graduate in 6 years if schools have to continue to cut staffing? My freshman is already taking 3 out of 6 of her classes via distance ed. At some point, one has to ask, what's the point of attending our community school? I do it to support my community and help make opportunities available to ALL of my community's students through enrollment numbers. We could certainly homeschool and take matters into our own hands, but that does not align with my community-minded outlook.

Funding the education budget needs to be a top priority! If you don't invest in a school, then you are starving a community. Families move away to pursue better jobs and educational opportunities elsewhere. The whole community slowly starts to dissolve. Please act now to prevent this from happening to Seward and towns around Alaska like us. I ask you to please support HB 65 and SB 52.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Jennifer DesErmia

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Michael Bailey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 4:12 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Testimony (written) for Wednesday, March 22, 2023 re Operating Budget

I live in Senate District E, and House District 09-115 represented by Senator Cathy Giessel and Representative Laddie Shaw.

For over 20 years, I have worked with people with intellectual disabilities and I am deeply concerned about the stability of home and community based service providers. It is very important to me that Alaskans with disabilities have adequate work force to support them, which has been even harder to keep during pandemic times. Only if the rates of reimbursement to providers providing critical services are sufficient to attract and retain workforce will these services remain available in the near future.

By regulation 7 AAC 145.520 - Home and community-based waiver services provider rates should have been re-established at least every four years (2014, 2018, 2022 and so on) using provider cost data and to allow for cost of living increases for the direct service work force. The Governor's proposed budget \$3.700 UGF plus amended budget \$1.650 UGF, is based on the cost survey data collected by the Department for SFY2020. The annual inflation reported by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics since then was 7.04% for 2021 and 6.45% for 2022. At best, the Governor's budget would fund a 3% rate increase in SFY24.

Home and community-based service providers are struggling to sustain operations as the pandemic-related federal relief funds cease. I fully support additional funds being added to the budget to provide the funds necessary to allow a 13.5% rate increase to address the current inflation costs. I also fully support a lower permanent fund dividend this year to make this funding available for these services.

If the network of community providers fails, the options for Alaskans with disabilities is far more restrictive for them, and 3-4 times expensive for the state budget in the next few years. Bridge funding is needed urgently to prevent system collapse during the process of addressing flaws in the rate methodology system and redesigning the system as described in the Department of Health Waitlist Elimination Plan.

Sincerely,

Michael Bailey  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Casey Robinson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 7:52 PM  
**To:** House Finance

Our public school systems have reached a critical crisis point. Please fully fund education. There is a need for an increase BSA for all students. Our school district has already closed two schools, increased class cap sizes whilst cutting support staff that is essential in filling the educational and social emotional gap caused by covid and other struggles.

We are currently facing a multi million dollar deficit for next year. Approximately 87% of the district's operating budget is salaries and benefits, the vast majority of the cuts are staff reductions that reduced the efficacy of students education. 83.4 position have been eliminated in the areas of classroom instruction, administration, elementary and secondary support, eLearning, and SMART, among others. Without an increase in BSA Fairbanks Northstar Borough School District is looking to increase their class sizes, further trim down their teacher positions, cut almost all of their support staff including kindergarten aids and reading tutors.

These reductions in staffing eliminate programs that help provide literacy and math interventions. Which is essential to have when considering the Alaska reads act.

Schools need to be fully funded. Students need money put into schools, not administrative positions, not big box curriculums that are linked to poor literacy growth. Students need small class sizes so they have opportunities to thrive and receive more personalized instruction. Students need reading tutors to pull student s for additional practice. Students also need staff that are dedicated to providing them with engaging and effective lessons. This cannot happen without an increase in BSA.

Thank you for your time,

Casey Wehmeier



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Casey Wehmeier [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 7:59 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Education budget

Our public school systems have reached a critical crisis point. Schools need an increase BSA for all students.

Our school district has already closed two schools, increased class cap sizes, cut support staff. We have seen a 15% cost of living inflation and no BSA change in multiple years, we are currently facing a multi million dollar deficit for next year. Approximately 87% of the district's operating budget is salaries and benefits, the vast majority of the cuts are staff reductions that reduced the efficacy of students education. 83.4 position have been eliminated in the areas of classroom instruction, administration, elementary and secondary support, eLearning, and SMART, among others. Without an increase in BSA Fairbanks Northstar Borough School District is looking to increase their class sizes, further trim down their teacher positions, cut almost all of their support staff including kindergarten aids and reading tutors.

These reductions in staffing eliminate programs that help provide literacy and math interventions. Which is essential to have when considering the Alaska reads act. The current budget short funds schools and DEED fir the implementation of the Reads Act. If this act is going to be used as a mechanism for accountability it needs to be adequately funded to ensure success.

Schools need to be fully funded. Students need money put into schools, not administrative positions, not big box curriculums that are linked to poor literacy growth. Students need small class sizes so they have opportunities to thrive and relieve more personalized instruction. Students need reading tutors to pull student s for additional practice. Students also need staff that are dedicated to providing them with engaging and effective lessons. This cannot happen without an increase in BSA.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Casey Wehmeier [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 8:01 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Education Budget

Our public school systems have reached a critical crisis point. Schools need an increase BSA for all students.

Our school district has already closed two schools, increased class cap sizes, cut support staff. We have seen a 15% cost of living inflation and no BSA change in multiple years, we are currently facing a multi million dollar deficit for next year. Approximately 87% of the district's operating budget is salaries and benefits, the vast majority of the cuts are staff reductions that reduced the efficacy of students education. 83.4 position have been eliminated in the areas of classroom instruction, administration, elementary and secondary support, eLearning, and SMART, among others. Without an increase in BSA Fairbanks Northstar Borough School District is looking to increase their class sizes, further trim down their teacher positions, cut almost all of their support staff including kindergarten aids and reading tutors.

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Paige Klem [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 8:40 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY23 State Operating Budget - Childcare as a Priority

Hi, We all know the state needs more funding to support early childhood education and services. The relief funding has helped centers substantially, but with it ending soon it leaves uncertainty for centers and families who rely on childcare. Our communities need stable childcare options to support a stable workforce and continue to contribute to our economy.

There is a disconnect between affordable tuition for childcare and providing sufficient wages to support our teachers who spend 40+ hours with our children every week. My daughter attends a local Anchorage CDC and our family is very aware of limited options in the community as centers have been forced to close and reduce services available.

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Paige Klem

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Stephanie Presley & Nate Crossley [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 8:51 PM  
**To:** Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; House Education; Rep. Ben Carpenter; House Finance;  
senate.finanace.committee@akleg.gov; Senate Education  
**Subject:** Support HB65 increase in Base Student Allocation

We are in support of a large increase in the Base Student Allocation. Please pass HB65. Our children deserve better.

Stephanie Presley & Nate Crossley

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Nancy Mendenhall [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 9:34 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Increase in BSA needed!

Dear Representatives, Nancy Mendenhall, am a member of the Nome School Board but I am addressing you today, not as a board member, but as a grandmother, great-grandmother and mother of 17 (two adopted) who all have either been part of the student body here in Nome Public Schools in the past or are attending right now. I came to Nome in 1972 to work in various educational positions in Nome and continued in them until my retirement in 1996 as Director of Northwest Campus/UAF. I believe the problems we face in the school district here are similar across all of rural Alaska and most of them probably the case through all of the districts, rural and urban. The BSA has to get a healthy increase if we are going to continue to offer quality education to our youth. Their success in their schooling, whatever path they choose, is critical for the future of rural Alaska, as I know you are well aware.

The problems we have faced during Covid attack simply highlighted the more endemic issues: old deteriorating buildings unless we keep constantly on solid repairs, recent higher turnover in teachers and other staff as they realize the cost of living here and the, frankly, pitiful salary increases in last six or so years, now compounded by inflation, unfilled positions meaning crowded classrooms, reduced curricula, and so on, that I know you are surely familiar with, and that a healthy BSA is vital for healthy schools. Please don't shortchange the schools! Thank you, Nancy Mendenhall

**Nancy Mendenhall**  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Toni [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 7:05 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY24 State Operating Budget

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

Thank you for your support of pre-K and early childhood education, infant learning, and family supports. Please fight to keep these elements not only supported but better than what we have now, notably increasing funding for child care as federal relief funding sun sets.

I am a faculty member at UAA. You are probably aware that UAA has a great number of non-traditional students who are older and often take classes part-time vs full-time. The reason for this is because the cost of post-secondary education is so high, increasing at a rate higher than inflation, out of reach or nearly out of reach for a great many people . Most of my students have jobs, many have children. The greatest obstacle they face is not the difficulty of the material, but having the time to study while juggling work and child-care.

The lives of my students are about to get a lot harder. Federal funding that is keeping the doors open at many of the places my students bring their young children is going to stop. When that happens, I fear they will not be able to find alternatives they can afford. What this means is that they will stop taking classes.

Why should you care? I guess that is up to you to decide. As a lifelong Alaskan, I care. If our economy is to diversity, we need more educated people. If we are to staff our hospitals and our schools, we need more educated people. If we want an educated work force, we need to build an environment that creates and attracts educated people.

My students are smart, dedicated, overworked, sleep-deprived, amazing people who are desperate for better support of young families. Please fight hard to improve their lives so they can become the contributing professionals they want to be.

Antonia Sparrow  
UAA Faculty member and lifelong Alaskan

• Sent from my iPad

[REDACTED]

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**From:** David Lefton [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 7:32 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Written Testimony

Please increase funding to our students

As an educator in a small Homer school I am writing to advocate for an increase in the BSA. Our students deserve this and our schools can not adequately support students as inflation and costs eat away at our ability to use the same funds for ever increasing needs. The projected budget shortfall is over \$4 million dollars in our district alone. Many of our schools are in need of significant deferred maintenance. Teachers are leaving the system at a high rate, I fear that soon this vicious cycle will rob our students of opportunities.

This is an avoidable problem and one that must be remedied if many of our challenges are to be addressed. It's time to stop playing politics and support our children and schools.

Thank you!

David Lefton

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Valerie T [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 8:14 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY24 State Operating Budget

Hello,

My name is Valerie Truncali. I have 2 children, one attends the O'Malley French Immersion Program in 2nd grade and the other is in Pre-K at Taku in the communications classroom. I am a dental hygienist and my husband is a professional technical specialist in the oil and gas industry. Together we make more than 100K per year and still felt the burden of nearly \$2,000/mo in child care expenses when both of our children needed childcare. That was after the feat of finding a quality childcare facility with openings. Please help working families keep their jobs, and grow our economy by supporting early childhood education!

Thank you for your support of proposed FY24 operating budget which includes early childhood resources and services such as infant learning, early literacy, Pre K, and other family supports. These critical resources play a vital role in our children's future!

As Federal relief funding is passing us by, I ask that you increase state investment in child care to soften the impact of the expiring federal relief funding and ensure child care can continue to keep its doors open serving Alaska's families and young children.

Sincerely,

Valerie Truncali, RDH, BSDH

Sent from my iPad



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Emily Vockeroth [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 8:34 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Imagination Library Statewide!

Hello,

I'm writing in support of increased funding for Best Beginnings. For over a decade, Best Beginnings has proven to be a true champion of Imagination Library programs around the state. Here in Fairbanks, we have relied on financial, logistical, technical, and moral support through Best Beginnings and the network they have fostered to sustain our program, which will soon be celebrating it's 15<sup>th</sup> year of providing books for children from birth to age five. In the last couple of years, we have been able to expand our reach to include communities throughout the Interior thanks to a partnership with Tanana Chiefs Conference. We would love to be able to expand further and include communities along the Parks Highway as there is a gap between Nenana and the Mat-Su Borough where children are not yet part of an affiliate community. Additional funding for Best Beginnings would help areas like this across the state have access to high quality books for young children. We have seen anecdotally, and confirmed through research, that this program is making a difference for kids in our state. Those who participated in Imagination Library are testing higher on Kindergarten readiness skills and parents report an increase in the time spent reading to their children, which teachers report as the number one thing parents can do to prepare children for school!

Thank you for your years of support for Best Beginnings, please consider an increase in funding so that more children have the opportunity to access Imagination Library and we can continue to build our community of readers in Alaska!

Best,

Emily Vockeroth

President

North Star Imagination Library

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Bethany Miller [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 8:37 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** BSA increase - support  
**Attachments:** BSA Letter - KPBSD support.docx

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear House Representatives,

Please see the letter attached which shows my support of the BSA increase. We need this increase in order to save our peninsula pools. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter!

With Kindness,

Bethany Miller  
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District  
Kate Kuhns Aquatic Center  
Pool Manager

[REDACTED]



Dear House Representatives,

My name is Bethany Miller, and I am the pool manager at the Homer High School Pool, which is in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. I also have a son who is in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at Fireweed Academy.

I am writing in support of: HB 65, to raise the BSA.

Stable, predictable funding is necessary to ensure districts can attract and retain high quality educators and support staff members. The base student allocation (BSA) hasn't been increased since 2016, and the impact of inflation during that time has created a significant loss of purchasing power for school districts.

Reliable funding is key to improving student outcomes by stabilizing schools and reducing educator and staff turnover.

Without the increase in funding, our school district has decided that one of the items they would need to cut is our pools. I have been in aquatics for over 20 years. I can name hundreds of reasons why pools are important. However, the most important is that learning how to swim saves lives. Did you know that Alaska has the highest rate of drowning per capita in the nation? If children do not learn how to swim, they can easily become part of that drowning statistic.

Have you ever witnessed a drowning? I hope not, because I have. When I was 18 years old, I was lifeguarding at the summer camp pool. A large portion of the camp was a lake that was NOT for swimming, only for fishing and water sports, so it did not have a lifeguard. Two teenage brothers decided it would be easier to swim across the lake, than walk around it. One of the brothers could not swim well, and as soon as the water got deep, he went under. His brother got to the other side, ran over to the pool, and found my friend (who was also a lifeguard, but not at this camp) and myself. We ran as fast as we could to the lake, but by the time we got there, he was nowhere to be found. We jumped in and searched for over an hour. EMS and water rescue arrived, and found him about 3 hours later, in a 15-foot trench. The scream his mother made when she found out her son had drowned is a sound I will never forget. This day changed my life. It lit a fire in me to teach as many people to swim as I could. I grew up in Virginia, then moved to the Cayman Islands as an adult, and am now here in Homer, Alaska. I have taught hundreds of children and adults to swim. Please do not take the pools away. The communities here rely on these pools for water literacy and exercise. When I say water literacy, I do not simply mean just swim lessons, but cold-water safety classes, boating safety classes, children's water safety classes, and even exercise. We have a large community of retired people in Homer. They have told me that swimming literally has saved their life, as they cannot do any other form of exercise due to arthritis, or other ailments.

Please consider increasing, as well as inflation proofing the BSA to ensure Alaska schools can continue to serve students with the quality education they deserve, and the community with valuable resources, like pools.

Thank you.

Bethany Miller



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Stacie Dublin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 8:58 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Testimony on Budget Appropriations

A Child Care Grant Program funding increase to \$15 million, and increasing the cap to \$500 per child, will help to immediately increase wages and improve hiring and retention, thereby increasing childcare availability and incentivizing Alaskans to raise families and work here.

Other CCGP benefits:

- The program already exists, and is administered by the state's Child Care Program Office. This is cost effective for the state and allow for the funds to have an immediate impact as early as July 2023. Alaska can't afford to wait a year or more for action.
- The grants are a direct subsidy to programs and may be used for wages. Without increased wages, the childcare sector will continue to struggle to hire workers.
- The hundreds of providers already using the program understand its requirements and what is expected of them.

These are just some of the reasons that this funding is a must for child care. We are seeing 2 and 3 child care programs closing each month in our state. We already did not have enough child care for families that need it. We have to be able to raise the wages for child care staff so that we can hire people so we can keep programs open for families.

This affects our economy if we do not have child care so that families can go to work then we will begin to see businesses continue to lose staff also.

Sincerely

Stacie Dublin

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Sarah Newton [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 9:01 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Testimony for Head Start

Hello. My name is Sarah Newton and I am the Program Director for Thrivalaska Birth to Five Head Start. I would like to thank the House Finance Committee for considering an increase of \$5 million to the State operating budget for FY24. Head Start is a 58 year old federal program! It provides comprehensive services to poverty stricken children and their families. We promote the school readiness of infants, toddlers and preschool-aged children. Head Start supports children's development, health, and their family well-being, while recognizing family participation is essential to strong child outcomes.

Head Start services are available with no cost to families in a center-based setting. Our classroom teachers are required to have Bachelor degrees to ensure we are offering the best, high-quality services in a safe and healthy setting. Many children we serve are in the Foster Care system or their families are homeless. Over 100 communities are served in urban, rural and remote locations in Alaska serving almost 3,000 of our state's most vulnerable children and their families We provide over 900 career opportunities, 40% of staff is current or former parents!

The state of Alaska has provided a flat \$6.8 million dollars since 2010 to 17 Head Start grant recipients across the entire state of Alaska. The initial purpose of Head Start funds provided through the state was to guarantee that grantees meet their required match, quality program improvement, staff professional development, and whenever possible, serve additional children and their families. (In the past year, our program alone has lost the ability to serve 18 children due to state funding loss.) As federal grant recipients, we are required to have a 20% non-federal match. The increasing Federal dollars that come into our programs, requires more dollars from the state to meet the non-federal share match. Federal funding brought in \$55,796,006 directly to local grant recipients in Alaska for operations in FY22. That means that as a whole, the state of Alaska provided only 12% of the required match. It is estimated that Alaska will bring in nearly \$59 million dollars in federal funding this year. With the current state funding, this means we won't meet our match without a state increase. We are in a funding crisis. We are asking that you increase the state Head Start budget to \$11.8 million dollars. Every Alaskan child that is eligible but unserved will be less prepared for success in school and in life. The entire state of Alaska will pay 100% of those costs in the long run.

Investing in our Alaskan children and their families is too important to neglect any longer. I ask you, please invest in Alaska and return to meeting the 20% match for Head Start programs!

*Sarah Newton*

Thrivalaska  
Birth to Five Head Start  
Program Director  
[REDACTED]

"Play is the highest form of research," ~ Albert Einstein



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Erica Burnham [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 9:05 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** BSA

I hope you will vote to appropriately fund education by fully funding the BSA and fully funding the Reads Act. Our district is struggling with years of cost increases without any matching increase in funding. This is affecting our staffing and quality of education. We cannot remain a competitive employer and offer our students all of the resources and opportunities they deserve on flat funding. If legislators deserve a pay increase of 50%, for working 120 days, what do teachers deserve for 185 days? In our district, a teacher would have to be in year 10 and have 2 masters degrees to make the equivalent to the proposed salary of a state legislator. We have had years of negligible pay increases, less than 1%, and face increasing pressure to pay health insurance premiums. We are struggling to find and retain highly qualified teachers. It is not a sustainable situation.

Our staff are excited about the Reads Act, but it only works if it is funded. More unfunded state mandates are doomed to failure.

Thank you,

Erica Burnham  
[REDACTED]  
Tok, AK 99780



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Melissa [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 9:31 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Please raise the Base Student Allocation (BSA)

Dear Finance Committee Members,

How would increasing the BSA affect my school? I'm a teacher in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. Increasing the BSA would enable us to hire enough teachers to keep class sizes small for our kindergarten through 2nd graders and hire an intervention teacher to meet the needs of the students who need more intensive teaching to learn to read, write, and solve math problems. Six years ago my school had 9 classroom teachers, a morning and afternoon preschool teacher for children at risk of learning difficulties, and 1 ½ reading and math intervention teachers. Now we have 9 classroom teachers, a half time reading intervention teacher, and 2 aides. Do we want the most at risk children being taught by the least qualified in order to save money? The students coming to school now have more needs than students before the pandemic. For example, more students have speech delays possibly due to mask wearing and late developing speech is a risk factor for reading delays. Yet the speech language pathologist is now working at 4 schools instead of just one with an aide teaching while she is at another school. The Legislature passed the Alaska Reads Act last year signaling an intent to help more students learn to read at a typical pace, but by not funding schools at a rate that keeps up with inflation you are negating this priority. Since 2017, inflation has risen by 15% which has steadily diminished school districts' buying power and competitiveness in the national educator job market. Meanwhile, the BSA has only increased by 0.5% over that same period. I urge you to take immediate action to provide a Base Student Allocation (BSA) increase and develop long-term education funding solutions. Thank you for your service and your consideration of this message.

Sincerely,

Melissa Gersdorf  
Homer, Alaska

[REDACTED]

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**From:** joyanna Geisler [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 9:49 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Testimony on the Operating Budget

My name is Joyanna Geisler and I am the Executive Director of the Independent Living Center serving the Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak Island and Valdez/Cordova communities. We provide services to people and families living with disabilities and support them to stay in their own homes and communities and to age in place.; this includes older Alaskans and disabled Alaskan Veterans. Thanks to the Governor for his proposed increment in the Senior and Disabilities Community Based Grants line item in the operating budget. Thanks too, to the subcommittee for their support. As stated in the intent language \$586,000 of the \$1.498,200 increment would go to the four Centers for independent Living in Alaska. In FY 22, Centers saved an estimated \$14 million of public funds by transitioning or diverting Alaskans to community based living settings, rather than more expensive institutional care.

Another priority needing your support is a small increment for Senior and Disability Services to support them in making Participant Directed Care an option for Alaskans receiving Medicaid Waiver services. Participant Directed Care will give choice, quality of life and eliminate some of the current lack of workforce issues in the state.

Thank you for your time and your work on our behalf and have a successful rest of your session.

Joyanna Geisler  
Executive Director  
Independent Living Center (ILC)



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Brandi Jo Nyberg [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 9:53 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Testimony on Budget Appropriations

Hello,

My name is Brandi Jo Nyberg, and I'm a resident of Palmer. I'm sending public testimony on budget appropriations to voice my concern over Alaska's need for additional public funding toward child care.

Right now, our state is in a child care crisis, and the problem will only worsen without additional funding. My household currently makes about \$50 over the limit to qualify for childcare assistance. We pay over \$1,000 per month for our three year old to have childcare. While we would like to have another child, the reality of child care cost – or the high possibility that we wouldn't even have access to child care due to limited facilities and incredibly long wait lists – is weighing heavily on that decision.

Without access to quality childcare, how can the representatives of Alaska expect us to grow strong as a state in the future? And without competitive wages, the state cannot expect our child care crisis to get any better.

Thanks for your time,  
Brandi Jo Nyberg

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Brandi Jo Nyberg  
[REDACTED]  
Palmer, AK 99645

"Sentiment without action is the ruin of the soul." - Edward Abbey

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Lisa Hodges [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 10:18 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY24 State Operating Budget

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for your support of the proposed FY24 operating budget which includes early childhood resources and services such as infant learning, early literacy, Pre K, and other family supports. These critical resources play a vital role in our children's future! Federal relief funding has helped child care to keep its doors open, but it is soon sunseting. Please increase state investment in child care to soften the impact of expiring federal relief funding and ensure child care can continue to keep its doors open serving Alaska's families and young children.

Here in Sitka, we started "Childcare Now," a group that is solely focused on solving the childcare crisis in our town. Childcare providers, various agencies serving families, and parents are working hard to tackle this issue as well as ask for support from our city government. We can only do so much and go so far. We need support at the state level to make effective change. Families are leaving Sitka because of the lack of childcare available, which in turn is affecting our local economy. An increased investment in early childhood resources will allow families to stay in Sitka. It will reduce family stress and increase the well-being of all parents and children. Early childhood is the most important years of a person's life and without quality childcare, this will affect the outcome of our future community.

Thank you for considering this proposal and keeping babies, toddlers and families in mind!

*Lisa Hodges, MA, IMH-E®  
Developmental Specialist/  
Infant Mental Health Specialist*

*Early Learning Program  
Center for Community  
700 Katlian St. Suite B  
Sitka, AK 99835*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Camie Gillen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 10:30 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Testimony for Budget Appropriations - Additional Funding for Child Care

To Whom it May Concern,

Childcare needs more financial support! Our childcare rates in Alaska are extremely difficult for families to pay considering the extreme cost of living rates. However, our childcare workers are generally getting paid below a livable wage. We have to find a balance in funding to give centers more financial stability to be able to pay their staff better, get supplies, and operate and stay open.

Childcare is the most important thing to keep our workforces in place. We need reliable and trustworthy childcare. We need to be able to leave our children in care that gives our children a safe place to learn and develop in some of their most crucial learning years of their lives. These teachers deserve to be respected and paid better wages without having to raise our rates for parents. Our kids are spending more hours in the week at childcare facilities than they are with us parents at night. My children's teachers are supporting my kids, they are loving them, keeping them safe, teaching them new things, preparing them for school, and constantly adapting lesson plans to help them grow. Our centers need more funding for so many things. The first being wages - that way childcare centers can recruit and keep their employees long term! They also need funding to help get new supplies, curriculum, toys, development tools, training, and maintenance. It's very important we start investing in early childhood education. Our future depends on it.

Thank you for reading this testimony.

Sincerely,

Camie Gillen - parent and board member for a childcare center

[REDACTED]

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**From:** PSD Superintendent [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 11:05 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Testimony on HB 39 State Operating Budget

Co-Chairs Edgmon, Foster, Johnson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Erica Kludt-Painter and I am the Superintendent of the Petersburg School District. I am also a proud parent of two Petersburg High School graduates, and have served the Petersburg School District as a principal and superintendent since 2001. My commitment to public education in my community and in the state of Alaska is clear and unequivocal. Thank you for your continued work on behalf of Alaska's students.

I am writing today in support of an operating budget that fully funds public education. The education budget in Alaska has been unstable for years. The base student allocation (BSA) has only been increased by \$30 since 2016, and the impact of inflation during that time has created a significant loss of purchasing power for school districts. This instability has resulted in inadequate resources, underfunded programs, and limited opportunities for teachers and students alike. This, in turn, has led to a decline in the quality of education in Alaska, and the state has fallen behind in terms of educational outcomes and student achievement. In order to foster excellence in our schools, the State needs to make a larger investment in education now. Stable, predictable funding is necessary to ensure districts can attract and retain high quality educators. Reliable funding is key to improving student outcomes by stabilizing schools and reducing educator turnover.

After years of conservative budgeting and strategic reductions, our school district is facing a \$1 million budget deficit. There is no more fat to trim, and next steps will be increased class sizes and reduced programs and learning opportunities for students. In addition, as we prepare to meet the requirements of the READS Act, the current operating budget is inadequate to support successful implementation for schools and DEED. If third grade reading proficiency is the priority, then we are all accountable for ensuring our students, staff, and schools have the necessary resources and training to meet this goal.

I thank you for your efforts on behalf of Alaska's students, and stand ready to do my part to ensure that all students have the opportunity to receive an outstanding education. An operational budget that fully funds education is a requirement for student success. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Erica Kludt-Painter

*MISSION: Petersburg Schools will advocate for continuous growth, promote a healthy environment, and provide diverse educational opportunities where all students achieve.*

Erica Kludt-Painter  
Superintendent  
Petersburg School District  
[REDACTED]  
Petersburg, AK 99833

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Sonia Clary [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 11:11 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** operating budget

Hello,

My name is Sonia Clary. I live in Kodiak and Representative Stutes and Senator Stevens represent me. I work agency that supports people with intellectual disabilities. I 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.

Sincerely,

Sonia Clary

*Sonia Clary*

Regional Administrative Assistant

[REDACTED]

Hope Community Resources  
917 Mill Bay Road  
Kodiak, AK 99615

**What lies behind us and what lies before are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.**

*The mission of Hope Community Resources is to provide services and supports, requested and designed by individuals and families who experience disabilities, resulting in choice, control, family preservation and community inclusion.*

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.



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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Natalya Carlson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 11:17 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Keep Support Services

**Greetings Alaska Legislators,**

**The provider support services are vital to Alaskan families.**

**Please don't take away the funding and add additional funds to assist providers.  
The support services are important.**

--

Natasha Carlson, Teacher  
West Valley High School  
3800 Geist Road  
Fairbanks, AK 99712  
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Diane Gubatayao [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 11:38 AM  
**To:** Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education; House Finance  
**Subject:** Testimony regarding HB65  
**Attachments:** Res 2982AS BSA Increase (1).pdf

Good day, Rep. Ruffridge and honorable members of the House Education Committee. My name is Diane Gubatayao, and I have served as a School Board member for the Ketchikan Gateway Borough SD for seven years. Thus, I have a long vision of the impact of flat BSA funding. Districts have scraped along this far partially due to special Covid funds, but we can no more.

Attached please find a copy of the joint resolution passed unanimously by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly and the KGSD. It highlights with historical and current data the dire situation facing our district budget. The number one duty of the State and the legislature is to adequately fund and support education. There truly is no more important responsibility.

Bottom line: all school districts NEED a significant increase in the BSA. One time special funds do not compensate, and restrict our ability to strategically plan for the future. The band aid approach is no longer sustainable. We are in survival mode, and that is severely harming our students' education. I urge you to support HB65 and a substantial BSA increase.

Thank you for your time, service and dedication to Alaska and our youth.

Respectfully, Diane Gubatayao  
KGBSD School Board member



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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Mary Corcoran [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 11:46 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Testimony HB39

To House Finance Committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. As a homeowner at Ellamar, Alaska on Prince William Sound, I ask you to add support for public broadcast to this budget. For those of us at remote locations, the importance of the Emergency Alert System is vital. We receive tsunami alerts and other natural disasters like weather and flooding events through public broadcast. This service is a lifeline for those on land and water that cannot be duplicated in many geographic areas.

Please consider the lives and property that may be saved with this added to HB39. Thank you for your attention and work.

Sincerely,

Mary Corcoran  
Ellamar, AK  
Delta Junction, AK

[REDACTED]

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**From:** karen jensen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 12:01 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** support libraries and the communities they serve

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee:

I'm writing in support of the \$635,000 in additional funding for the SLED databases and the Alaska Library Catalog. These databases are available to all Alaskans wherever they live, and the Alaska Library Catalog reaches over 92% of the residents of the State of Alaska, with more than 3 million items available including books, ebooks, music, movies and more. This cooperative organization of libraries throughout the state operates on a shoestring budget, but the additional funding from the State makes a tremendous difference to our success. Alaskan libraries and librarians have always worked together to increase access to information for all Alaskans; "cooperation and collaboration" are our standard operating procedures to save costs and maximize services. It would be hard to find an organization elsewhere in this state or any other that produces as much in services to patrons as our libraries do. And our doors and products are open to all.

Please help sustain this amazing service and vote yes for this funding.

Thank you  
Karen Jensen  
Fairbanks Alaska

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Santa Claus [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 12:06 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY24 State Operating Budget

Dear Alaska House Finance Committee Members:

Thank you for supporting Alaska's proposed FY24 operating budget, including early childhood resources and services: infant learning, early literacy, Pre-K, and other family programs.

Federal relief funding has helped child care providers keep their doors open; however, the program support is constrained by impending sunset provisions.

As a longstanding volunteer advocate for child health, safety, and welfare, I implore you to increase state investment in child care, so that providers can continue meeting the substantial needs of Alaska's deserving families and young children.

Best regards, Santa

Santa Claus  
North Pole, Alaska  
99705-0122

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Deborah Rinio [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 12:36 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Library Funding

Greetings,

I am writing today to support funding of libraries in two arenas.

First, I'd like to ask the finance committee to restore the cut of \$402,700 made by the House Education & Early Development Finance Subcommittee. This funding supports Public Library Assistance Grants, which provide \$7,000 each to 86 public libraries in the state. A cut of \$402,700, if evenly applied, would reduce these grants by \$2,300 per library. For our smaller communities, this funding is critical to their successful operation.

I also want to write in support of the \$635,000 additional funding for SLED databases and the Alaska Library Catalog. These databases support children, adults, job seekers, and more every day throughout the state. The Alaska Library Catalog provides a centralized catalog so that users in member libraries can check out books from any other library throughout the state. This expands offerings and helps libraries expand their offerings to their users.

These two resources are important to the continued use of public library services throughout our state and I urge you to fully fund them.

Thank you.

Deborah Rinio, MLS, PhD  
2023 Conference Co-Chair, Alaska Library Association  
[REDACTED]

"Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation." - Walter Cronkite

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Juneau Montessori School JMS [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 12:58 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY23 State Operating Budget: Support funding for childcare!

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

I'm writing to you as a local childcare provider to thank you for your support of the proposed FY23 operating budget, which will provide critical support to young children and families.

Our early childhood education program has received significant federal relief funding during the last three years of the pandemic. These supports have allowed us to keep our doors open and provide a safe learning environment for children whose families have returned to the workplace. However, in the same time period we have also seen early childhood educators leaving the field en masse for more lucrative industries or less stressful, part-time work, leaving childcare programs scrambling to stay afloat. Our board has worked quickly to invest our federal relief funding wisely, so that returns can be used to compensate our valued employees at a living wage. Even so, we are only able to pay our support staff \$17/hour and our lead teachers about \$50k per year, with no healthcare or retirement benefits. For reference, the current starting wage at McDonald's is \$18/hour.

We need to do more for our children to secure Alaska's future. All Alaskan families need access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education. All early childcare providers deserve to earn a living wage for the heroic work they do. As federal relief funds dry up, the House Finance Committee needs to increase state investment in childcare. Without this support, we will continue to see high attrition in the childcare industry, and as a result childcare programs will keep closing their doors all across the state.

Thank you for your dedication to Alaskan children and supporting investment in childcare!

Sincerely,

Laura Talpey  
Executive Director  
Juneau Montessori School  
[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Mitchell Hansen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 1:03 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** CDVSA Funding

Dear committee members,

I'm writing to express my support for two things regarding the CDVSA budget. This program is essential for organizations like AWAIC to do their work that is so critical to the Anchorage community. In FY21 AWAIC provided a total of 14,081 total shelter safe nights for adults and children. Without this support some of these people could become unhoused, adding to strain on other services in the city.

My recommendations are as follows:

- Move the recommended one-time funding for FY24 to the base for CDVSA
- An increase to cover the increasing costs of shelters doing business – inflation has caused major problems & agencies have received flat funding for the last five years.

Thank you for your time.

Mitchell Hansen  
Anchorage Resident

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Lyndsey Brisard [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 1:35 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Support Childcare Funding

Good afternoon,

I am writing in regards to the opportunity for public testimony to support childcare funding.

I am a full-time working mother of a 1.5 year old that attends childcare in the Mat-Su valley. Before he was born, I was surprised at the limited options we had for quality childcare and even more shocked at the prices for childcare.

I work full-time, my husband works full-time and we make a decent wage. Even so, we still struggle with the expense of childcare to ensure our son is taken care of. I cannot imagine how people make it day to day on a wage any less than ours. Was it our decision to have a child, yes. We'd love to have another baby soon but the fear of child care expenses holds us back. Some would say "maybe a parent should stay home" - that is not an option for me. We have wonderful careers that we love and allow us to live the life we have. We do not live beyond our means AT ALL and the burden of childcare is remarkable.

Even if I wanted to sacrifice my career to stay home with my son or future children, I wouldn't be able to do that for MY mental health. Being a stay at home parent is draining and not a fit for everyone. I truly believe my son would not be in as strong a place developmentally if it were not for the care and attention he receives from his daycare provider. These childcare workers are angels and they deserve to be paid well for the hard work and commitment they give to these children. They are shaping young minds and molding their futures.

The rate in which childcare expenses are increasing is not sustainable. It hurts the daycare provider and their employees, it hurts the parents like myself, and potentially the economy. If all these parents can't afford child care and are forced to stay home - that results in more vacant positions in an economy where people are struggling to be fully employed.

Please, support child care funding. Our kids deserve it and so do the providers.

Lyndsey Brisard

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Lori Berrigan [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 1:51 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Funding for Early Childhood Education

Hello,

I am writing asking the finance committee to look at funding Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Alaska. This funding should go directly to the Child Care Providers for wage increases. If it is given through a non-profit, some of the money is then used for the administrative wages of that non-profit. The Childcare Grant Program that is already in place and managed through the CCPO is the best way to get funds directly to providers so we can increase wages.

We have a Child Care and Early Education crisis now in Alaska. I am the owner and director of a private ECE center based in Palmer, Alaska. We currently have almost 150 people on our waitlist. We have 4 spots available this summer. New people are adding their names to our waitlist daily. Parents call daily to see if there is any chance they will have spot soon.

While we are full with a waitlist, keeping staff is a huge issue. This is the same reason a local center in Palmer closed down in Palmer after over 30 years in business.

Our biggest issue is paying a competitive wage to Early Childhood Educators.

- As a private entity, our main funding source is through tuition payments.
- This funding source does not allow us to compete with our local school district or other industries.
- Teachers working for the MSBSD start at \$50000 a year. They are contracted for 185 days a year. This is equivalent to over \$35 a hour.
- Lead teachers in ECE settings usually make anywhere from \$15 - \$20 an hour. Their contract often doesn't include seasonal or holiday breaks. Their days are also typically longer (8 hours vs. 7.5 hours).
- This type of schedule, long days and no seasonal or holiday breaks, leads to major burn out amongst administrators, teachers, and other staff in ECE settings.
- Burnout has led to a major decrease in the number of people willing to administer ECE programs.
- Starting pay for many Directors is anywhere between \$25-\$30 an hour. They typically make less than a teacher working for the school district and work longer hours with no major breaks.

Why support ECE?

- Child care is absolutely needed in order for those with young children to work. Providing a stable ECE program will help provide a stable work force.
- Money invested in ECE programs is recovered over the long term.
- Children who attend quality programs are more likely to graduate high school, are more ready for Kindergarten, are more likely to be emotionally regulated, earn higher wages, stay out of prison, and are more likely to be a productive member of society.

What happens if ECE isn't supported?

- ECE Centers will close or become so expensive that they will not be possible for those making an average wage.

- Parents will choose to stay home with their children because it will be cheaper and they will qualify for more benefits by not working.
- Other businesses and industries will not be able to find quality applicants due to a decreased workforce.

I am willing to answer any questions the committee may have about ECE and our current struggles.

Thank you for your time.

Lori Berrigan  
Palmer LifeWays

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Kathy Morgan [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 1:52 PM  
**To:** House Finance; Rep. Mike Cronk  
**Subject:** House Finance Committee Testimony on operating budget

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Thank you for letting me speak today. Here, in case you would like it, is the testimony I offered via phone.

Hello. My name is Kathy Morgan and I live in Tok. Thank you for letting me testify today.

I am the director of the Tok Community Library and I am testifying to urge you to restore the \$402,700 you have proposed cutting from the Governor's proposed budget for the Alaska State Library. That money would be taken from the Public Library Assistance grant, which our library depends on for a significant portion of our annual operating expenses.

We serve the communities of Tok and Tanacross, as well as tourists and Alaskans traveling through Tok on their way to other destinations. Volunteers currently keep the library open 31 hours a week and we are open for several hours each day, 7 days per week.

In the past this grant program has been our single largest source of income. If it is fully funded, our library will receive \$7,000. With the proposed cut, we likely would receive only \$2,300 which would have a really adverse affect on our library. One of the grant requirements is that we spend at least \$3,500 on collection development such as new books, movies, etc.; clearly \$2,300 doesn't even cover that.

Like several other libraries in the State, our library is entirely volunteer operated. All of the money we receive goes to our program: we use it to

buy books; heat, light and insure the building; provide CIPA compliant filtered Internet and computer access to travelers and community members who do not have this access at home; and pay for our electronic catalog and checkout system. Tok is a community in the unincorporated borough, so there is no local government to collect taxes to help pay for library services.

Losing \$4,700 income would likely drop our income below the minimal, bare-bones expenses to operate. Fortunately, we do have some savings we can dip into, but that is not sustainable for very long.

On a related note, I would also like to urge you to fund the \$635,000 in additional spending for SLED databases and the Alaska Library Catalog.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Scott Vierra [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 3:19 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Statement of Support Section 404 Primacy Funding  
**Attachments:** NSES Statement of Support for Section 404 Primacy Funding 3-21-23.pdf

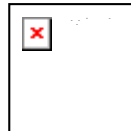
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Attention House Finance Committee

Please see attachment.

Thank you,  
*Scott Vierra*

Scott Vierra  
[REDACTED]  
790 Ocean Dock Rd  
Anchorage, AK 99501



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**Anchorage Valdez Homer Seward Dutch Harbor Ft Greely Fairbanks North Slope**

March 21, 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 you today in support of funding for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) to assume Primacy over Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and respectfully request the Legislature provide adequate funding to the Department of Environmental Conservation to assume primacy over this program.

Since 1950 North Star Terminal & Stevedore (NSTS) and North Star Equipment Services (NSES) has been the go-to company for members of the petroleum, minerals, and construction industries, as well as the U.S. military. NSTS, and NSES specialize in marine terminal operation services, stevedore services, heavy-lift crane operations, foundation pile and pipeline support members, and equipment leasing.

Our economy would significantly benefit from Alaskans permitting Alaska projects. Having infrastructure projects permitted and regulated by Alaskans ensures that regulators would consider our unique landscape, isolated project locations, and limited construction seasons without compromising the stringent environmental standards that we are required to follow by law. Right now, we experience uncertainty in processing and can miss entire construction seasons while a permit application sits on a federal regulator's desk in another state, awaiting review and approval. We believe that a state-run primacy program would create access to regulators that would encourage regular communication and accountability between the permittees and applicants to help move infrastructure projects moving forward. In addition, these projects would put 75-100 of our guys to work on many of these projects.

Lastly, the funds coming to Alaska through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will create opportunity for our state, but also has the potential to create a significant backlog in permits for infrastructure projects around the country. A state-run primacy program for 404 would provide the same high level of regulatory scrutiny while ensuring reasonable permitting timelines.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this funding.

Sincerely,

*Scott Vierra*

Scott Vierra  
Business Development Manager  
North Star Equipment Services





[REDACTED]

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**From:** Casie Warner [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 3:20 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Testimony on Budget Appropriations  
**Attachments:** CCGP House Finance Letter.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hello,

I would like my written testimony to be distributed to the House Finance Committee for Public Testimony on Budget Appropriations.

Thank You,  
Casie Warner  
Happy Youth Programs and Educational Resources  
Program Outreach Coordinator  
[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Alaska House Finance Committee,

I am writing to urge your support for increasing funding to Alaska's Child Care Grant Program (CCGP) to \$15 million and raising the cap to \$500 per child. This increase will immediately benefit Alaskan families and child care providers, ultimately creating a more vibrant and sustainable economy.

The CCGP is already administered by the state's Child Care Program Office and is a cost-effective means to provide direct subsidies to child care programs. Increasing funding to \$15 million will allow for immediate impact as early as July 2023. Alaska cannot afford to wait any longer to address the urgent needs of our state's families and child care providers.

In addition to providing cost-effective solutions, the CCGP also benefits the child care sector by directly addressing the critical issue of low wages. The increased funding will allow for higher wages and benefits, which will improve hiring and retention of workers in the sector. This, in turn, will increase the availability of child care, making it easier for families to raise children and work in Alaska.

Furthermore, the program already has hundreds of providers utilizing its services, and they understand the requirements and expectations of the program. This means that increasing funding will have an immediate impact, as providers can quickly implement the funds to improve their services and address the critical need for affordable, high-quality child care in our state.

In conclusion, increasing funding to Alaska's Child Care Grant Program is an urgent and necessary step towards creating a more vibrant and sustainable economy. I strongly urge the members of the Alaska House Finance Committee to support this critical initiative.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Casie Warner



Seward Alaska  
99664

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Carolyn Smith [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 4:17 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** PAT Support

Good afternoon, I hope this message finds you all well.

I'm writing this email in support of the Parents As Teachers program in Juneau, and within the State of Alaska. My husband and I had our first child last February (2022) and enrolled in PAT while in the hospital. Bartlett OB staff were so supportive and helpful, that I was curious what other support there might be for new parents in our community. I had previously never heard of PAT, but found it to be a great help, especially during the first few months when I was home alone with my tiny helpless newborn, and my husband and I were sleep deprived. We loved that it was inclusive for both parents, and we got ideas on how to interact with our child to help him grow and develop in a loving and safe environment. We got information sheets, children's books, small toys for activities (such as bubbles) and invitations to events with other PAT families. It allowed us the opportunity to meet and talk to other families who had similar aged children. After the first few months, PAT staff also helped me track into daycare options; another HUGE issue in Juneau.

I have never found this program to spend needless tax dollars, but rather, has aided families in very small (yet impactful) ways. They have come to my house in their own personal car on Saturdays, and have spent an hour chatting. They have asked if I needed help with formula, diapers, etc, during times where the nation was facing shortages. Even though I did not need the additional formula-- I can imagine how crucial that help must have been for others!

This program certainly warrants getting additional funding approved by the House Finance Committee for this reason alone; but with inflation, that reason is at least two-fold. Please consider how this program's funding could bring aid DIRECTLY to families with little ones in our communities, and how this impacts Alaska's future.

Thank you for your time,

Carolyn Smith  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Sam and Anna [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 4:28 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** support for funding childcare

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Members,

I am in support for more funding for our childcare business! Additional childcare funding is essential to prevent further loss of childcare facilities around the state. As a working mom of three I know the importance of great childcare! Their job is very important and they need supportive to keep great workers!

Anna Caulum  
Petersburg, AK  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Hillary Scherrer [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 4:13 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** My testimony to support childcare funding

Childcare across the state needs more financial support but especially in Southeast Alaska. Our rates for childcare are already so difficult to pay for families living and working in the community that it makes it nearly impossible to justify working vs staying home to parent our children.

We need to find a solution that supports our teachers and childcare workers so that they can be paid a liveable wage and we as parents can rely on quality care for our children without raising our rates even higher. The turnover rate at most childcare facilities is unacceptable and yet we can't help because nobody can live off of those wages.... Our children deserve better. Our childcare staff deserve better.

My hope is that we can increase wages for childcare workers. This will reduce turnover, and in turn allow more employees to be hired which will increase the amount of children allowed to be enrolled.

Our centers also need funding for supplies. They could be building such better curriculums at such a delicate learning age for our children if they had the funds to do so. Our kids spend the majority of the working week in daycare. We need to know that they're with people that have the ability to support them, to teach them, and to keep them safe.

There are a great number of ways that childcare centers can use funding but these are two things that I feel will strongly impact the level of care our children get.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

- Hillary Mazzella

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Luann McVey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 3:58 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Operating Budget

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the operating budget. I'm aware of very positive and helpful appropriations, including a state funding match for ferries, grants for seniors and people with disabilities, funding for health professional recruitment & retention, an extension of postpartum Medicaid coverage, and funds for the Public Defender's Agency. These important services make a difference for Alaskans. I urge you to keep these allocations in the budget.

As a retired Alaskan teacher, however, I'm aware of some glaring needs. I strongly support increasing the Base Student Allocation of \$1250 as proposed in HB 65. In addition, to retain our public employees, including teachers, Alaska must bring back a defined contribution pension plan, as described in SB 88; these funds must be included in the budget.

I'm concerned about the cuts to state library positions and grants for 86 public libraries in the state, as well. Also, I'd like to see our rural radio stations receive enough funding to assure the communication that allows for public safety alerts.

Cuts are not the only solution to a slimmer state wallet. Our state can generate income through increased oil taxes, a state-wide income tax, and a more modest PFD check.

Alaska has been my home since 1957; my 90- year-old parents live here in the Juneau Pioneers' Home. My husband and I are proud of our daughters and their husbands, who live and work in Juneau. help with child care for our two preschool-aged grandchildren. I care deeply about the well-being of our young people's health, safety, and ability to make a sustainable living. For these reasons, I urge you to pass a budget with adequate services to support families and their futures.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Luann McVey  
[REDACTED] Douglas, Alaska. 99824

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Amanda Beebe [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 3:50 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Testimony re: Childcare

Hello my name is Amanda Beebe-Bay I am a current state employee and parent to two children attending Discovery Preschool in downtown Juneau. I am emailing to say I highly support the addition of \$15 million to the budget to increase the child care grant for wages. Without this increase the childcare system in Alaska and especially Juneau will not survive leaving many working families struggling to find care. Thank you so much for taking time to read my testimony.

Thank you again,

Amanda Beebe-Bay

Concerned parent

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Raineke Ackley [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 3:29 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Parents as Teachers budget increase

Hi, my name is Raineke and I'm writing in support to increase funding for the Parents as Teachers program, as funding has not been increased in years. I've worked as a Parent Educator for Parents as Teachers for almost 5 years and have seen firsthand the impact it has on families in our community. I've had parents report an increased knowledge of child development, feeling supported as a parent, and equipped/prepared to better care for their children all as a result of utilizing our program. When parents feel supported, it directly impacts their capacity to support their own children, helping them grow, learn, and thrive. A state funding increase is needed in order to sustain our current families and grow our capacity, as we *consistently* have a wait list for families wanting to join our program. It's up to YOU to take action and increase our operating budget for the Parents as Teachers program to ensure the families in our community feel seen and supported.

Thanks,  
Raineke



[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Elizabeth Will [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 3:13 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** HB65: Increasing the BSA

My name is Elizabeth Will. I live in Sitka where I taught many years in the school district. I currently work with rural communities across the state through the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project. I know first hand the critical, positive impact that increasing the BSA from \$5960 to \$7210 will have.

Every Alaskan has a stake in education. Our students are our future. You know the data - the BSA has not kept up with inflation. You are hearing from across the state examples of the needs of schools in both rural and urban communities, how these needs have grown with the demands of quality, equitable learning experiences and with an aging infrastructure, stress on teacher retention and challenges for recruitment.

We must invest in students, teachers and schools.

I urge you to increase the BSA by at least \$1250 per student and include provisions for inflation proofing.

**Please advance HB65 to the next step towards becoming law.**

Thank you to the Committee and your work on this bill.

Elizabeth Will

Sitka, Alaska

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Anna McDonald [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:51 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Childcare budget

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Anna Ambrose, and my husband is Nico Ambrose. We've been State of Alaska employees since 2015. Currently, we're both public defenders living in Juneau. We have two kids, Bode (3 years) and Lolo (8 months). This means our days are busy and we cannot function without full-time childcare.

We had extreme difficulty finding childcare for Bode when we moved down to Juneau from Fairbanks despite an extensive search for it. We submitted waitlist applications for every single place we could find, but we only found one opening for childcare at the very last second. The same scramble took place for Lolo even though we had her on every waitlist in Juneau long before she was even born. It was to the point that I almost wasn't able to return to work doing a job I love and care about. I was told a nanny would be about \$4,000 per month. Without care, we would have had to leave Alaska and find work elsewhere.

We have put our kids in childcare centers and in-home settings. In all childcare settings, what we care about most is maintaining consistency in employees for our children's sake. Our kids *love* the bonds they form with their teachers. They are truly family to our children. We've witnessed high turnover with staffing due to the current wages for those workers, and yet, the price of care remains high here. Please add \$15 million to the budget to increase the child care grant for wages. The child care system is on the brink of collapse. It is already impossible to find care. It will certainly crumble if something is not done to improve wages this year.

Childcare is in crisis in Alaska and without childcare, you will continue to lose state employees.

Thank you for your time and for hearing my written testimony.

Sincerely,

Anna Ambrose

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Tiffany Shelton [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:49 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Funding for childcare in AK

To whom it may concern,

My family relocated to Alaska 4 years ago to enjoy the pace and avoid the trappings of the big city. We so love our little community of Petersburg and cannot be more grateful to the staff at our local child care centers. They love our children as if they were their own. It is often a stressful, thankless job and we want child care workers state wide to get the recognition they deserve, especially in our little community. Without further financial support and incentive I fear that in the coming years we will be facing an even greater challenge to our child care vacuum. Please consider allocating more to the education and child care of our state.

Thank you for your time,  
Tiffany Shelton

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:47 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY24 OPERATING BUDGET - ASSUMPTION & FUNDING FOR CLEAN WATER ACT 404

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Dear Representatives:

I am writing in support for funding and assumption of the Clean Water Act 404 by the Department of Environmental Conservation. Assumption of this program will:

- Provide more tailored application of this segment of the Clean Water Act and provide consistency and remove the threat of an irregular application as in the case of pre-determined permitting denial for projects such as Pebble
- Provide substantial benefit for miners on other projects, and
- Road builders, and
- Home and building constructors
- Other construction projects in or affecting wetlands.

Assumption of the program will not weaken the stringent requirements of the program, just make them more compatible with Alaska conditions. This will make our administration more predictable in the permitting process. The uniqueness of Alaska makes state assumption very desirable and near-mandatory.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I have a medical appointment and can't testify in person, however, I trust that this will register.

Respectively,

Rich Hughes, PE  
H2T Mine Engineering Services, LLP  
318 Juneau Ave.  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Susan Ritter [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:46 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** BSA Increase

To the Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Susan Ritter and I am a special education teacher in Anchorage. I have been teaching for 16 years. I am a Tier 3 teacher.

I urge you to support an increase in the BSA, currently it is being considered in the amount of \$1,250.00. This is a good start to an increase but I suggest at least \$1,750.00.

Why should you increase the BSA? I have a number of reasons.

- 1- The BSA has not increased since 2017.
- 2- The rate of inflation since 2017 has increased by 15%.
3. Since that time, all school communities are being squeezed financially to support the academic needs of all students.
4. Teachers continue to do their jobs with less support. This is finally creating a situation where qualified teachers are either leaving the profession and moving outside to teach or the Tier 2 teachers are retiring because they see limited support by school districts to support not only student learning but a livable wage for teachers.

Alaska is losing great, qualified teachers because the state has chosen to ignore the needs of students and teachers. Please support an increase to the BSA.

Thank you for your time,

Susan Ritter  
Anchorage, AK

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Girlie Cruz [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:44 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Think of day care providers and the kids

Hello, I am Girlie Cruz , a Filipina and I own 2 day care centers in Ketchikan , Alaska , the AVG Child Care Center and AVG Child Care Extension . Our mortgage for our day care center at 1922 Tongass is \$8000.00 a month . Our extension at 735 Jackson is \$975.00 a month . On top of this, I have to pay our employees, our insurance , our workman's comp, utilities and our day to day expenses . I am working at hospital in the weekend to help with our mortgage. I am a nurse . There are times I want to stop the day care as I'm too tired from working everyday . But I have 40 families who depend on us. My employees depend on us too . Last pandemic, we're able to survive because of the grant . We need help so we can continue to operate . Last month, I moved from full time staff to relief at the hospital as we don't have enough workers . It's too hard to work at the day care. If not for my kids , I will not have workers . We need help to increase the salary of the workers . They need to have a decent life , We need help so we can continue to pay our mortgage . So we can continue to serve the 40 families that we have . I don't earn at the day care . As long as my kids and employees are getting paid, I am ok . As long as we're able to pay the day care mortgages, I'm good. I don't know how long we will last . We need your help for our employees and our families . Thank you, --

Girlie Cruz RN BSN  
Owner/Administrator  
AVG Childcare Center  
AVG Extension  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Discovery Preschool [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:17 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** House Finance Members

Hello,

My name is Rosemary Williams I have owned Discovery Preschool downtown Juneau in the Thomas Stewart Legislative Building since the summer of 2020

I would like to ask that \$15 million be added to the budget to increase the child care grant for wages.

The child care system has been crumbling for a long time now and something needs to be done to improve wages. On average a child care worker makes \$15 - \$18 an hour. As we all know this is not a livable wage. What this child care grant would do is allow providers to raise wages to \$20 - \$25 an hour.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration!

Rose Williams  
Discovery Preschool  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Robbi Mixon [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:08 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** proposed Operating Budget-

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi, my name is Robbi Mixon and I'm the director of both the Alaska Food Policy Council and the Alaska Farmers Market Association and a member of the Alaska Food Coalition. I'm calling today from Homer.

Thank you, co-chair Rep. Delana Johnson, for the opportunity to testify today on the proposed Operating Budget.

I am calling today to support the appropriations for technology upgrades, as well as staff and IT workers at the Department of Health

The inclusion of funding to upgrade the antiquated technology and database system and to hire more staff and IT workers at the Department of Health will help us get through the SNAP backlog and prevent it from happening again.

In Homer and Anchor Point we've seen a tremendous increase in demand for food pantry assistance. Addressing this SNAP backlog will help folks better access food, as well as help rural grocers stay open.

We encourage the Department of Health and legislature to consider long-term efforts to streamline and improve SNAP, like Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility, which will not only help people access food easier, but provide cost-saving efficiencies for the State.

Finally, I'd like to say thank you to the Department of Health and to Governor Dunleavy for immediate relief funding- this was much needed and is appreciated.

--  
Robbi Mixon, Executive Director



Alaska Food Policy Council

[REDACTED]

PO BOX 173, Homer, AK 99603

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Leila Kimbrell [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 12:07 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Support for 404 Primacy Implementation  
**Attachments:** RDC Ltr to HFIN re 404 Primacy 3-21-23.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Please accept the attached letter expressing support for implementation of a state primacy program for CWA 404 permitting.

Thank you,



Founded 1975

Executive Director  
Leila Kimbrell



# RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

March 21, 2023

Submitted electronically to: [House.Finance@akleg.gov](mailto:House.Finance@akleg.gov)

House Finance Committee  
State of Alaska Legislature

Re: Support for Implementation of State Primacy over CWA 404 Permitting Authority

Dear House Finance Co-Chairs Edgmon, Foster, and Johnson, and Members of the Committee:

The Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc. (RDC) writes in support of taking all necessary steps to give effect to the statutory authority for the State of Alaska to implement state primacy of Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA), including funding authorization. Section 404 regulates the discharge of dredged or fill materials into waters and wetlands. With the passage of SB 27 (28<sup>th</sup> Legislature) in 2013, RDC has a long record supporting this effort and is encouraged by the State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) recent feasibility study dated January 26, 2023. It is now time for implementation.

RDC is a statewide trade association comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska's fishing, tourism, forestry, mining, and oil and gas industries. RDC's membership also includes Alaska Native corporations, local communities, organized labor, and industry support firms. Since 1975, RDC's purpose has been to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state's economic base through our mission of growing Alaska through responsible resource development.

RDC supports and encourages our elected officials to promote an effective, efficient, and rigorous environmental permitting process. A stable permitting process promotes a robust private sector to build a diverse economy. Primacy will streamline permitting and reduce costs without sacrificing Alaska's stringent environmental standards. The State has a proven record assuming primacy programs, including the Clean Air Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and the CWA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.

With 404 primacy, project owners will benefit from State control over permitting of projects that involve dredging or filling, site improvement for residential, commercial, as well as recreational developments. Such permits are required for nearly all development projects in Alaska. Currently, review is required by the Army Corps of Engineers, the EPA, the State DEC, and State DNR. Supporting implementation of state primacy over the 404 program will also ensure we are well-positioned to efficiently permit projects supported with funding from the federal Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

At a time when uncertainty in federal permitting is the only thing that seems certain, maximizing local control of our permitting programs is more critical than ever. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Leila Kimbrell  
Executive Director

#### 2022-2023

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U.S. Rep. Mark Peltola  
Governor Michael J. Dunleavy



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Jeff Miller [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 7:29 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** Greg Miller  
**Subject:** Cruz Construction - Jeff Miller - Assume Primacy of the 404 Program  
**Attachments:** Support for Assuming Primacy of the 404 Program.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

To Whom it May Concern,

Please see the attached letter regarding the support of Alaska's efforts to assume primacy of the 404 program.

Respectfully,

Jeff D. Miller

Vice President  
Cruz Construction, Inc.



March 20, 2023

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

Re: Support for Section 404 Primacy Funding

Dear Members of the House of Finance Committee,

I write you today in full support of funding for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation pursuit of permit primacy over Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Cruz is an Alaskan owned and operated Heavy Civil Construction Company that has been doing business in Alaska for over 40 years. With our specialty being extreme remote projects the process time and uncertainty of obtaining permits potentially can delay the start and completion of projects. Which with the limited construction season we face in Alaska can be financially detrimental to businesses. The permitting process needed for projects to start should not cause uncertainty and undue stress for the future of a business.

With more funding coming to Alaska through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, A state-run primacy program would encourage regular communication and accountability between the permitters and applicants to help move infrastructure projects forward and continue to build Alaska.

Thank you for your consideration of funding a program that will strengthen the State's permitting efficiency, stability and accountability. Which are needed to ensure that projects are developed for the benefit of Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff D. Miller".

Jeff D. Miller  
Vice President

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Nina Faust [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 18, 2023 9:21 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Alaska taking over "404 State Primacy" from EPA

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Dear House Finance Committee Members:

I do not support any money in the proposed budget being used for the Governor's proposed takeover of the EPA 404 Permitting process. We cannot afford to spend the projected \$5 million for this unnecessary program when it is already free. There are many more needs in education, public safety, transportation, and public health that would better benefit the public than wasting it in the manner the Governor is proposing. This expenditure would be fiscally irresponsible.

Respectfully,  
Nina Faust

[REDACTED]  
Homer AK 99603

March 17, 2023

RE: Alaska taking over "404 State Primacy" from EPA

The Federal EPA under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act oversees requests for permits to discharge or fill waters of the United States. We know more now than ever protecting wetlands is essential to the health of the environment. Since it would cost the state of Alaska over \$5 million to take over this program under the "404 State Primacy" provision, I see no valid reason for Alaska to do this. We do not need to incur this high expense to administer a program that the federal government already has the infrastructure and personnel to oversee.

If the State took over this program it is likely there would be less tribal involvement since Alaska does not recognize tribes as sovereign entities. I would also be suspicious that there would be less public input. Plus it is likely Alaska would like to do this because citizens have more protection under federal jurisdiction if they have to sue over a permit not in the public interest. Since Alaska has a history of allowing the unthinkable—filling in salmon streams on some development projects, I trust the feds more than the state to do what is right when it comes to CWA permits.

Do not waste our money on this request from the Dunleavy Administration to administer a program that currently costs us nothing.

Sincerely,

Nina Faust

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Deantha Skibinski [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 17, 2023 11:44 AM  
**To:** Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. DeLena Johnson; Rep. Julie Coulombe; Rep. Mike Cronk; Rep. Will Stapp; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski; Rep. Alyse Galvin; Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Daniel Ortiz  
**Cc:** House Finance  
**Subject:** AMA support and commitment for 404 program funding  
**Attachments:** AMA 404 primacy letter HFIN.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee:

Attached is a letter of support from the Alaska Miners Association on funding for the State assumption of the Clean Water Act 404 program. AMA has gone to great lengths in the past two weeks to ensure the support of our diverse membership, from placer miners to large operations, to commit to work with DEC to adopt an appropriate long-term fee structure to cover the State cost of regulating our members under this program. We did extensive outreach amongst our members, and also consulted with the Fortymile Mining District to ensure we have industry-wide support.

A detailed letter is attached, and I am always available to discuss further and answer questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Deantha Skibinski  
Executive Director  
Alaska Miners Association  
[REDACTED]



121 W. FIREWEED SUITE 120 | ANCHORAGE, ALASKA | 99503 | 907.563.9229 | [ALASKAMINERS.ORG](http://ALASKAMINERS.ORG)

March 17, 2023

Representative Bryce Edgmon, Co-Chair  
Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair  
Representative Delena Johnson, Co-Chair  
House Finance Committee  
*Sent via email to: [House.Finance@akleg.gov](mailto:House.Finance@akleg.gov)*

Re: Support for funding for State of Alaska assumption of Clean Water Act 404 Program

Dear Co-Chairs Representative Edgmon, Foster, and Johnson, and Members of the Committee:

The Alaska Miners Association (AMA) writes to support funding authorization to implement primacy of the federal Clean Water Act Section 404 program, and to communicate our willingness to participate in the adoption of a fee structure to recover State costs.

AMA is a professional membership trade organization established in 1939 to represent the mining industry in Alaska. We are composed of more than 1,400 members that come from eight statewide branches: Anchorage, Denali, Fairbanks, Haines, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan/Prince of Wales, and Nome. Our members include individual prospectors, geologists, engineers, suction dredge miners, small family mines, junior mining companies, and major mining companies, Alaska Native Corporations, and the contracting sector that supports Alaska's mining industry.

Assuming primacy of federal regulatory programs in no way equates to the loosening of environmental protection. In fact, it is quite the opposite. If primacy is implemented, State of Alaska will be required to comply with the Clean Water Act 404 program, and standards will be at least as, if not more stringent than the federal regulations. Alaska can elect to elevate requirements in any area it may choose, but it cannot decrease them.

What the State of Alaska can do differently than the federal government is bring stability and predictability to our permitting process. For Alaska's small-scale placer mining operations, this would be a significant improvement. Too often, federal employees come to Alaska and serve in their roles for three years or less, often without understanding of the Alaska National Interest Lands and Conservation and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Acts that guide our land management principles, and Alaska's unique environment and characteristics. Something as basic as an ice road, or the importance of bringing in equipment and the timing of logistics to support a remote mine site when the ground is frozen, is often lost on those new to Alaska. It is not lost on the Alaskans that work at our State's regulatory agencies.

The State of Alaska has an excellent track record of managing federal programs, including the Clean Water Act National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES; now the Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System APDES), the Clean Air Act, and the Safe Drinking Act. We are well equipped to manage



the Clean Water Act Section 404 regulation as well, and doing so would bring the regulatory certainty needed to grow investment in resource and community projects, and the Alaska economy.

Alaska's miners have a long history of paying their way, including fees and reimbursements to cover the cost of regulatory agencies. AMA members, from family-owned placer mines to the large operations, have agreed that we are prepared to do so for the 404 program as well. We stand ready to work with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to determine an appropriate fee structure so that in the long-term, the State is not financially burdened by this regulatory responsibility. We also support DEC efforts to pursue and secure federal funding for the program, as it is the only primacy program that does not receive at least partial funding from the federal government.

Thank you for your consideration of funding the Clean Water Act 404 program, as it will strengthen the State's regulatory system and attract the investment needed to grow our economy. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions.



Deantha Skibinski  
Executive Director

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Sam and Anna [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 4:28 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** support for funding childcare

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Members,

I am in support for more funding for our childcare business! Additional childcare funding is essential to prevent further loss of childcare facilities around the state. As a working mom of three I know the importance of great childcare! Their job is very important and they need supportive to keep great workers!

Anna Caulum  
Petersburg, AK  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 5:13 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** Rep. Sarah Vance  
**Subject:** Operating Budget for Public Libraries

Madam/ Mr. Chair and members of the committee, my name is Heather Smith from Ninilchik, Alaska and I am representing the Ninilchik Community Library. Our library is the core of our community and the place that everyone is welcome free of charge. Our library has been in this community for 70 years and uses our PLA grant to keep us open for the community. Without this funding restored to Alaska libraries we will not be able to offer this service to our community. Not only does a library offer books, but they also offer a place to go for information, a warm spot to use the computer, or even printing services. We act as a central location for the community to get together for different events or activities as well as promote early development by offering children reading programs. Without our library in the community there will not be a place for our community to go for help with research or just to get help with connecting to the internet. The Ninilchik School has not had a librarian at their location, so we are the library the children in our community go to for books and research. Every year we help our elderly community members with filing taxes, filing for their PFD and even just help them to navigate the internet to pay their bills since everything is on-line now. We also help the fisherman and hunters with applying for and printing off licenses every season. Please consider our smaller communities when it comes to a reduction in funding and the consequence it could have on our whole community. Thank you for your time and please reach out to us with any questions or more information.

Heather Smith  
Library Director  
Ninilchik Community Library  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Rhonda Bohart [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 5:25 PM  
**To:** Sen. Gary Stevens  
**Cc:** Rep. Louise Stutes; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Senate Finance Committee; Senate Education; House Finance; House Education  
**Subject:** HB65 - In favor of increasing the Base Student Allocation

I am writing in support of HB65. We need to increase the Base Student Allocation. We need to support our kids, our future of Alaska, and our teachers. If our kids do not receive great educations in Alaska, families will leave to find other states with better education systems, and we will lose our current and future work force. If we do not support our teachers and staff we will lose great educators and staff to other states.

We live next to the ocean. Our kids need to know how to swim, which they will only get if they have access to a pool. Our community also needs an outlet for swimming during the dark, windy days of winter. The pools supports our students and our community.

Our current teacher/student ratio is already on the high end. Covid hit schools hard. We have a lot of kids who need extra help catching up. Having fewer staff will only hurt the students, as they will not be able to have the extra help.

We need to keep our Student Success Liaison. With so many students taking distant education classes because of the lack of options at our high school, we need to keep the person who is overseeing these students. We cannot expect high school students to be able to navigate online classes on their own. They need the guidance and accountability of an adult.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ben and Rhonda Bohart (Parents of two students at Seward Elementary)

Seward, AK

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Janice Smith [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 5:30 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Childcare Funding request

Hello, my name is Janice Smith and I have been an early childhood educator for over 20 years. Please consider additional funding, I have never experienced the need for quality childcare for families as much as I have in the time. We find ourselves in a space w/ high demand and less workers because we cannot offer sufficient pay to keep employees and staff do not want to work because they are on their feet constantly with not much relief. These children in our Head Start and Early Childhood programs deserve our best. They deserve a place to be nurtured in a time when both parents need to work to pay their bills and put food on the table. Our future needs our attention, someone to listen, to hold them, to feed them healthy meals to teach them how to treat their peers and identify and express their wants and needs. This is prevention and preparedness to succeed in school. Head start not only provides for the preschooler, but we assist the families with identifying needs and we assist families with support to move in the direction of self-sufficiency. We promote breaking unhealthy cycles, substance abuse , neglect and violence cycles. We identify strengths and promote family engagement, value in family, culture and community. We ask for fundings for staff, for trainings and for supplies to assist our littlest who have no voice to ask for themselves. Please consider us. Thank you.

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Lauren Wild [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 6:07 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY24 State Operating Budget (HB39)

Hello,

I'm writing to comment on HB39 and the operating budget. Specifically, I'd like to thank you for including early childhood education in the budget in the form of Early Learning Coordination and pre-K grants. I'd also like to urge you to increase funding for early childhood education (also known as "childcare") in the State of Alaska.

From birth to age 6 is well documented to be the age of the most brain development in people, and it builds the foundation for lifelong learning and success. Early childhood education is the care for our littlest youth; everything they do while being cared for is educational - they learn how to speak, share, write/draw; they learn fine and gross motor skills, communication skills, how to regulate emotions, social skills, etc. This is the time when the education and care is most crucial and sets them up for success. Thus, I believe it is very important for our state to invest in these littlest Alaskans, and help build a stronger and better state for our future.

Please increase the funding by however much you can to the early childhood education programs and facilities around the state so they can pay their employees well and provide adequate care opportunities to our communities, which are currently severely lacking.

Thank you for your time,

Lauren Wild

--

Lauren Wild, PhD

Research Biologist  
Fisheries & Marine Mammalogy

Sitka, Alaska  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Nick and Morgan Ramseth [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 6:15 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Fund PAT

Greetings,

I am writing today to urge you to increase funds for the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program in your operating budget. PAT comes alongside families to empower them and give them resources during a very vulnerable time. Becoming a parent is one of the most rewarding and yet hardest times of many peoples life. There is so much information out there about how to approach parenting and the first days of being a parent and yet it is often so overwhelming. PAT meets families where they're at and helps to normalize and share in demystifying many aspects of the initial years of parenting. This program meets families across many income levels and does so much to start families in a strong direction. This program could use increased financial support to better provide for all the families of Juneau starting off. Please consider increasing funds for PAT this operating budget to ensure that no family who wants this service is unable to receive it. It goes so far in bringing families together and connecting and plugging people into resources. Thank you.

Nick and Morgan Ramseth

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Lupita Alvarez [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 6:23 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Support additional funding to the BSA and Child Care Grant

Dear legislators,

I'm writing to urge you to increase the BSA by the \$1,250 that has been proposed. This amount will help school districts across the state to catch up with the increasing costs of inflation.

For the last six years in which the BSA hasn't kept up, we have been asked to do more with less. Typically, you would see a kindergarten class with 20 children. I currently have a preK and kindergarten class with 27 children, not including three young families I recently lost. They could not afford to remain in the State of Alaska where childcare is extremely expensive or non-existent and where special education services are very limited when provided by overworked and overwhelmed teachers.

I do my best to meet the needs of every child that crosses my path. Early childhood education has been my passion for almost 30 years. Eight years ago, I brought to the Juneau School District a model of preK-Kindergarten program to serve more young children in our community with a very high quality education. I have worked tirelessly to bring the Montessori Children's House program to fruition. During the pandemic, teachers like me were hailed as heroes, because of the work we do to support the health and development of our students. I was even recognized as the Early Childhood Education of the Year for the State of Alaska. I love my job, but like you, deserve to be properly compensated for the work I do.

According to the Constitution of the State of Alaska, it is your responsibility to, and I quote, "establish and MAINTAIN a system of public education open to all children of the State"

You can be a hero too for Alaska's public schools this legislative session. Increase the BSA. Please don't let us down.

Until we can have universal preschool, childcare providers deserve better wages.

Add a \$15M increase to the Child Care Grant Program (CCG), to specifically be used for better wages for in-home and center based providers. I know the CCG program isn't perfect (we will get it untied from the child care assistance program), but it is the quickest way to infuse sustained funding to the child care sector.

Thank you,  
Lupita Alvarez  
[REDACTED]  
Douglas, AK 99824

Sent from my iPad



[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 6:27 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Base Student Allocation

Dear Legislators,  
I am writing for myself, not as a Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Member.

It is imperative that the Base Student Allocation (BSA) be raised. Inflation has ravaged school districts spending power. Alaska is no longer competitive in hiring educators. Our students and communities are suffering from lack of funding. We cannot survive as communities without quality schools. Many, many, years ago a person here in Ketchikan, with whom I shared almost no political points of view, totally agreed that no community could attract or retain People if we didn't have a good school system. Since then, we have seen our school district diminished by lack of funding. Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District has a number of financial challenges. Even a \$1,000 increase in the BSA a will not solve everything, however, without an increase, the necessary cuts to service will all but cripple our district. Thank you for your efforts to keep Alaska solvent. My solution is a smaller, Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD). Alaska should not become an entitlement economy. It is not prudent to hand out large PFDs and cripple services that benefit every community and all Alaskans as a whole.

Judith McQuerry

[REDACTED]  
Ketchikan, AK 99901  
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad

[REDACTED]

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**From:** jenn des [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 6:40 PM  
**To:** Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Senate Finance Committee; House Finance; Senate Education; House Education  
**Subject:** Support HB 65/SB 52 - Increase the BSA!

Senators and Representatives,

I am writing today in support of HB 65 and SB 52 to increase the BSA for Alaska's public schools. Our schools and students desperately need more resources to be successful. They haven't seen any substantial or lasting relief since 2017, and when adjusted for inflation, the statistics are even more bleak. It is unreasonable to think that schools can operate today on less money than they did in 2005!

When budgets don't increase while costs continue to rise, the easiest place to make cuts and balance budgets is directly in the classroom. Here in Seward, what that looks like is cutting 5 teachers in our schools. That's where the dominoes start to fall...increased class sizes (some classes are already over the set PTR), less offerings for core classes (this drives students to distance education classes), minimal elective offerings (no art/music/library teacher at all for our 3 schools), no Student Success Liaison (making distance education/OJT/internships difficult), closing our pool (which has produced an Olympian),...the list goes on. This is too much for our community to carry. We need an increase to the BSA to happen now, so that we can keep our teachers, class offerings, electives, pool, and keep our students interested in going to school.

I am the parent of a Seward High and Seward Middle School student. I've had my kids enrolled in public school for their entire educational careers. That's 10 years of watching their schools be systematically dismantled to the point of barely being able to offer the bare minimum needs to their students to graduate. I wonder what it will be like by the time my kids graduate in 6 years if schools have to continue to cut staffing? My freshman is already taking 3 out of 6 of her classes via distance ed. At some point, one has to ask, what's the point of attending our community school? I do it to support my community and help make opportunities available to ALL of my community's students through enrollment numbers. We could certainly homeschool and take matters into our own hands, but that does not align with my community-minded outlook.

Funding the education budget needs to be a top priority! If you don't invest in a school, then you are starving a community. Families move away to pursue better jobs and educational opportunities elsewhere. The whole community slowly starts to dissolve. Please act now to prevent this from happening to Seward and towns around Alaska like us. I ask you to please support HB 65 and SB 52.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kirk DesErmia

[REDACTED]

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**From:** KATHLEEN FITZGERALD [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 7:51 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** Rep. Ben Carpenter; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman  
**Subject:** Testimony to House Finance

My name is Kathleen Fitzgerald and I am represented by Senator Jesse Borjkman and Representative Ben Carpenter. I am a founding member of the Key Coalition of Alaska, a member of Hope Community Resources Board of Directors and the parent/guardian of a 40 year old daughter who is supported through Alaska's IDD Medicaid Waiver Program.

I have watched the erosion of our Developmental Disabilities (DD) service system over the past several years due to inadequate Medicaid reimbursement rates. As a Board Member, I have seen the difficulty of providing services without the increases in our Medicaid reimbursement rates over the past many years. Due to the lack of adequate Medicaid rate increases, we are concerned with our ability to continue to provide services down the road. Several agencies across the state have already closed their doors and many DD agencies will be shutting down within the next couple of years if rates are not increased.

As parents we have experienced the struggle our agency has had in finding and keeping staff to care for our daughter. You can well imagine the stress and concern this creates for us as aging parents worrying about the very viability of our service system to continue to care for her after we are gone.

Many years ago, The State of Alaska closed down it's only Developmental Disability Institution due to the high cost of providing care and a desire to provide a more natural setting of support which allows for family and community involvement. If our DD agencies are forced to close, outside institutional placement will be the only option.

I support the need for additional funding to ensure the stability of our DD service system to provide ongoing services needed for my daughter and others like her. I urge you to also support this needed funding.

Respectfully,  
Mark and Kathleen Fitzgerald  
[REDACTED]  
Soldotna, AK 99669

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Kim Larson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 8:42 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** HB89 childcare

Hello my name is Kim Larson  
I am a licensed childcare provider in Haines, Alaska for the past 24.5 years.

Please consider adding the 15 million dollars to the childcare grant for wages this will help to stabilize childcare in Alaska. The last 3 years have been hard. I have consider closing my childcare and I'm the only licensed one in Haines. The average wage for childcare providers is between 12-15 dollars an hour. Childcare is essential and needed, between the ages of 0-5 is when the brain is like a sponge. We need High quality childcare and with these wages it wont work.

Also with the childcare Assistance program please consider hiring the amount families can make to qualify for assistance.

Thank you for your time, if you have any questions please reach out.

Kim Larson  
[REDACTED]

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

[REDACTED]

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**From:** heidi shepard [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 9:20 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Testimony on Budget Appropriations - Child Care Funding

House Finance Committee Members,

I would like to offer support for additional public funding toward child care.

I am a married woman with a 19 month old child. When he was three months old, I took a job as the Executive Director of a local non-profit. I had the option to bring him to work with me while it was manageable and while I searched for childcare. I understood that my options would be expensive, what I didn't expect was I wouldn't even have the option to pay too much. There was no childcare available for a baby under 2. I reached out to every reputable childcare facility in the area - they all told me there were no openings. I even tried to hire a nanny, but the options were few and far between. I eventually had to step down from my role and seek employment during evenings and weekends, when my partner is available to watch our son.

Our community needs trained childcare workers who are paid fair wages. Other industries in the state will not survive the labor shortages caused by educated individuals leaving the workforce to become full-time caregivers. Families won't thrive when parents have to work split schedules to pay their bills and manage care.

I urge you to support public funding for child care.

--

Heidi Shepard

[REDACTED]  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99712

[REDACTED]  
Harmony | Developer | Context | Intellection | Individualization

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Bette Seaman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 9:50 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Department of health funding

To the House Finance Committee,

I am writing in response to the teleconference hearings, which I was unavailable for. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. I am a retired clinical dietitian/diabetes educator who now volunteers at Homer Community Food Pantry. I am in support of increased funding for the Department of Health to upgrade their technology and have adequate staff for processing SNAP applications, as well as Medicaid applications. The tremendous delay in SNAP benefits has caused heartache for parents and food insecurity for children. Every Monday at the Pantry I see fallout from this. I am very grateful for the recent emergency funding, it has already started helping our clients!

Thank you.

Bette Seaman, RDN, CDE

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Deena Mitchell [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 10:04 PM  
**To:** House Education; House Finance  
**Subject:** Please a raise the BSA!

Dear Committee Members,

As a former Anchorage School Board member, I know that an increase in the BSA is critical!!! We have lost so many programs and increased class sizes in the past decade of basically flat funding. If we want Alaska to have a bright future and if we want people to move here and stay, we need to keep our schools strong and vibrant.

Thank you for supporting a strong Alaska future,

Deena Mitchell

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Julie Hood [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 11:16 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Increase CCG funding

My name is Julie Wilson. I am a practicing family physician at Arete Family Care in Anchorage. My husband, Russell Hood, is a physics teacher at Bettye Davis East High School in Anchorage. We have both been living and working in our professions in Anchorage for over 20 years.

We have a 13 month old son who attends child care at Hillcrest Children's Center. Without this care, one of us would have to quit our job. We both provide valuable services to the community as an experienced physician and science teacher. Having childcare is essential for us to do our jobs. Currently finding childcare for a child under 15 months is close to impossible. In my practice I see a large number of young children and families and I feel for their struggle to find reliable and affordable childcare. I secured a spot for our son 9 months before he started attending. There is an incredible shortage of childcare and the system is going to crumble if something is not done to improve wages and attract and retain more workers in childcare. Without childcare, we lose workers in our community and this burden takes more women out of the workforce than men. We can not afford a shrinking workforce - especially in professions such as teaching and health care. Improving quality childcare and making it more available requires attracting trained and experienced workers to take care of our children, our investment in our future. Please look to the future of our state and increase the CCG funding.

Thank you for your consideration.

Julie Wilson and Russell Hood



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Meghan Carson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 7:44 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Budget Proposal for CDVSA / AWAIC Impacts

Hello,

My name is Meghan Carson and I am the current treasurer and board member of over four years of Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC). I am writing to respectfully urge your support of the increase to the Council on Domestic Violence (CDVSA) funding allocation in this year's budget proposal.

As you know, AWAIC is the only domestic violence emergency shelter in Anchorage and provides critical services to those experiencing assault, violence, sexual abuse. The emergency shelter and 24/7 crisis line are the core programs of the organization and are funded through local, state and federal grants. CDVSA funds are the primary source of funding for AWAIC's emergency shelter; CDVSA funding combines a mixture of state and federal funds but neither have been consistent over the last several years and in most cases, the organization has received flat funding. This has posed significant challenges to the organization in an environment with rising costs, particularly in wages needed to attract quality candidates. **Flat funding from CDVSA and other grantors has restricted AWAIC's ability to offer competitive wages critical in recruiting and retaining quality candidates. The ongoing employment vacancies directly translate to a negative impact to some of our community's most vulnerable individuals.** If AWAIC is able to provide a higher hourly rate, AWAIC will be able to compete more effectively to attract and retain quality applicants, **ensuring victims of domestic violence and sexual assault have access to the services and resources that keep them safe.**

**The state's investment in victim services has been and will continue to be critical in maintaining operations for domestic violence shelters and ensuring the safety of victims fleeing violence and potentially life threatening situations for themselves and/or their families.** Again, CDVSA funds are the primary source of funding for the emergency shelter. **Federal funds allocated toward supporting shelters have reduced significantly in the last three years, necessitating state funds to continue support and increase funding.** The state has stepped up in the last three years to provide flat funding to CDVSA, however as we noted, flat funding poses significant challenges in a landscape of rising costs.

In this year's proposed budget for CDVSA there has been an increase suggested as well as a transfer of funds to the baseline which will create stability and continuity for the future of CDVSA and victim service programs. **Your support of the increase in CDVSA's funding allocation and transition of funds to the baseline will provide meaningful and critical support to shelters throughout Alaska.**

I encourage you to please support this budget proposal and help your fellow Alaskans in need.

Respectfully,

Meghan

Meghan A. Carson, CPA, CFP®  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Maureen Hall [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 7:44 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** School nurses/reading specialists - BSA

Honorable House Finance Committee members:

Having spent the last 17 years on the front lines as a school nurse, I have witnessed first hand the impact of flat funding of education since 2017 and saw the impact of the cuts with programs scaled back or eliminated (reading specialists being one) and school nurses another target of the cuts. These are just 2 examples of so very many but let me share the impact of these two cuts on student achievement.

Reading specialists - 2 of my 4 children were identified as being dyslexic by a reading specialist working in their elementary school. They were identified early and had intensive support for a period of time during their elementary years. My son is now working as a health care professional and raising his family here in Alaska (and enjoys reading for pleasure). His son, despite having a literature infused childhood, is also struggling to learn to read and likely won't be at grade level by 3rd grade. With the Alaska Reads Act, help is on the way but likely only partially funded and contains such a harmful, misguided approach with grade retention. My dyslexic daughter had excellent support in elementary (pre-flat funding) and went on to graduate as a valedictorian of her class and is also making Alaska her home.

School nurses - cuts to nursing services in our district were a result of flat funding and an effort to try to minimize the impact on the classroom. Relative to student achievement, if a child has a vision or hearing problem, or a health condition that is not being addressed, if a child doesn't have a medical home and regular health care, the school nurse is there to help identify, refer and work with families to address health conditions with the goal of having every child healthy, safe and ready to learn when they come to school. Statewide, there are many students that do not have access to nursing services or even basic health care and instead of allowing districts the ability to continue to fund their nursing service or hire a nurse, flat funding cuts off this vital option.

So, please, during your budget deliberations, prioritize increasing education funding through the BSA to allow districts the flexibility of addressing the unique set of challenges they are facing in their district. Provide the ability to fund support services (school nurses) and education specialists (reading teacher) to help move the dial on student achievement in Alaska. Help districts have the ability to attract and maintain a decent workforce and the ability to maintain their school to educate the next generations of Alaskans.

Respectfully,  
Maureen Hall  
[REDACTED]  
Juneau, AK 99801  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Sarah-Kathryn Bryan [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 7:57 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Testimony Regarding FY2024 Budget on Behalf of AWAIC

Good morning,

I am writing in my capacity as Board Member for Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), the only domestic violence emergency shelter in Anchorage, to request that the House Finance Committee increase the funding allocation to the Coalition on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA).

In addition to providing safe emergency shelter with 67 beds and a 24/7 crisis line, AWAIC relies on a combination of state and federal funding to provide case management and support for domestic violence survivors during and after their use of emergency shelter services. In the past several years, AWAIC has received flat funding from the state.

AWAIC has had significant challenges providing competitive wages due to this flat funding from its grantors. With additional funding from the state, AWAIC will be able to offer a competitive wage to higher quality applicants. The ability to offer a competitive wage will help AWAIC recruit and retain staff who are competent to provide safe shelter and services to domestic violence survivors.

The state's investment in victim services around Alaska has been critical in maintaining operations for domestic violence shelters and ensuring the safety of victims fleeing violence. CDVSA funds are the primary source of funding for AWAIC's emergency shelter. Furthermore, the federal government has decreased its funding for ongoing shelter support during the past three years, which increases domestic violence shelters' reliance on state funds. The state has provided crucial support to meet survivors' needs by providing flat funding to CDVSA.

Your support of the increase in the CDVSA's funding allocation and transition of funds to the baseline will provide meaningful support to shelters throughout the state. In this year's proposed budget for CDVSA there has been an increase suggested as well as a transfer of funds to the baseline, which will create stability for the future of CDVSA and victim service programs.

Thank you for your diligent work representing Alaskans.

Respectfully,

Sarah Kathryn Bryan  
Board Member, AWAIC  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Eric Gurley [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 8:06 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Support for HB39 SDS Operating Budget - Community Based Grants Increment

Good afternoon Representative Co-Chairs and members of the House Finance Committee. Thank you for this opportunity! My name is Eric Gurley, and I have been an Alaskan since 1975. I live in Anchorage. I am representing Alaska's four centers of independent living which serve Alaskans statewide that experience disabilities, seniors, and veterans.

I am here to support HB39, specifically the Senior and Disabilities Community Based Grants increment of \$1.4 million consisting of a \$586,000 increment for Centers of Independent Living and \$912,200 for SDS Community Based Grants recipients. **My ask**, please continue your support of this measure.

I am the Executive Director of Access Alaska, Inc. Last year Access Alaska served 568 consumers in the communities and outlying areas in Anchorage, Fairbanks, the Mat-Su, Kenai Peninsula, Bethel, and Southwest regions. Our services include independent living skills development, advocacy, peer support, information and referral, and nursing home transitions back to the consumer's home and community. Again, independent living centers helped Alaskans, and their families, in their efforts to improve their independence and remain in their own homes and communities. Last year, CILS delivered over 16,644 services and worked with 2,570 consumers. We also assisted 95 Alaskans in transitioning and diverting from assisted living homes, or nursing homes, to home and community-based settings, saving Alaska \$14,024,684 in public funds.

To the committee, I, and many Alaskans, are thankful for HB39. Thank you for the time, detail, and care you have taken to ensure this increment is in place. One more time, **thank you**, and please keep supporting the proposed SDS Community Based Grants increment of \$1.4 million.

Eric L. Gurley, MBA

Executive Director  
Access Alaska, Inc.  
1217 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99501

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
(800) 770-4488 (Toll-Free)  
[REDACTED]

**Selfless Service** – Colin Powell (Retired Four-Star General, Former Secretary of State, United States National Security Advisor, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff)



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Deanna Scott [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 8:30 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** re: Increase Childcare Grant for wages

Good morning,

My name is Deanna Scott and I own Dee's Little Angels Childcare in Wasilla.

As a small business owner, adding \$15 million to the budget to increase the childcare grant for wages would help me to obtain quality childcare workers and not lose them to already government funded facilities that can pay a lot higher than I currently can.

Childcare is an extremely stressful job and because of lower hourly pay, the turnover is extremely high. Adding the \$15 million to the budget would give these childcare workers financial relief and a willingness to deal with the stress that comes with job because they're being rightly compensated for it.

In Wasilla alone, so many childcare facilities have closed because of lack of employees due to lower paid hourly wages. This \$15 million increase will really help us all maintain our employees

Thank you for taking time to read my email.

Deanna Scott  
Dee's Little Angels  
Owner

[REDACTED]

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**From:** CHELSEY KITTS [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 9:12 AM  
**To:** House Finance; Kijun Hong  
**Subject:** Public Testimony re: budget appropriation for childcare industry in AK

To Whom It May Concern,

I understand that the House Finance is accepting public testimony this week on budget appropriations. Additional public funding toward childcare is essential to prevent further loss of childcare facilities around the state. As a working mother, I know important quality childcare is to families. The need to trust that your child is being safely cared for is vital to a mother.

The childcare sector needs solutions that are immediate and will increase wages. This will enable providers to compete with other industries for workers in order to increase availability statewide and to remain operational for our community.

Please consider increasing budget appropriations for the childcare industry! They are our future!

Sincerely,

Chelsey Hong

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Shina duVall [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 9:20 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Testimony: Please support the proposed \$15M increase to the Child Care Grant Program (CCG)

Dear House Finance Committee,

My name is Shina duVall and my husband and I live and work in Anchorage. We have lived in Alaska for 12 years and we have a 7.5 year old son who is now a student in ASD. As working parents, our son attended Hillcrest Children's Center in Anchorage from 4 months of age until he started Kindergarten at our neighborhood elementary school. We all benefitted from the extraordinary care and early childhood education that he received at Hillcrest.

**Early childhood education and childcare are ESSENTIAL** for children and for working parents. They are also critically important for our community overall. Quality and loving childcare results in well-adjusted and healthy children who are better prepared to learn and grow and contribute to their community as they get older.

Sadly, it is a well known fact that wages in this industry are not adequate or sustainable for the long-term welfare and prosperity of staff and their families. Many childcare providers are living at or below poverty levels, particularly in Alaska where costs of living are significantly higher than many other areas in the U.S.

Like teachers and staff in the public education system, childcare staff are doing the most important work of all - caring for and teaching the next generation. They deserve better wages. Our society desperately needs high-quality, committed, and experienced caregivers and educators for our children. The consequences of any other alternative are dire.

**Please support the proposed \$15M increase to the Child Care Grant Program (CCG).**

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Shina duVall

[REDACTED]  
Anchorage, AK 99501



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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Karen Encelewski [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 9:27 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Library Assistance Grants

Dear House Finance Committee:

I am writing to ask you to restore the \$402,700 in funding that was in the Governor's budget for the Public Library Assistance Grants. We support the \$635,000 in additional funding for the SLED databases and the AK Library Catalog. These connections with other libraries give assistance with programs that benefit our library. I have been on our Ninilchik Library board for about six years and am very familiar with how small libraries struggle financially to keep their doors open. Cutting our PLA grant from \$7,000 to 2,300 a year would cripple the library. Even with the \$7,000 we have been very thankfully receiving, it still takes an effort through fund raising and smaller grants to keep the library operational.

We have a number of volunteers to work the desk, which helps our very excellent librarian to take care of the bookwork, ordering books, and the many other things our librarian does. Heather, in addition to all the things it takes to enable a library to run smoothly, volunteers to run a Sunday pre-school program during the winter.

The community would be hurting without our library. The school basically has no functioning library, so we are it. People come in all the time to use the computers, check out books and movies, and visit. It is an educational hub as well as a way to occasionally see friends and neighbors. We are a very small community and the library is an important community asset. Please consider restoring the \$402,700 funding.

Thank you,  
Karen Encelewski,  
Ninilchik Library Board President



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[REDACTED]

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**From:** John Dittrich [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 9:57 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** Sen. James Kaufman; Representative.Calvin.Schrage@akleg.gov  
**Subject:** Testimony to House Finance - Increased Funding for Disability Services in AK

Good morning,

My name is John Dittrich. I am a lifelong resident of Alaska and have served on the board of Hope Community Resources for 20 years - and in the role of President for the past 7 years.

Having served on the Hope Board for the past two decades, I have watched our agency initially grow and flourish during my first ten years, only to see it turn the completely opposite direction on a downward trajectory during the last ten years. Funding must be increased, and substantially, to allow agencies such as Hope to continue to provide the absolutely necessary support and services for our fellow Alaskans that truly have a need for care. We have been without any substantive rate increases over the past ten years, have not at all kept up with inflation and, when combined with the overall labor shortage around our country, has made it extremely difficult to attract and retain the necessary staff to provide these critically important services.

If funding is not increased considerably, the next step will be to consider the closure of some of our assisted living homes. This will result in individuals being "returned" to the state for care and without much in the way of viable options, this will mean these folks will most likely be sent out of state costing the state exponentially more than it would cost to simply provide agencies, such as Hope, with the increases necessary to keep Alaskans with disabilities in Alaska.

Therefore, please include increases for ID and DD support in this coming budget. This cannot wait another year and must be addressed in the coming budget cycle.

Thank you,

John Dittrich  
[REDACTED]  
Anchorage 99507

**From:** Bridget Smith  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 10:11 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Education funding

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear House Finance members,

Both of my children, now adults in their forties, attended Juneau Public Schools. They had teachers who cared about them, curriculum that worked, and extra curricular activities that nourished them. Since that time, costs have risen and the SBA has remained the same for 7 years. It is incomprehensible to me that we are handing out huge PFDs while our schools, teachers, and students struggle.

I believe that we could have a public education system in Alaska with reading and math proficiencies that we could all be proud of, not the low numbers of proficiency that we currently have. (Ymj@jwhjsyflj@kxyzij syx% fhmj {isl% fym@wtkhrjsh~%F fxf%88\* Ymj@jwhjsyflj@kxyzij syx% fhmj {isl% vjfiisl% wt khrjsh~%85\* Uzgq%hmtt@Wj {nj | .

We have the ability to fund public education not just adequately, but well. But we need the political will that puts the needs of children first.

Sincerely yours,

Bridget Smith

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Charles Westmoreland [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 10:09 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Written Testimony on Operations Budget  
**Attachments:** H FIN Testimony\_Westmoreland.pdf; AK Childcare Fact Sheet\_Westmoreland.pdf

Please see the attached written testimony and fact sheets in support of additional childcare funding as part of the state's operating budget.

Very Respectfully,

Charles L. Westmoreland

House Finance Committee Members,

My name is Charles Westmoreland, and I am a Juneau-based researcher, writer and data analyst. For several months I have been tracking and compiling data regarding Alaska's childcare sector. The trends are alarming and provide numerous justifications for taking immediate legislative action to help address this crisis.

From 2018-2020, Alaska lost 20% of its childcare providers, leaving the state with childcare slots for only 29% of all youth ages 4 and younger. A percentage this low classifies the whole state as a "Childcare Desert." Anecdotal evidence from dozens of childcare providers I've spoken with about young families leaving the state due to lack of childcare availability correlates with another alarming set of statistics. According to US Census Data and State of Alaska population estimates, the population decline of 0-4- and 20-29-year-olds is getting worse.

Age	Pop. 2010	Pop. 2020	Pop. 2022	% Difference (2010-2020)	% Difference (2020-2022)
0-4	53,996	48,972	45,403	-9%	-7%
20-29	109,838	100,190	94,524	-9%	-6%

Childcare providers are unable to hire and retain staff at current wages (\$14-\$15 hourly), which is impacting availability and forcing many to close. Communities such as Valdez and Wrangell have no licensed childcare facilities. This lack of childcare availability has resulted in Alaskans leaving the workforce and is contributing to negative economic consequences. The service sector is perhaps the most hard-hit by the lack of available workers, but every industry and sector has felt similar impacts.

About 7% of working parents have left jobs because they couldn't find childcare, and 77% of all working parents have missed time at their jobs for the same reason. The statewide economic loss is \$165 million annually. Nearly 10% of that figure is lost sales taxes (Source: US Chamber of Commerce Foundation). I have included charts and data points in a separate attachment related to this issue.

Childcare availability has become a public crisis, which is why public funding is required. A \$15 million annual increase to the Child Care Grant Program is the most cost-effective and timely way to meet this problem head on. The program is familiar to providers, and requires no additional state personnel or resources to manage. A \$15M increase could be used to improve childcare worker wages by more than \$4 per hour, enabling providers to once again compete with other sectors for employees.

Funding toward the childcare sector must be viewed as an investment in the economy that will produce greater returns in the future by creating a stable environment for young families and providing incentive for Alaskans to return to the workplace.

Very Respectfully,

Charles L. Westmoreland

Researcher, Rain Coast Data



# childcare for Alaska's future

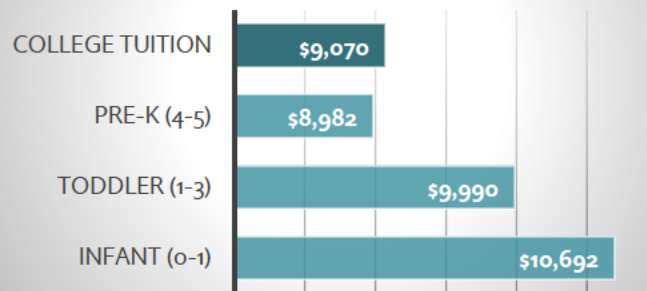
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Child Care Coalition of Alaska

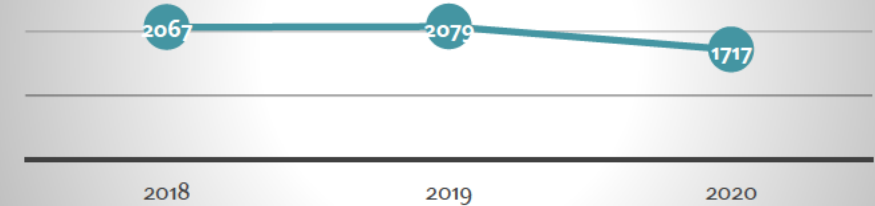
[childcareforak@gmail.com](mailto:childcareforak@gmail.com)

The annual cost of childcare in Alaska is **more expensive** than a year of tuition and fees at UAA, UAF and UAS. As a result, parents are leaving the workforce to stay at home with young children.

## Average Annual Cost: Child Care vs. College



## Child Care Workforce

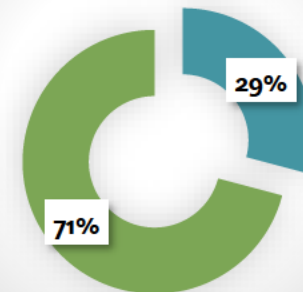


Alaska's childcare workforce **decreased 20%** between 2018 and 2020.

## Improving Availability

Increasing Alaska's contribution to the Child Care Grant Program from **\$1.5M to \$15M annually** would increase wages from **\$15 to \$19.25 per hour**. Increased wages will improve retention of workers and increase childcare availability to Alaskan families.

## Child Care Availability



Alaska has available childcare slots **for only 29% of all children** ages 4 and younger.

# Childcare and the Economy Economic Impact of Alaska's "Childcare Desert"

**\$165M**

**Total  
economic  
loss  
resulting  
from lack of  
childcare**

**7%**

**Parents  
who left a  
job due to  
lack of  
childcare  
availability**

**77%**

**Percentage  
of parents  
who missed  
work due to  
childcare  
issues**

**61%**

**Percentage  
of Alaskan  
families  
living in a  
"childcare  
desert"**

**61%**

**Portion of  
Low-income  
families  
impacted by  
lack of  
childcare**

Source: US Chamber of Commerce Foundation,  
"How Childcare Impacts Alaska's Workforce  
Productivity and the State Economy" (2021)



**Child Care Coalition of Alaska**  
[childcareforak@gmail.com](mailto:childcareforak@gmail.com)  
[Visit Us Online](#)

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**From:** Miranda Gideons [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 10:20 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Written Testimony

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

I agree that we need more funds that would help child care center stay open. I currently work at a daycare in Fairbanks. We get calls all day from people looking for childcare but we are usually always full. I feel like if we had more funds it would help the children because they would have more supplies to do activities and learn with. Also if we had more pay given to us I think we wouldn't have such a hard time hiring staff that are willing to stay. Taking care of kids can be very challenging.



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Mary Richey Sell [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 10:27 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Support for Parents as Teachers (PAT)

Good Afternoon,

My name is Mary Richey and I am a mother of two here in Juneau. I've worked with Parents as Teachers (PAT) since my second son was just a few weeks old, he's now one year old. I wasn't able to participate with my daughter (4yo) when she was born because the demand was too high.

This program is invaluable for parental support in the community. Having someone come to our house, answer questions and check in with our family is so helpful to new parents and could potentially be life changing to those struggling with the transition to parenthood. Personally, having the home visits while I was on maternity leave helped so much with my postpartum depression and anxiety as a mom. This program has done so much for our family including establishing an in-home library for our children, connecting us with other parents in the community and connecting us to other resources in the community. We often forget about our mothers and parents and don't have the support needed for them. We have so much education for when you are pregnant and to prepare for child birth but after you have the baby you are sent out on your own with no one to help. This program is invaluable to our community and needs to be fully funded at the levels consistent with inflation rates.

Please consider increasing the funding to this program that is so important for so many.

thank you,

Mary Richey  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Virginia Morgan [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:06 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** Rep. Ben Carpenter  
**Subject:** HB 39 Operating Budget

Good morning Representatives,

I am writing today, concerned about the decision made by the committee to reduce the Governor's proposed budget for the Alaska State Library by \$402,700. Some of the comments I heard in a committee meeting made me realize that there are some who do not realize how essential the Public Library Assistance Grant is to communities across Alaska. A comment was made by a representative that libraries are well-funded and they found it unlikely that this reduction would cause any library to close.

Our library in Cooper Landing would likely have to close without the \$7,000 PLA grant each year. It is the only source of revenue we can count on. We receive no borough or city funding. Our library, like many others in the state, is completely run by volunteers. We depend on the state grant, volunteer labor, and donations. The state grant allows us to provide our community with current and relevant new materials each year, as well as provide internet and computers, heat, and electricity. For many in our community, the library is the only place they can receive reliable internet.

I also ask you to add \$635,900 to the operating budget for the SLED databases and the Alaska Library Catalog. These resources are of immense value, not only to our community members, but to residents all over the state.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Virginia Morgan  
Cooper Landing, AK

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Chelsea Clawson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:08 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public testimony to support childcare funding

I would like to take this opportunity to voice my support for increasing childcare funding in the state of Alaska. Alaska has lost more than 20% of its childcare providers since 2018, making it extremely difficult to find childcare, especially for younger children.

For example, as soon as I found out I was pregnant with my daughter in 2022 I started calling and emailing every daycare I could find. Of the 23 I reached out to, only 2 responded. One told me they didn't have a waitlist, and the final facility put me on the waitlist. I was on that waitlist for over a year before the spot opened up. Luckily, I was able to fill the 3 months between when I went back to work and the daycare spot was available with family care, but many people are not as lucky as I am to have family in town. They are not able to provide full time childcare indefinitely, but were able to make some sacrifices to fill in the gap. Without family able to step in, I don't know what I would have done- I need my job to provide for my family, but I cannot work without childcare.

I am so grateful to have daycare, and the people who take care of my daughter do a wonderful job. I know the facility has had trouble retaining and recruiting employees, as the pay is not as high as other industries. These wonderful people who care for my child absolutely deserve to be paid more, but I cannot afford to pay more for childcare. Full time care for my daughter is \$1,150/month. I have a masters degree and work for the State of Alaska, making a good wage. Daycare costs me 30% of my take home pay. Increasing the cost of daycare would be difficult for me, and I know that I make more money than many people who also have children in daycare. Increasing the cost of daycare would make it untenable for many families, many of whom need 2 incomes just to afford rent, food and bills. Wages haven't kept up with inflation, and Alaska is already a costly place to live.

If we want people to live and work in Alaska, we need to increase the availability of affordable childcare. As part of that, we need to ensure that childcare workers are paid a living wage, commensurate with the invaluable service they provide.

I hope that you will consider additional public funding toward childcare through budget amendments. Our children are the future of this state, and if families leave because of the lack of affordable childcare, that future is at risk.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Chelsea Clawson  
Fairbanks, Alaska

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Julie Shockro [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:14 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Letter of Public Testimony

[REDACTED]  
Kenai, AK 99611

March 22, 2023

Kenai Legislative Information Office  
145 Main St Loop  
Suite 17  
Kenai, AK 99611

My Fellow Alaskans,

My name is Julie Arness. I live in District D, and my local representatives are Jesse Bjorkman and Ben Carpenter. I am writing to you today to ask for your help in prioritizing additional funding to the current budget for community based supports for people with disabilities.

I am a mother of three amazing young people, the youngest of whom was born with a rare genetic mutation that had a staggering effect on the development of his brain. Jojo (who does have a real name on his birth certificate, but goes by Jojo with everyone who knows and loves him), is a sweet, happy, and wildly innocent human that melts hearts wherever he goes. At almost six years old, Jojo is able to engage with people, but unable to walk, talk, feed, or care for himself in any way. It is difficult to comprehend the time, energy, and love required to care for what is essentially a very large infant if you are not in those shoes.

For the first several years, my husband and I spread ourselves beyond thin trying to provide everything for everyone in our family of five, but we were barely keeping our heads above water. It was especially difficult to give our older children their due time and attention, never mind our role as spouses.

When we finally accepted that we needed help, we opened our house to Hope Community Resources and eventually found Jojo's direct support professional, Autumn. You might understand the angst that comes with allowing someone else to care for your child, but that feeling is exponentially higher when you consider the added challenges of caring for a child like Jojo, who cannot advocate for, or protect himself in any way. It took time to educate Autumn in all the intricacies of our sweet boy, but today, she is able to keep him safe, provide for all his needs, and even more importantly, she loves him, and he loves her back.

Words cannot express the relief we feel, or the gratitude we have for Autumn. Because of her, Jojo gets the care he requires, and we are able to provide the kind of time and experiences for our other children that they deserve. We are able to backpack, fish, ice skate, berry pick, coach their youth basketball teams, and volunteer in their school. In short, we are able to be present and engaged parents.

What Autumn and other caregivers like her provide to families and recipients of community based supports is a priceless gift. It is a difficult and at times, exhausting job. The pool of caring, reliable, and competent adults willing to take on such a career is small enough as it is, but when wages in this state barely exceed that which what one could earn at McDonald's, it is very difficult to entice new employees, or maintain the existing ones.

As a family, we often say, "What would we do without Autumn?" We try to provide a comfortable environment for her to work in, but it would be understandable if she left us for a higher paying, less taxing position. For the moment, we're the lucky ones. There are people like us, with loved ones like Jojo, who do not have consistent care, if any. As a state, we need to provide a more competitive wage so we can retain the wonderful people like Autumn who enable our people with developmental and intellectual disabilities, and their families, to thrive. Many of these agencies who employ people like Autumn are at risk of failing due to financial instability.

I am urging you to please support an amendment for additional funding to Medicaid and community based supports for our residents with disabilities.

Thank you for your time,

Julie Arness

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Ruby Jones [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:17 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Voter in support of Child Care Grant Program (CCG) increase \$15M / District 23L

Hello,

I am a life long Alaskan resident. I grew up in Bird Creek, attended Girdwood Elementary and High School at AJ Dimond High. I received my Bachelors and Minor at the University of Alaska Anchorage. I am a television producer for National Geographic and BBC Studios and have made Alaska my permanent home. I am a home and property owner in Eagle River and my partner is a small business owner. We have one child with another on the way.

I am writing to urge you to approve the increase of \$15million to the Child Care Grant Program - these funds are desperately needed by families like myself in order to keep childcare affordable and parents working and off other social services like Medicaid, SNAP etc. if I needed to quit working due to a lack of affordability in childcare our family would need other forms of government support in order to remain afloat.

All workers deserve fair pay and a livable wage. Retention of caregivers over the course of your child's year and really for as long as possible is best for the mental health, and physical health of your child. A big part of employee and caregiver retention is the ability of the facility to offer fair, competitive wages and benefits for their trained, and experienced caregivers. If my childcare facility is not able to increase the wages of their caregivers it will become a dire situation for our family and all families at Hillcrest Children Center and childcare facilities across the state.

Having safe, dependable, caring, informed childcare is essential. Keeping families in the state of Alaska is dependent on the ability of those families to be able to find and afford childcare. I urge you to, beg you, implore you to approve this increase and create stability for my growing Alaskan Family and all future Alaskan families. Caring for our children is a sociological priority.

Thank you for taking my testimony and please reach out to me directly with any questions, or future needed testimony.

--

Ruby Jones  
Producer  
Life Below Zero: First Alaskans  
BBC Studios Reality Productions / National Geographic Channel  
[REDACTED]

Android Phone users please text me on [WhatsApp](#)

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Heather DeLoach [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:29 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** Susan DeLoach; Jenn Schoaf; Vass Lafollette  
**Subject:** Please Add \$15 million to Child Care Grant for Wages

**Importance:** High

Good morning,

My name is Heather DeLoach, I am the Corporate Finance & IT Manager for Bright Beginnings Early Learning Center. I am also a mother of two children in our program. I am writing to implore the State Finance committee to add \$15 million to the budget to increase the child care grant for wages. We are very grateful for the funds provided from the CARES, ARPA and MOA grants, however, these have only provided a temporary bridge as we struggle to gain and retain employees in this intensely competitive job market. We have already increased wages by 40% with these funds in the last 3 years, which meant we had to increase tuition rates accordingly to maintain these wages as grant funds have been exhausted. Still, our starting wage is barely matching entry-level positions in the fast food and retail industries. This is unsustainable for our centers, our families, and our state. Without sustained support for better wages in the child care sector this year, the system will crumble. Thank you for taking my testimony on this very important matter.

Thanks,



Heather DeLoach  
Corporate Finance & IT Manager  
Bright Beginnings Early Learning Center  
1000 Sundown Ct.  
Anchorage, AK 99515

[REDACTED]  
Main Line: 907-344-9435, opt. 9  
Fax: 907-344-9437  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Karen Matthias [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:29 AM  
**To:** Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. DeLena Johnson; House Finance  
**Subject:** Support for 404 primacy funding  
**Attachments:** CAP support for 404 primacy HFIN.pdf

I have attached a support letter from the Council of Alaska Producers.  
Thank you.

Karen Matthias  
Executive Director  
Council of Alaska Producers  
PO Box 220193  
Anchorage, AK 99522-0193  
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Taylor Lee [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:33 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Child Care Grant Program

My name is Taylor Lee and I live in Ketchikan with my husband and our two children, five and eight. We have struggled to find reliable, safe and affordable daycare in this community. This is a huge issue that affects so many local families.

Please add \$15 million to the budget to increase the child care grant for wages.

My children currently attend First Lutheran Childcare Center in Ketchikan. If the legislature does not pass this grant then this daycare will most likely close, leaving over 30 kids without childcare. If you want people working in this town it is imperative that this daycare stays open.

Thank you for your time and letting me submit testimony.

Taylor Lee  
[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Stoneking, Marge [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:35 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** Kevin Jardell  
**Subject:** Written Op Budget Testimony\_SDS budget amendment request

Dear Reps Johnson, Foster, Edgmon, Coulombe, Cronk, Galvin, Hannan, Josephson, Ortiz, Stapp, Tomaszewski;

Nursing home institutional care for one Alaskan at an average \$159,000/year costs the State Medicaid program 4x what a Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver costs, but the waiver service system is at risk. Alaska is experiencing a severe direct care workforce shortage, impacting the ability for people with disabilities and the elderly to receive in-home services and avoid costly institutional care. Alaska must use all tools available to sustain the HCBS system or our Medicaid long-term care budget will skyrocket and older Alaskans will have poorer outcomes. The vast majority of us want to age in place at home, and that is indeed a key plank of Governor Dunleavy's Healthy Families initiative, aging in place. **Participant Directed Care would allow older Alaskans to directly hire family, friends, or neighbors and AARP supports giving AK Senior & Disability Services modest funds to stand-up the program.**

Participant-Directed Care is a HCBS option open to Alaska, in which the individual who receives services decides how, when, and from whom their services will be delivered, at home. 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. Participants in self-directed programs often choose to hire family, close friends, or neighbors as paid caregivers. 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 for the caregiver and the larger economy; the homecare workforce is expanded; and it prolongs the use of lower-cost HCBS while delaying or avoiding costly institutionalization.

Senior and Disability Services favors adding Participant Directed Care as an option, but maintains that they need a resource allocation software system and modest staff support to implement Participant Directed Services as an HCBS option. SDS has long discussed and contemplated this tool (interrail) which it also named as a necessary first step in their State Plan for Eradicating the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Wait List with staffing for \$647,800 (does not include adding any new IDD Medicaid waiver participants). The tool would allow the State to assign a needs specific budget to each waiver participant, rather than each budget being open ended or one size fits all. This is equivalent to the cost of avoiding institutional care for four Alaskans, and stands to benefit hundreds of older Alaskans and those with disabilities through participant directed waiver services.

**AARP is asking for \$647,800 to be added to the Department of Health, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services budget with budget intent language to *stand-up a Participant Directed Care service delivery model through a Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Home & Community Based Services Appendix J waiver add-on to existing Alaska Medicaid HCBS waivers, and to begin to offer budget and employment authority for a minimum of 200 existing waiver participants by June 30 2024.***

Respectfully,  
Marge

Marge Stoneking | Associate State Director - Advocacy | AARP Alaska  
3601 C Street, Suite 1420, Anchorage, AK 99501  
Office: (907) 762-3306 | [REDACTED]

| Web: [www.aarp.org/ak](http://www.aarp.org/ak) | Facebook: [@aarpak](https://www.facebook.com/aarpak) | Twitter: [@aarpak](https://twitter.com/aarpak)



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Itz Plasmaa [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:39 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Childcare wages

I believe the child care system is going to continue to crumble if nothing is done to improve wages!

Thank u for taking the time to read my testimony

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Hailey Hostetler [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:42 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** childcare funding

Hello my name is Hailey I work at discovery preschool. You need to add 15million to the budget to increase the grant for wages. The childcare system is going to continue to crumble if nothing is done!  
Thank u for taking the time to read my testimony  
Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

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**From:** JOSHUA ROCKEY [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:01 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** SB 88 and similar education retirement related bills public testimony

Esteemed State Representatives,

My name is Joshua Rockey and I am principal of Butte Elementary, a K-5 school in the Mat-Su. Next year, I will be the principal at Swanson Elementary, a K-2 school in the Mat-Su. I have been in education since 2003 teaching in Chicago in a private school, substituting in the Mat-Su, teaching in the Mat-Su, and have spent the last 10 years as an administrator.

You have read written testimony from me before regarding the BSA, and further support for education. I spoke of staffing shortages, staff members covering odd and extra duties as a result, and lack of substitute coverage all as related topics. While all of those topics are immediate, the retirement consideration is a part of the long game.

As a Tier III employee, I am exactly the type of employee that this bill would impact. As I speak with my colleagues hired just one year before me, they talk about potential retirement in 8-10 years (I am currently in year 17 in the district with a full time position) based on their personal need timeline. When I look at the projected timeline for myself on the Alaska Retirement and Benefits Website, at half of my current income, I am not projected to be able to retire "safely" (money continues in perpetuity) until age 72. If I retire at 65, the money runs until 90. If I retire at age 60, the money runs out about age 78. As you can see, despite working 20 years in education, and for a long time in this district, my ability to retire safely is no sure thing for a long time.

As the perception and environment of teaching/administration deteriorated during Covid over the last two years, I considered changing fields altogether, but also considered simply leaving the State to continue to work in education. Every other state in the Union has a defined benefit pension plan. If I need to work a minimum of 18 years to have a retirement that expires quickly, why not head South, work for 20 years instead of 18 and combine that state's pension with what I have accumulated here?

Ultimately, I chose to stay as I love the Valley and raising my family here. However, if the education environment continues to deteriorate, folks like me will leave. We already have a number of retirements from teachers and admin in Tier I and II, but I am seeing folks that are Tier III, and IV decide that it is not worth it to hang around.

If we want to invest in the long game of education, there needs to be some certainty for working in the field of education.

Please support creating additional retirement support.

Thank you for your time,

Joshua Rockey

**Joshua Rockey** – Butte Elementary School, Principal  
Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District  
Ph: 907-861-5200 | [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Rory Jankowski [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:03 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Rural cap

The pre k program I'm sterling was a huge benefit to both our kids and when it closed last year multiple friends of ours in the community were left with no options for child care

Thanks for ur time

Rory jankowski

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Ashley Padgett [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:12 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Early Childhood Education in AK

Hello, I was informed that there might be a cut in early childhood education. I wanted to take a minute to explain the importance to me as a mother of 4 girls who all had early childhood participation. Not only that it prepared my daughters for school but helped me prepare them for school. I was able to find ways to work with my daughters daily through this program. I couldn't imagine not having it available to me when it was so valuable to have in Alaska. Especially, the fact that we will in a rural community so we don't have very much available to us. Having this early childhood education gave us something more than the little we have. If you cut this program or not fund it fully it would take away even more from our small community.

Thank you for your time in reading this email, as I had felt disheartened to hear the news of this cut back so I couldn't help but respond to it and explain from personal experience as a mother of 4 girls in Alaska the importance of this being available to us.

Thank you and I appreciate all you do,

Ashley Padgett

Sent from my iPhone



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Asya Claflin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:36 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** CHILDCARE BUDGET

Hi my name is Asya Claflin, I work for discovery preschool. It is a MUST to increase and add \$15 million to the childcare budget! We already have been hit with ni enough childcare in this town and state, if we do not provide livable wages to the childcare workers there won't be anyone left. We are the people who help raise your children so you can provide for them at home. Like myself and many other workers we have kids ourselves and it is beyond valid that we also deserve a living wage to take care of our own family. Just think if you take that away you will also be taking away childcare for your own children and you will be left with no one. Think about this long and hard, it is a serious matter. Don't take childcare workers for granted. We matter. Thank you for your time. And please, please increase the child care grant for wages!

-Asya C.

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Cheri Smith [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:40 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** HB 39

My name is Cheri Smith and I am the Executive Director of The LeeShore Center, which is a domestic violence and sexual assault victim service agency in Kenai, AK. I am writing in support of the budget for the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) under Public Safety.

I'm aware there is a 3-million-dollar one-time increment of general funds in the CDVSA budget as well as a 3.5 million federal appropriation through a request from Senator Murkowski. Although I'm supportive of those funds being in the budget, I'd like to point out that without this one-time funding, services for victims would be 6.5 million dollars short from the previous years' funding. It's critical victim service agencies in the state have stable and adequate funding. I am in favor of at least moving the 3-million-dollar increment to base funding within the CDVSA budget in order to help ensure more adequate, stable funding is available.

At The LeeShore Center, we have seen an increase demand for services over the past year; for example, we are only in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of our current fiscal grant year and have already exceeded the prior years total emergency shelter bednights by 26%. During FY22, our agency provided advocacy and support to close to 700 individuals accessing our services, some of which included emergency shelter, transitional housing, legal advocacy, crisis hotline calls, walk-in services, etc. We lost one advocate position a few years back and have not had adequate funding since to fill that position. We've expended over \$30,000 on hotel costs to house victims needing to isolate outside of our emergency shelter during the COVID pandemic; costs which were over and above our grant funding. We haven't had an increase in funding for a number of years and as costs in all areas of operation increase annually, it becomes more challenging to meet victim service needs and ensure an adequately funded agency.

I want to express my thanks to you for your efforts in addressing the issue of one-time funding vs. stable, adequate funding for victim service programs across the state and hope additional funding can be secured to ensure our services to victims can continue.

Thank you,  
Cheri Smith, Executive Director  
The LeeShore Center

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:51 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Childcare budget increase

Good afternoon, my name is Kimberly Stacy. I am the Owner/Operator of Alphabet Kids Childcare in Ketchikan. I am asking for \$15M to be added to the budget to increase the Childcare Grant so we providers are able to increase staff wages and be able to hire new staff and keep current staff working. The childcare sector has been crumbling for a long time now and if something is not done to improve wages this year the sector will crash leaving working parents and children in a very hard position.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,

*Kimberly Stacy*  
*Alphabet Kids*  
*Business: (907) 220-0633*

[REDACTED]  
*Fax: (907) 220-0634*



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](https://www.avast.com)

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Colleen Adams [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:52 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** How HeadStart Impacted Me

Good afternoon,

I've recently learned of this public hearing about how impactful our Headstart Facility is in Nome (or any facility in Alaska), which I've been calling home for almost 10 years. Within those ten years I had my son, who is now 5, he has been attending the Kawerak Early Headstart/ Headstart program since he was about 6 months old. Before he was enrolled I had difficulty keeping babysitters and cannot tell you how many I went through. I am forever grateful for this program and how it has impacted my son, who was ready for kindergarten this year with no hassle. But it can be difficult with classroom closures due to short staffing, I think one of the main reasons the teachers are not continuing their employment has to do with their pay. With the cost of living rising, it's pretty easy to decide when to leave a position that does not meet your financial needs. I've been in that situation before and left positions that I really enjoyed, but had to make the decision to resign and accept higher paying jobs.

-Colleen

**From:** Brenda Shelden [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:53 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Division of Senior & Disability Services

Dear House of Representative Finance Committee Members,

I would like to ask that these written comments be considered during the public comments on the operating budget.

The Mat-Su Council on Aging is a part of the AGENet coalition and is asking that you not only support the Governor's \$1,498.2 increase in Senior and Disabilities Community Based Grants, but also advocate for another 6.5% increase. These grants have not increased since 2015 and address the basic needs of older Alaskans.

Community based grants from Division of Seniors & Disabilities (SDS) are instrumental in keeping Alaskans 60 and older in their own homes and communities. Alaska has the fastest growing senior population in the country per capita with more than 19,000 seniors served by these grants. These grants effectively provide much needed support services to seniors and their unpaid caregivers, costing much less than assisted living or nursing home care services.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me. I would be happy to answer them or provide additional information.

Brenda Shelden DPT/PT/ATC/WCC

[REDACTED]  
Executive Director  
Mat-Su Council on Aging



[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 1:26 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Email testimony

Hello good afternoon,

My name is Cristina santos & I am a preschool teacher at discovery preschool and been in childcare for a few years now. It would be greatly appreciated if you guys add \$15 million to the budget to increase the child care grant for wages

Ιφ χηιλδχαρε δοεσν□τ γετ τηε γραντ Ι δον□τ τηινκ ιτ□λλ βε γοοδ φορ τηε ωορκ σψστεμ

Τηανκς φορ λιστενινγ!

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Julie Mettler [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 1:33 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Finance Committee - Funding for Disability Services

3/22/23

Alaska House Finance committee members:

Hello,

My name is Julie Mettler and I live in Anchorage. I'm represented by Senator Loki Tobin and Representative Zach Fields. I've worked in the field of disability services in Anchorage for almost 27 years. These past few "pandemic years" have impacted the field of health care like nothing I've seen in my career. While hospital care and the medical professionals working in these facilities have certainly been affected negatively, the children and adults who experience life-long disabilities, who are living at home, and in their local communities, have also struggled greatly to remain safe and receive necessary services.

The lack of adequate compensation for our frontline workers – our Direct Support Professionals – has caused many in the field to seek work elsewhere during this time. We need to find a path to adequately reimburse Home and Community Based services or we will ultimately cost ourselves much more in the long run. Those costs are calculated in many ways: Institutional care is radically more expensive than home care; Families supporting their loved ones who experience disabilities are significantly at risk for breaking apart due financial and emotional stress; Caregiver's risk losing employment without adequate home care providers or flexible services; People with disabilities remain unfunded, or underfunded, resulting in lost opportunity to learn or maintain skills.

Please prioritize funding for home and community services. Alaska cannot attract or retain the workforce we need to keep people safe without additional Medicaid and state funding. We can and must do better for our loved ones and our neighbors.

Thank you,

Julie R. Mettler

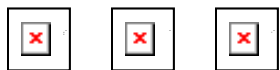
[REDACTED] Anchorage AK 99501

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.

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Helping Alaskans with Differing Abilities Experience Hope since 1968.



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Nora Matell [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 1:50 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** Rep. Calvin Schrage; Sen. James Kaufman  
**Subject:** Child care grant program testimony

Dear legislators,

I'm writing in to add testimony for adding an increase (\$15 million or more) to the Child Care Grant Program. I live in Anchorage in District 12/F.

I'm a high school teacher in Anchorage and a single parent with an infant and a toddler. In order for me to work, my two sons must go to daycare. I feel incredibly lucky that I found a wonderful center and have had great caregivers. Many parents are not even able to find childcare - I can't tell you how many of my friends have been piecing together unreliable daycare. Several teachers I know were up to the wire, not finding childcare until the day before school started!

The childcare situation is crazy. The amount that parents pay is stressful to our budgets. I pay more for EACH son that I do for my mortgage. However, the stress on my own budget, even as a single parent, is far less than the financial stress that the caregivers are facing. \$15/hour, which is now the minimum wage at my center, is not enough to pay a family's bills. And the \$15/hour is actually an increased wage that my center came to this fall after realizing that they were not able to attract or retain workers. Even at this level, we are losing caregivers to other centers or even to jobs at stores, restaurants, etc. When new employees are hired, they are requiring higher wages than existing employees, which is a great way to reduce morale as well as long-term to lose current employees to other jobs.

As a teacher, I get a very reasonable living wage. You as legislators get a very reasonable living wage (with a recent pay increase to boot!). The people that we trust to work with our young children deserve a living wage as well. The reality is that at this point, they have to be very committed to childcare to stay in it, because many times they could get a higher wage elsewhere. Childcare centers can't retain workers without increasing wages, yet to do so would put too much financial stress on families. (Cost per month has already increased about 10% since my toddler started about 18 months ago.)

The Child Care Grant Program has been a big help for childcare centers for years. It has not been increased since 2012, and we know that costs have substantially increased since then! It is critical that this grant program receives an increase. Without it, there is a strong likelihood that many childcare centers will not be able to retain workers and will have to close. As a single parent, I could not function without childcare. Our state's economy couldn't function without childcare.

Thank you for "listening". I know there are many costs that need to be balanced in a budget, but this one is critical to our state's economy. For both the individual benefit to workers and families with children, as well as the cumulative benefit to our state, please think of this cost as much more crucial than a larger PFD.

Thank you,  
Nora Matell

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Anchorage



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Susan Steele [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:58 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** George Smith  
**Subject:** RE: Letter of Support for HB 65 from Board Chairman, George Smith  
**Attachments:** Good morning Chairman Ruffridge and members of the House.docx.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Chairman Smith asked me to share his letter of support with you for HB 65.

Please see the attachment. Thank you!

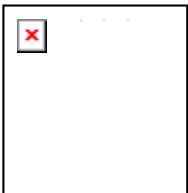
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**Susan R. Steele, Ed.S.** – Director of *Special Projects*

**Lower Yukon School District (LYSD)**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] -





# LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 32089 · Mountain Village, Alaska 99632

Phone: (907) 591-2411

[www.lysd.org](http://www.lysd.org)

**George Smith**

Chairman

**Gene Stone**

Chief School Administrator

March 22, 2023

Good morning Chairman Ruffridge and Members of the House Committee,

My name is George H Smith. I am the Chairman of the Lower Yukon School District Board of Education. I am writing to support HB 65 as written for a BSA of \$1,250.00. It is promising to hear that this body recognizes and is willing to work to address the deficit due to flat funding for the last several years.

The Lower Yukon School District has seen rising costs to our operations and maintenance of our schools, transportation, shipping, building materials, housing, labor, recruiting, fuel, and nutrition services, to name a few that flat funding still needs to address. These rising costs have tripled since COVID.

Our athletic and academic programs are the worst hit with flat funding. Recruitment has gone overseas with a nationwide teacher shortage. Our schools and related infrastructure have their share of problems. Hooper Bay has erosion problems, likely related to climate change. CIP funding has been non-existent at the State level, forcing us to spend down our reserves.

The BSA of \$1,250 is an excellent starting point for increasing the BSA. We can't attract teachers without adequate housing. Additionally, our students went through the COVID pandemic without internet access, and our District has one of the highest poverty levels in the country.

I'm incredibly proud that the Lower Yukon School District has been innovative. We partnered with the Anchorage School District to provide CTE opportunities for our rural students in an urban setting at King Career Center. These opportunities, for obvious reasons, are not available for them in our villages due to a lack of adequate funding and infrastructure to provide such services. We paid for and renovated the old Long House Hotel so our students could access CTE opportunities that we could not fund if we tried to support a similar program in rural LYSD. The Kusilvak Career Academy (KCA) is a considerable milestone demonstrating our innovation. We have done our part to think outside the box, share resources with ASD, and provide a return on investment to stakeholders and the State of Alaska.

We are using our COVID money to upgrade HVAC systems in all our sites rather than spending it on personnel. Our spending COVID money will save the State 17 million in CIP costs to address this vital infrastructure upgrade.



# LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 32089 · Mountain Village, Alaska 99632

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**George Smith**

Chairman

**Gene Stone**

Chief School Administrator

We have teachers, support staff, and infrastructure that need increased BSA funding to continue education delivery. Lastly, remember what BSA stands for (Base **STUDENT** Allocation).

In 1972, 27 teenagers brought suit against the State of Alaska, claiming that boarding schools were discriminatory and unjust. It was well known as the Molly Hootch Case after the name of the first person in the case. I was just an 8th-grade student at the Scammon Bay BIA Day School. In the settlement, the State of Alaska agreed to establish and fund operations to educate 126 high schools scattered throughout the State mentioned in the settlement, better known as Rural Education Attendance Area schools.

Article VII Section 1 of the Alaska Constitution states: "The legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State and may provide for other public educational institutions. Schools and institutions so established **shall be free from sectarian control**. No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution."

Thus, the State is ultimately considered responsible for schools. School districts are subdivisions of the State government. Their power is delegated to them by the State.

Unless State Law is changed, YOU must fund our schools using the foundation formula. I am a parent and a grandparent of students who attend LYSD public REAA schools. Americans for Prosperity **DO NOT** represent my children and grandchildren. Please recognize that fact first and foremost. Simply put, they don't give a shit about my family's need for a public education worthy of being called an Alaskan School. They do not represent my children who attend our schools. They have their special interest, which speaks to "**sectarian control**."

Please make adequate education funding a priority for our kids and teachers. Seven years of flat funding have put all districts in massive deficits. Please pass HB 65 as proposed with a BSA of \$1,250.00

George H Smith

Chairman, Lower Yukon School District

March 22, 2023

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

Our names are Jack and Suzanne Fisler and we live on the Kenai Peninsula. We are represented by Senator Gary Stevens and Representative Sarah Vance

We have a son with intellectual disabilities and are very concerned about the stability of the community providers whose employees deliver services to our son. It is very important to us that Alaskans with disabilities (as well as our son) have adequate work force to support them. This will only be accomplished if the rates of reimbursement to providers whose employees deliver these critical services are sufficient to recruit and keep their workforce.

In addition to what the Governor has in his budget -we fully support additional funds being added to the budget to provide funding to accomplish this task. If the network of community providers fails, the options for people with disabilities becomes far more restrictive and expensive. It will impact not only the person but the state budget as well. Thank you for providing this opportunity to comment and thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Jack and Suzanne Fisler

[REDACTED]

Kasilof, Alaska 99610

[REDACTED]





## **ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS of ALASKA**

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8005 Schoon Street • Anchorage, Alaska 99518  
Telephone (907) 561-5354 • Fax (907) 562-6118

3750 Bonita Street • Fairbanks, Alaska 99706  
Telephone (907) 452-1809 • Fax (907) 456-8599

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

March 18, 2023

Re: Support for Section 404 Primacy Funding

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

Associated General Contractors of Alaska is the construction industry's largest professional trade association, representing over 600 general and specialty contractors and industry suppliers statewide.

We write to you today in support of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's pursuit of permit primacy over Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. We respectfully request that the Legislature provide adequate funding to the Department of Environmental Conservation to assume primacy over this program.

AGC believes that our economy would benefit from Alaskans permitting Alaska projects. Having infrastructure projects permitted and regulated by Alaskans ensures that our unique landscape, isolated project locations, and limited construction seasons would be considered by regulators without compromising the stringent environmental standards that we are required to follow by law. Right now, our members experience uncertainty in processing and can miss entire construction seasons while a permit application sits on a federal regulator's desk in another state, awaiting review and approval.

We believe that a state-run primacy program would create a level of access to regulators that would encourage regular communication and accountability between the permittees and applicants to help move infrastructure projects forward. Similarly, a state-run program would be accountable to Alaskans and the legislature, assuring that Alaska has control of its permitting priorities while enabling the state to integrate the dredge and fill program with other related land and water management programs.

Lastly, the funds coming to Alaska through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will create opportunity for our state, but also has the potential to create a significant backlog in permits for infrastructure projects around the country. Virtually every construction project created by IIJA funds would require a 404 permit; site improvement fill for residential, commercial or recreational development; breakwaters, levees, dams, dikes, and weirs; placement of riprap and fill material for roads, airports, or buildings; and resource development projects. A state-run primacy program for 404 would provide the same high level of regulatory scrutiny while ensuring reasonable permitting timelines.



Successful examples of when the state of Alaska assumed primacy in similar precedent include the Clean Air Act, in 1972; the Safe Drinking Water Act, in 1978; and the Clean Water Act (section 402) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, in 2012. Assuming primacy over 404 would add another tool in Alaska's permitting toolbelt to help us fully realize the value of IIJA funds in connecting our state via roads and broadband, and furthering our overall mission of Building Alaska.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alicia Amberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alicia" and last name "Amberg" clearly distinguishable.

Alicia Amberg  
Executive Director  
Associated General Contractors of Alaska

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Alicia Amberg [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 3:55 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** 404 Primacy Funding Support  
**Attachments:** AGC 404 Primacy Funding Support 2023.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

House Finance Committee Members,

Please see the attached letter of support for 404 Primacy Funding from Associated General Contractors of Alaska.

Alicia Amberg  
Executive Director  
Associated General Contractors of Alaska  
8005 Schoon Street  
Anchorage, AK 99518  
[REDACTED]  
Office • (907) 561-5354  
[REDACTED]



**WE BUILD  
ALASKA**



[Read AGC's 2022 Annual Report to Members](#) to see how we've been working for our members, and Alaska's construction industry at large, over the past year.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Joan O'Keefe [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 4:10 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Testimony on the Operating Budget  
**Attachments:** SAIL Operating Budget Public Testimony.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Gunalchéesh / Háw'aa / Thank you for this opportunity to provide written public testimony on the operating budget for the record. Please find attached.

**Joan O'Keefe**  
Executive Director  
Southeast Alaska Independent Living, Inc. (SAIL)  
United Human Services of SE Alaska, Inc. (UHS)  
888-487-0987 office [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]





February 21, 2023

**Dear House Finance Committee**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide public testimony on the Operating Budget.

By way of introduction, the **Independent Living Network (IL Network)** member organizations – Access Alaska, Arctic Access, Independent Living Center (ILC) and Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL)– provide vitally important services to seniors, people with disabilities, their families and their communities. Through our assistance and support, individuals with disabilities can identify and obtain needed services in an effort to age in place in their own home as opposed to living in much more costly and restrictive institutional settings. The IL Network partners with the **Dept. of Health's Division of Senior & Disabilities Services (SDS)** via **SDS Community-Based Grants** to promote the total integration of people who experience a disability and Alaskan seniors to live as independently as possible in the community of their choice. In FY22, the ILN helped transition and divert 95 people from nursing homes to home and community based settings, saving more than \$14 million in public funds. The ILN is a great bang for the buck!

We are all **Centers for Independent Living (CILs)**, which are private, nonprofit, consumer-controlled organizations that provide independent living services to Alaskans experiencing a barrier to functional independence living in their home or communities. A majority of our staff and our governing boards are people who experience a disability. After a decade of flat funding, a bipartisan majority of legislators voted last session to support a \$1.5 million inflation adjustment increment to be spread between Centers for Independent Living and other SDS community-based grants senior service providers. Governor Dunleavy included this increment in his proposed FY24 budget. We ask your support of this line item.

Additionally, the State of Alaska, Department of Health has the authority under both 1915 (c) and 1915 (k) to implement a Participant Directed program which would be a way for waiver participants to manage some or all of their waiver services. This change will ease workforce shortages and create an avenue for waiver participants to experience self-determination. Senior & Disability Services is examining the best way forward. Please encourage Senior & Disability Services to move forward with implementation.

Please contact me at [REDACTED] with any questions and thank you for your service to Alaska.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joan O'Keefe', written in a cursive style.

Joan O'Keefe  
Executive Director

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Lynn Lovegreen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 1:59 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Library funds in budget

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear House Finance Committee,

I encourage you to add money for libraries to the operating budget. Libraries are having trouble with inflation and other financial issues like the rest of us, and need our support.

The House Education and Early Development Finance Subcommittee cut the governor's proposal by \$402,700 in the Alaska State Library budget. That would reduce the average Public Library Assistance (PLA) Grant from \$7000 per facility to about \$2300, decreasing library services to children and working families. Please restore the \$402,700 to the budget.

SLED databases are used throughout the state for homework help, health research, and other purposes. The Alaska Library Catalog offers books and materials to library patrons statewide. Please add \$635,000 to the budget to continue these programs for all Alaskans.

Thanks for your service to Alaska,

Cheryl Lovegreen  
Anchorage  
speaking as an individual

--  
author Lynn Lovegreen  
she/her/hers  
living on Dena'ina land, Alaska  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** kathleen shoop [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:01 PM  
**To:** Rep. Cliff Groh; House Finance; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Zack Fields; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Calvin Schrage; Rep. Jennie Armstrong; Rep. Maxine Dibert; Rep. Ashley Carrick; Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Alyse Galvin; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Cathy Tilton  
**Subject:** HB 65

Dear Alaksa Legislatures;

Alaska cannot financially afford HB 65 and I am strongly supporting a "NO" vote.

Please cut the school districts from 54 to 1. This would financially be a wise move.  
The University should be one not 3 different schools.

Please listen and work with reasonable solutions that are fair equally to all, such as a 4% income tax to pay for services.  
ISER states eliminating the PFD is the worst financial move that can be done and hurts more people like me!  
I can't even afford insurance on my house and my property taxes already hurt me!  
I need my full PFD to survive!

Kathleen Shoop  
Alaska Resident since 1992

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:05 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Cc:** Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Rep. Will Stapp  
**Subject:** Re: Restore funding for public libraries, SLED, and the Alaska Library Catalog

Ladies and Gentlemen--

I am writing to urge you to restore the \$402,700 dollars that was in the Governor's budget for the Public Library Assistance grant and to add \$635,000 for SLED & the Alaska Library Catalog. Small town libraries are heavily reliant on the Public Libraries Assistance grant to fund their budgets and all communities, but especially small ones, are heavily reliant on their public libraries for everything from job hunting to PFD filing assistance to tax preparation (to name just a few of the many duties of a public library). SLED and the Alaska Library Catalog provide vital information to a statewide audience. I encourage you to restore funding for all three items.

--Sincerely,  
Robyn Russell :-)  
[REDACTED]  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Sarah Scambler [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:12 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Support Local Libraries

To Whom It May Concern:

I work at the Irene Ingle Public Library in Wrangell, Alaska. I am writing to ask the committee to restore the \$402,700 in funding that was in the Governor's budget for the Alaska State Library. The director of the state library indicated in testimony that these funds would be taken out of the Public Library Assistance grant. Last year 86 public library facilities were awarded PLA grants of \$7000 per facility for a total of \$602,000. If the funding is not restored, it is estimated that grants could be reduced to ~\$2300. At the library here in Wrangell these funds are used to purchase new print material, and to fund our subscription to OCLC, which is the database we use to access interlibrary loans. Without these funds we would not be able to offer these services to our community. I know that many smaller libraries around the state depend on these funds for much of their operating costs throughout the year. Please consider restoring these funds.

Thank you for supporting local Alaskan libraries.

**Sarah Scambler**  
*Library Assistant*

Irene Ingle Public Library  
P.O. Box 679  
Wrangell, Alaska 99929  
Phone: 907-874-3535  
Fax: 907-874-2520



[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Gwenzetta Carter [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:14 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Stability of services for IDD and MH recipients

Hello,

My name is Gwenzetta Carter. I live in Soldotna-District AK-24, 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.

I fully support additional funds being added to the budget to provide funds to accomplish this task. If the network of community providers fail, 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 and for listening,

***Gwenzetta Carter***

Community Support Supervisor  
Hope Community Resources, Inc.  
47202 Princeton Avenue  
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

Phone: (907) 420-3600  
[REDACTED]

Fax: (907) 260-9435  
[REDACTED]  
[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.

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Helping Alaskans with Differing Abilities Experience Hope since 1968.

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Sarah Aho [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:16 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Child care grant program

Hello,

I'm a mom and also work in public health. Please add \$15 million to the budget to increase the child care grant for wages. I couldn't do my job without excellent child care for my toddler. I value the work child care workers do and something must be done to improve wages. The cost of child care is already prohibitive for many but employees deserve support from these grants. Thank you.

Sarah Aho  
Anchorage

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Sampaguita Calhoun [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:22 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Amendment proposition to support waiver services

Subject: Amendment proposition to support waiver services

Hello Alaska House Finance Committee Members,

My name is Sampaguita Calhoun and my representatives are Elvi Grey and Andy Josephson. I am writing in support of increasing the operating budget to support disability waiver services. My little brother experiences Down's Syndrome and over the years I have seen the huge benefit that his waiver services has made in his life.

By supporting him in employment, to helping learn how to manage his duties at home adding with being supported in both amazing and practical life goals, from being a remarkable athlete, artist and community member, we have given his life substance, purpose and joy as he has given those who encounter him just as much of the same!

As someone who has worked in the direct support field, and who now supervises direct service professionals, I know the work is purposeful and absolutely necessary but with the cost of living and inflation, the current wages that organizations are able to pay are very often, just not enough.

Please consider increasing the operating budget for these services. It will have huge positive impact for the entire community and even the world!

Thank you so much,

Sampaguita Calhoun  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Mary Corcoran [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:31 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Testimony HB39

To House Finance Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I urge you to restore \$17.5mil targeting deferred maintenance and [https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_\\_http://4.mil\\_\\_;!!LdQKC6s!Lv9YthWHQf9JwObPwGNnERHnHu6vvkjqpMcgw0i2BOxdf5tJixiSVAWiuigdtU33238xvOg2bKW\\_5-m9AAOCQ\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http://4.mil__;!!LdQKC6s!Lv9YthWHQf9JwObPwGNnERHnHu6vvkjqpMcgw0i2BOxdf5tJixiSVAWiuigdtU33238xvOg2bKW_5-m9AAOCQ$) for fixed cost increase to the University of Alaska budget. It's a given that infrastructure must be maintained to remain usable. It seems reckless and irresponsible to let these investments deteriorate. These are State of Alaska assets that house our highest level of education utilized by several members of my family including myself.

Please consider adding this to HB39. Not acting now passes along costs that will only increase.

Sincerely,  
Mary Corcoran  
Delta Junction, AK

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Margaret Villarma [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:37 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** PLA Grant

Our library depends on the PLA grant to provide books for our patrons. We are a small rural library, and our budget is not that large. The PLA grant also pays for our access to OCLC which is a borrowing service for libraries to borrow books that they do not have in their collection. Please continue to offer this service so that our patrons can be kept informed. Thank you for your time.

***Margaret Villarma***  
*Library Director*

*Irene Ingle Public Library*  
*Box 679*  
*Wrangell, AK 99929*

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Geoffrey & Camie Gillen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:44 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Childcare in Alaska

To Whom it May Concern,

We are writing today as concerned parents here in Petersburg Alaska. We are concerned about the future of childcare in our town. Currently our childcare facilities are always searching for employees, and struggling to keep them. Our teachers in early childhood education make less than a livable wage. They are making sometimes minimum wage to care and teach my children for more hours in a day than I am with them. They are held to extremely high standards of trainings and licensing regulations, yet not financially supported by the state. These teachers do INCREDIBLE work. Teaching babies how to start feeding themselves, teaching young toddlers how to be independent and get dressed to go outside. How to use utensils, eat at the table, learn how to draw, fine and gross motor skill practice. Our kids are learning and being socialized every day. Yet these teachers are making less than they can afford to live. We have to change this cycle. Childcare centers NEED quality employees. However the turnover rate is extremely high because of the low wages. We have to start supporting early childhood education.

Please support giving funding to childcare needs in Alaska.

Thank you!

[REDACTED]

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**From:** SaVina Haywood [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 3:13 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** In Support of Community-Based Services & Additional Medicaid Dollars

Hello,

My name is SaVina Haywood. I live in the Soldotna area and am represented by Senator Jesse Bjorkman and Representative Justin Ruffridge. I have dedicated my career to supporting those in our communities who are vulnerable and at risk. I support those who work under me with the same passion. I have a team of devoted staff who work hard each and every day. They give of themselves to better the lives of others. Through the pandemic and now with inflation, we've lost many of them, despite their love of the work, to other professions that can pay a living wage. We struggle to find and hire people to do the work, as we can't pay enough to attract potential applicants. I would ask that you prioritize funding for community-based services, acknowledging that without the workforce needed to provide critical services, those we support end up in hospitals and long-term care rather than in communities of choice- costing the state far more than is currently allocated. In addition to what the Governor has allotted, Please support additional Medicaid dollars added to the current budget for the purpose of assuring community-based services can continue. Thank you for your service.

*SaVina Haywood*

Regional Director  
Hope Community Resources, Inc.  
47202 Princeton Avenue  
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

Phone: (907) 420-3600

[REDACTED]  
Fax: (907) 260-9435  
[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.

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Jim Wilson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 3:15 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Unalaska in support of HB 65

Good Afternoon House Finance Committee Members;

I am grateful that HB 65 was moved from committee this morning and referred to the house finance committee. I respectfully request that you approve HB 65 and move it to the floor for full consideration. An increase to the BSA will be critical for Unalaska City School District to address rising costs with insurance, staffing recruitment and retention, energy costs and in supporting the Alaska Reads Act. Flat funding to the BSA has caused schools to reduce teaching and support positions in a time when we should be trying to figure out how to close the achievement gap and better support our very diverse student population.

Please know that I fully realize this is a highly discussed and debatable topic. I would encourage all legislators to research this topic and to please reach out to school leaders with questions. We are public employees and all should be committed to providing transparency in helping you to navigate the complexity that is public education. Today during the education committee hearing on HB 65, Representative McKay stated that the majority of people testifying were paid public employees and that this should be taken into consideration as we would benefit from this. I understand and appreciate what Representative McKay is saying, but also implore yourself and the committee to seek the truth. Yes, it was teachers, superintendents and public education employees testifying last night but that is because we fully understand the direness of the situation. We are on the frontlines doing the work. If you want to find out about fish and game issues, you ask the folks managing the fisheries. You ask the fisherman who are actively involved in the fishery. Testimony last night in opposition to a BSA increase was not from those who understand education the best, but rather from a small group of citizens who largely have had a few negative experiences with public education. I would never discount anyone's experience and am thankful that all testified, but the legislature's duty is to find the truth. The truth in most situations, regardless of who is getting paid, is with those who work in the field. My step dad is a logger in Montana; if I want to understand logging issues I ask him. Education is no different.

I am the Superintendent of Unalaska City School District. I have lived in Unalaska for 21 years and raised my own children here and will be retiring at the end of this school year. My son is finishing up his student teaching and has accepted a job in Unalaska for the next school year, against my own advice. This broke my heart. He was offered a job in Washington for more money, a better retirement system and a significantly lower cost of living. I am proud that he decided to come home to teach and give back to his community, but in many ways I question his sanity. This should not be the case. I should be celebrating my son and his first teaching job in Alaska; not questioning if it was the right decision. This is the direct result of inadequate funding and its many consequences. As Superintendent I have cut \$901,896 from a 9 million dollar anticipated budget to be able to come in on budget. The cost; 2 teachers, 1 paraprofessional, one maintenance worker and 1/2 of an office support employee. We are on budget, but what is the real cost? We are a high achieving school compared to most in the state of Alaska; and yet we can do better. We should be hiring interventionists and reading specialists to support the Alaska Reads Act, we should be offering more classes in CTE to support the workforce needed in Alaska and yes as public testimony was given by those opposing the BSA increase, we should be doing better with the students we have. I will be the first to admit this and I continually stress this to my leadership team and my teaching staff.

There were so many false narratives given during public testimony of the education committee that one cannot begin to combat all of them. I can only speak to my school and the schools I have visited. Unalaska has two buildings and one principal in each building; that is it. They serve as the supervisor, educational leader, activities director, special education director, ELL coordinator, testing coordinator, hiring team, substitute teacher, part time janitor, bus monitor, the list

goes on and on. They do this for schools that have 152 students and 225 students respectively. Our district office has one administrator; myself. I serve as the Superintendent, grant writer, human resources director and chief financial officer. Are there support staff, of course there are. We have 60 employees and 400 people in the buildings. I will not pretend to know how the "Prosperity for America" team got their statistics during their testimony, but please visit a school and you will find the reality very different from what has been presented as the truth by some. An additional narrative presented is that home school can take the place of public schools and at a cheaper rate. I do not disagree with this...for some people. For those who have the ability, both financially and in time, this is a great option and I hold no hard feelings against this. But, for most this is not a reality. I was raised by a single mom who dropped out of school at the age of 13 as she was pregnant with my sister. I live in a community that has 60% English as a second language. I live in a community where both parents work 50-60 hours per week to put food on the table for their kids. I have lived in Dillingham and traveled to Nome, Bethel, Barrow, Togiak, King Cove, Kotzebue and too many places in between to mention. Home school was not a reality for my family and is not for most families in Alaska. Public schools are needed to provide opportunities for all; special education, regular education, the working mom and dad and the family who is barely staying off the street. We take everyone and do our best with them to make a difference.

There is so much here to discuss, but I really just wanted to reach out to say thank you for considering HB 65 and I hope it continues to move forward. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or anything I can help with. Unalaska is an open book and I will share anything you want. Thank you again and I hope your day is amazing.

Best regards,  
Jim Wilson  
Superintendent  
Unalaska City School District

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Marina Jones [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 3:56 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Grant

\$15 million needs to be added the budget to increase the child care grant for wages. It would really help local certified daycares be able to pay their employees. We need daycares to be able to stay open here in Ketchikan Alaska. With the pay being so low it's hard for someone to keep up with expenses of living in Ketchikan.

Marina Jones

**From:** Sina S [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 4:17 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Request for AWAIC

My name is Sina Saleapaga, and I am a case manager here at the AWAIC shelter. With the length of my work history with this organization, I am beyond thankful that Anchorage has a domestic violence shelter for victims to utilize when domestic violence arises. We are the only shelter in Anchorage that serves anyone regardless of gender. Domestic violence does not discriminate who can become a victim. People from villages and the lower 48 are also reaching out to AWAIC for guidance and shelter/safe place. Our core values are advocacy, compassion, dignity, and collaboration.

Alaska is well known for its level of crime and most of these crimes are dv related. Some victims are more comfortable calling AWAIC for immediate assistance because they need to get to a safe place before they can get help figuring out their next step. Our goal is to assist victims in transition to overcome personal and economic barriers to become self-sufficient. Many of the Participants that are utilizing AWAIC's services are from zero to low-income families.

Since the pandemic, our ability to function was at risk due to the inflation. A chance of housing or providing emergency financial assistance for the safety of our Participants was very limited due to the high number of Participants and less funding. Our role is to advocate and refer them to resources, but it is currently a challenge due to employee turnover and vacant positions. We had employees that had the compassion, patience, and knowledge to perform their duties, but left because of low wages. The support that AWAIC provides case by case can be unlimited but need more funds to accomplish our plans. Our mission is to provide domestic violence safe shelter, intervention, and prevention, and with better staff retention, we can provide this to more people in the Anchorage and Alaska community.

I am writing to request financial support for our organization not only to improve employment opportunities but to provide financial support and safety to domestic violence victims.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I want to especially thank you for the past financial support you have offered AWAIC, which has allowed us to continue with our duties and responsibilities.

Sincerely,

**Sina Saleapaga | Case Manager**  
**AWAIC** | 100 W 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue | Anchorage, AK 99501  
**Main** (907) 279-9581 | [REDACTED] | **24-Hr Crisis Line** (907) 272-0100  
[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Kristin Garot [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 4:30 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** SB 88

Members of the House Finance committee,

When I was in my earlier days as a teacher in Alaska, we joked about being on the hunt for our Tier 1 sugar daddies who would bring their amazing retirement benefits with them. We drooled over those senior to us who could retire after 20 years with their health care benefits in tact. It seemed like such a big thing to have to work an additional 5 whole year as a Tier 2 employee before I could retire after 25 years of teaching and get my health care benefits instead of having to wait until I was 60.

Ah, the follies of our youth. As a teacher who is now really close to 25 years of teaching in Alaska, how things have changed. I see the impact of the Tier 3 system where a defined benefit system is not in place. Going into teaching without a defined benefit plan and with dwindling support from the overall state budget which means increasing class size and fewer resources to support students who are still reeling from the trauma of COVID school years - not so inviting. And keeping new teachers in the profession? Much harder.

Please help us in recruiting and retaining the best teachers and setting them up for a lifetime of success and a retirement that supports them. A defined benefit retirement plan for TRS and PERS helps us do that. Please support SB 88 that gets us back on that path.

Thank you for your support.  
Kristin Garot  
Juneau

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Katrina Letner [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 4:33 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** \$5 million for state Head Start Programs

Good afternoon House Finance Committee Members,  
I am writing to ask you to support the \$5 million increase to Alaska Head Start programs.

My dad only received an 8th grade education. I have watched him struggle all his life with believing he had the ability to impact his circumstances. His lack of education really impacted his self efficacy. He made a lot of mistakes but he did one thing right. He put me in Head Start.

Head Start gave me the assurance that school was a safe place and the confidence to explore and try new things, make mistakes, try again, master new skills. Head Start set me on a life long trajectory of success in school and life. In April I will be moving into the Executive Director position for a Head Start program in Anchorage. I have had a successful 17 year career there. I have seen and experienced first hand how being a part of Head Start improves lives for children, families, and staff.

Head Start services are unique and comprehensive and have a multigenerational impact. Head Start is high quality and that quality is guaranteed by intensive federal monitoring that doesn't cost the state anything.

Head Start programs in Alaska have not seen an increase in funding since 2010. Inflation has really impacted what programs can do with the funding provided. We need resources to recruit and retain essential workers who educate and care for Alaska's youngest, most vulnerable children who make it possible for parents to work.

Please give our Alaskan children the same opportunity I had as a child.

Thank you.

Katrina Ahlfield  
[REDACTED]  
Wasilla, Alaska 99654

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Sara Hoedel [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 4:33 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Prioritizing children in our budget

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

I am writing to urge you to keep Best Beginnings – Imagination Library and Pre-K Grants in this year's budget, and also to include funding for Parents As Teachers, Head Start, and Child Care Stabilization, and to increase the BSA.

I am completing my Master of Social Work degree and am a Project BLENDS Scholar at UAA. My focus is on the behavioral health needs of our youngest Alaskans. I am keenly aware of the struggles many families face in providing a rich early learning environment for their children. I have also worked in elementary school special education and am raising three children who are students in the Anchorage School District.

Through all these lenses, I see the importance of supporting quality early childhood education, both formally and at home. Research shows that early investment in children strongly correlates to greater lifelong success across several domains. However, many of our children in Alaska are coming to kindergarten still needing to learn the skills to thrive in school and reach their potential in the long term. I strongly believe in investing in our community and the families raising our future.

I urge you to prioritize children through the inclusion of the aforementioned budget items.

Sincerely,

Sara Hoedel  
[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Bronze Ickes [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 4:38 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Public Comments on Alaska Budget Priorities

Attention House Finance Committee:

As you consider Alaska's budget priorities.

Please know that as a long time Alaskan Living in Juneau, I fully support smaller dividends to increase necessary funding for critical priorities such as:

- Increase the BSA for students' education,
- Improve physical and mental health services, and support for un-sheltered Alaskans,
- Increase financial support for the ferry system,
- Take advantage of the available federal funding our delegation worked hard to obtain for Alaska, so it can be used for infrastructure that requires State match.

All of these things will make Alaska a better place to live, work and raise a family!

Thank you for accepting my comments, your courage and leadership will help Alaskans get through our challenging financial circumstances.

Bronze Ickes

[REDACTED]

Juneau, Alaska 99801

**From:** Emily Coate [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 4:48 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Support of Parents as Teachers

Good afternoon-

I'm writing to share with you my desire to see PAT funding expanded. It's been years since there was an increase to the program funding and yet, we're serving more families around the state than ever before. I currently manage the Juneau Parents as Teachers program and while I could go on and on about the benefits, I'll stick to the basics:

- Parents as Teachers is one of the few evidenced based curriculums that has been shown to reduce childhood abuse and neglect.
- We work closely with OCS to serve families who are at risk, or have already had their children removed and are working towards reunification
- Parenting a young child can be an extremely isolating time of life, especially in the post- pandemic years.
- There's more brain development that occur in the first 3 years of a child's life than the whole REST of their lives. This is why it is so critical to provide parents and families support to understand and support their child's brain development- because it's the foundation for the rest of that child's life.

I also thought it might be helpful for you to hear some quotes that parents submitted to us on what they felt has been most helpful about being enrolled in PAT:

- *Being able to discuss different areas of development with my parent educator, especially when we're in the thick of a phase with our baby or toddler. I also LOVE the activities that are provided for visits!*
- *Basically the understanding of how my child's mind works. Although I have some knowledge already. I've heard words for my parent educator that I haven't heard before that I'm able to process and understand more clearly*
- *A wonderful resource to help us better understand and connect with our child.*
- *Reflecting together as parents what we need and enjoy in parenting.*
- *Helping me be present and mindful in my interactions with my kids.*
- *Having another person to talk to, she lets me know most of what I'm going through is "normal". She helps me put my mind at ease.*
- *It all has been so helpful! To name a few Helping us set time aside for the visits, allowing us to learn new info, become the best parents we can be and help know where our little one is developmentally and the best ways to engage with her. Having a safe person to talk with and ask questions. We also love the activities.*
- *Having someone to brainstorm with about challenges we're having with parenting, particularly communication with our 2 year old*

From a program standpoint, we consistently have a waitlist of families wanting to get into the program and the need has grown along with our reputation. We regularly receive referrals from the OB department at the hospital, the area pediatricians, parents self-referring, OCS and other partner agencies, to name a few.

Please consider expanding funding so we can continue to support the next generations of Alaskans and let every parent who needs support access it.

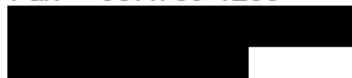
Thank you-

Emily Coate Thompson, IMH-E®

Infant Mental Health Specialist  
Parents As Teachers Coordinator  
AEYC Southeast Alaska

Main 907.789-1235 ext 103

Fax 907.789-1238



**sea**aeyc Southeast Alaska Association for  
the Education of Young Children



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Rachel Boudreau [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 4:57 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Testimony-Budget Amendment for Head Start Funding

To the House Finance Committee,

I urge all of you to add an amendment to the budget to increase Head Start funding by \$5 million. Reasons for this include:

- Head Start has not had a state increase since 2010 even as inflation has chipped away at the value of those dollars
- Head Start's comprehensive services are unique and support parents as well as children
- Head Start is high quality and that quality is guaranteed by intensive federal monitoring that doesn't cost the state of Alaska anything
- Head Start needs resources to recruit and retain essential workers who educate & care for Alaska's youngest children & make it possible for parents to work

When I moved to Alaska nearly 11 years, my first job here was at Kids' Corps, Inc. Head Start in Anchorage. Through my time at Head Start I not only saw the difference the agency makes in the lives of children and families, but I also found my own community through colleagues. I also saw the mission of Head Start I went on for further education to be able to become a mental health consultant to work with Head Starts across the state. In addition I have the privilege of serving on the board of directors for KCI Head Start.

Once again I encourage you to support a \$5 million increase to Head Start.

Best,  
Rachel Boudreau, LMSW  
KCI Board of Directors  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Sab ariss [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 4:58 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Testimony for childcare

To Whom it May Concern,

As the parent of a post covid child I have been made abundantly aware of needed aid and support for child care givers and facilities. The cost of care has skyrocketed post covid and like many other industries appropriately paid and funded help and facilities are dwindling. While the increased cost that has come with care and directly related the amount of children needing care and spots available to provide such care become scarce due to lack of funds. I think it is time to give back to the people that are caring over our greatest asset as a country which is that of our future.

Thank you,  
Sabrina Nowicki

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Sharayah Talarovich [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 5:12 PM  
**To:** House Finance; LIO Anchorage  
**Subject:** Advocacy statement

Hello, my name is Sharayah Talarovich. I live in Anchorage and am represented by Senator Matt Claman and Representative Jennie Armstrong. I currently work as the Chief Workforce & Risk Officer with Hope Community Resources (Hope). Hope's mission is to provide services and supports, requested and designed by individuals and families who experience disabilities, resulting in choice, control, family preservation, and community inclusion. Throughout my 11-year HR career at Hope, we have always faced staffing challenges. Workforce shortage is not new to our industry, as direct support professionals and caregivers have historically been difficult to recruit and retain across the US. Since the pandemic, our already thin staffing resources have gone to a critical level to which, if no change occurs, will result in the closure of our business and critical care and services going unmet in the community. Based on 10 years of Hope-specific historical workforce trending data, we will have no remaining employees to provide critical services to our community by 2030. Our financial projections indicate a two- year picture until our financial situation may force us to close our doors. Hope serves 600 individuals with disabilities in our state. If Hope is forced to close due to a lack of staffing and financial resources, those we support will be placed in hospitals and long term care, rather than in communities of choice. These placements will cost the State of Alaska far more than what is currently allocated for home and community-based waiver services.

I understand that in our rapidly changing local and global environments, organizations across industries are required to innovate and think differently. We are exploring new ways of providing health benefits to employees outside of a group plan model, reviewing infrastructure, considering how we can engage emerging technologies to develop business efficiencies and increase capacities, etc. However, we need your help. My ask is that you correct and adjust the Medicaid rates of reimbursement to providers so we have a fighting chance to attract and retain critical direct support workforce. The wages we can offer are well below competitive wages provided in other industries and we simply cannot compete. In addition to what the Governor has allotted, please support additional Medicaid dollars to the current budget for the purpose of assuring a sustainable system for the State as well as those with disabilities and their families.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. Thank you for listening, and thank you for your service to our communities in Alaska.

Sharayah  
[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.

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Deedie Sorensen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 5:13 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** HB65 BSA Increase to \$1000

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

March 22, 2023

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

My name is Deedie Sorensen. I am the current president of the Juneau Board of Education. I am testifying in Support of HB65 to raise the BSA.

I have a very lengthy relationship with the Juneau School District as I started teaching in Juneau in 1981. I mention this because I watched from the classroom as instructional material budgets and curricular supports diminished over the last 20 years. Because I started teaching at a time when Alaskan schools were well resourced, I had the benefit of outstanding professional development opportunities. Students had the benefit of well qualified staff and innovative educational programs from elementary through high school. As instructional opportunities as resources declined, I found it necessary to fund raise for specific materials that I knew would be of significant benefit to beginning readers. I also had a robust understanding of how best to support students who were struggling for a wide variety of reasons in their successful acquisition of reading skills. Fact: there is no “one way” to teach all children to read. My husband was a successful professional, so I had the further ability to simply purchase the instructional materials that I needed as budgets continued to erode. While the ability of a teacher to subsidize instructional materials in a classroom is the antithesis of educational equity, for me there was the moral and ethical question, “Should my students be subjected to a substandard educational experience that I would not accept for my own children.”

Up until a few years before I retired, all elementary schools had full time reading specialists, this position required a Master’s degree in reading. This skilled reading teacher worked with small groups of struggling readers. These positions were cut before 2010. Now, the district uses grant funds to cobble together “reading coaches” that are largely tasked with data keeping and “training” classroom teachers with the current “reading method du jour” which has now been defined by the legislature. There will be multiple positions necessary to submit data, data, data to the state. The methodology in this act will not work for every student. No



one methodology does. No matter the methodology, 15-25% of students will not be successful. A far better use of resources would be certified reading teachers who could assess and intervene with multiple reading strategies based on individual student needs. Some struggling readers have unique visual issues, learning modality issues, anxiety issues, language issues. It takes a teacher with more than a class in phonics to understand and help these students.

All students should have highly skilled teachers with access to effective instructional materials. Recruiting and retaining highly qualified and experienced teachers costs money. Excellent professional development independent of industrialized textbook adoption incentives costs money. Effective instructional materials for students with multiple educational needs costs money. Having specialized reading staff that are actually tasked with teaching children, not data collection, costs money. Money for all these things has been slowly draining away for almost twenty years. It is not the responsibility of individual teachers to cover the state's economic dereliction. I would encourage you to calculate what the BSA would be today if schools were funded equal to their funding in 2000.

I also want to address the myth of bloated administration. Juneau has always had a rather lean administrative staff. For years we have prioritized classrooms and students as we dealt with the annual cuts do to underfunding. We are now at a place where we do not have sufficient district level operational staff. We have building administrators who are simultaneously the principals of multiple schools/programs. Our superintendent, in addition to that role, has also filled a director position this year because we could not find a qualified candidate. Every central office administrative position has two or three "extra duties" that used to be managed by non-certificated managerial staff. Asking anyone to fulfill the job requirements for multiple fulltime positions in addition to the job they were hired to do makes it very difficult to retain qualified employees. It is a recipe for having no administrative staff to keep the district financially, administratively and legally accountable to the state, the federal government, the city and the community. All of the unfunded mandates around accountability, the collection, aggregation and submission of data on dozens of programs to dozens of agencies are all administrative tasks and require staff at a district level to accomplish.

A significant upward adjustment in the BSA of at least \$1000 is necessary. Inflationary adjustments should also be a priority. We used federal pandemic funds to support student programs and reduce cuts for the last few years. Those monies are gone and there is nothing left to cut except educational programs and opportunities. For parents and families, it will be another reason to move to a state that values education and the future. Failure to adequately fund education encourage out migration from Alaska. Large PFD's are not keeping energetic forward looking people here because they don't translate into broad opportunities for their careers, earning potential or their family's best interests.

Sincerely,

Deedie Sorensen



Juneau, Alaska 99801

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Daissy Sime Mezquita [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:35 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** How important ia head start to me

It is very important for my child to have a head start in his life to learn, to meet new friend, to have a school rutine. I love head start and it helps me with that while my child is in school learning im able to work for My family to feed my kids and pay bills.

Daissy R. Sime Mezquita

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Karri Montero [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:17 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** We need a \$15 Million Increase in Childcare workers Wages

Hello My name is Karri Montero, I'm a single mom to a 1 year old child and a former childcare worker.

I had plans to keep my daughter in childcare prior to her birth, unfortunately plans changed as her father passed from covid and she was also born premature.

I was scared of my daughter getting severely ill due to her prematurity so we decided to wait till she was 1 years old.

I can't go back into childcare right now, unfortunately and it kills me because I have a passionate for childcare. It's a rewarding positions, and loved every minute of it.

I never cared about the wages though, I still was severely low income while working at a daycare while pregnant and prior to my pregnancy. I was barely getting by, and still am but I had a partner to help.

Now I don't, and I'm out of luck because of it. I know my town, Ketchikan is desperate for childcare workers, and unfortunately there is only three big centers, two that are privately owned.

They can't afford to give workers insurance or benefits or a higher raise they need to live. Which is why we are dealing with a shortage.

Even with certified childcare workers. It's rough on me too, because while working in a daycare in exposed to many illnesses, possible spreadable diseases and blood borne pathogens.

Meaning if a child who has a spreadable disease by a bodily fluid. I don't have even protection for that if I make a \$1 about the Medicaid income.

In Juneau at Auke Bay Learning Center, the highest a childcare worker can make an hour is \$20.70. Which is upon completion of a Child Development Associate, which many centers try to pay for through THREAD Alaska.

I love working with Toddlers, they are so fun! But unfortunately I can't do it because I can't afford it. So many parents are on mile high waitlists because of the turnover in childcare due to the lack of pay and benefits. Which I affects employment in Ketchikan.

We are also forced to pay childcare costs out of pockets for those who can barely afford it. Childcare centers are raising rates because they are lacking workers because of the inability to pay workers a livable wage.

This will also create a bigger struggle among families. I know most jobs in Ketchikan that's are sustainable provide at-least \$18 an hour. If we are able to raise the wages of childcare workers many job seeking individuals will be more interested in working in childcare.

0-5 is a important learning milestone, and childcare workers work very hard to help them achieve learning milestones, while helping other children. It's not an easy job by no means.

Please save our system by increasing the wages, and get the 15 million grant. Ketchikan is relying on this money. Childcare is so scare here and if we can't get enough workers we will be creating more poverty among families who can't work due to not having childcare.

Thank you

Karri Montero

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Alysha Lee [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 10:43 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** House Finance Committee Considering \$15M for Childca

To whom it may concern,

Hello, my name is Alysha Lee, and I am a single mother of two whose children are currently enrolled in daycare. Childcare cost for both my children is \$2620 a month (\$1120 a month for my 3 year old and \$1500 for my 13 month old after childcare assistance pass 1 helps me My total payment out of pocket is \$610. I currently owe \$1002 in childcare, and at the start of April, an additional \$610 will be added. I currently work in Alaska, USA my take home . I had to transfer departments six months into work to a call center position due to not being able to get off early enough to pick my children up from school. I currently work nights, get off at 3 a.m., and take my children to daycare in the morning. I keep my children in daycare during the day because it is definitely helping them with their learning and building social skills and experiences. I had my son, and 4 to 5 months later, the pandemic started. So he did not start daycare till he was 2 years old, and the improvement I've seen in him has been so great. He used to be really shy and timid, but now he is very outgoing. Adding the 15 million to the budget guarantees that those experiences, learning, and social skills continue to grow while I am still able to work and provide for my family. Within the last 2 years, I've had to leave 2/3 of my jobs due to not having childcare. My current job is working with me due to childcare, but if they didn't grant me my transfer, then I would have had to quit and apply for an ATaP, which is a wonderful resource, but with two kids, childcare, groceries, car payments, electricity, car insurance, and toiletries, \$900 was not getting me very far. As much help as Atap was for my family, it was not enough. I am pleading with you: please grant the budget increase. I am not the only parent struggling to make it day by day.

Thank you so much for your time, and may I leave you with one last statement? Invest in our children, for they are our future. God bless.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Evan Rodriguez [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 9:49 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Child Care Grant

Hello, my name is Evan, I'm a friend of Rebecca Butikofer's. 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 would not be able to 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,  
Evan L. Rodríguez

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Natasha Lee [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 9:42 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY24 State Operating Budget

My name is Natasha Lee and I'm a commercial insurance agent and work full time. Please add the \$15m to the budget for the childcare grant. It can greatly help the daycares. My sons daycare has had to close multiple times, has low staff, trouble keeping staff. Daycares have been hit hard and we need to help educate and properly train the new teachers and staff. Help bring in educational materials, supplies, and toys. Thank you for taking my testimony into consideration.

Natashia Lee



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Kerry Clark [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 9:38 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY State operating budget: childcare support

Hello

I am a first time foster parent, living in Anchorage. I am writing to ask that the house finance committee please consider improving subsidies for childcare.

Thank you for your support of the proposed FY24 operating budget which includes early childhood resources and services such as infant learning, early literacy, Pre K, and other family supports.

Your support will soften the impact of expiring federal relief funding and ensure child care can continue to keep its doors open serving Alaska's families and young children.

Childcare providers deserve a living wage. The children in their care deserve care providers who are well funded to provide excellent care. Our economy needs workers, and when childcare is too expensive or too poorly funded to be healthy for kids; parents have to stay home with kids.

Please support children and families,

Kerry Clark  
[REDACTED]  
Anchorage, AK 99518  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** L F [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 8:58 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** HB65

Dear Representatives of the House Finance Committee;

My name is Linda File. I have lived in Fairbanks for 53 years; attended high school here and went on to receive a degree from the University of Alaska. I raised three children, all Alaskans, to adulthood and am testifying on behalf of my grown children and my pre-school granddaughter who will start Kindergarten in 2024, also here in Alaska.

Alaska's Constitution has a strong, definitive statement on the priority we as Alaskans place on a viable system of public education:

**"The legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State...** Schools so established shall be free from sectarian control."

Does the Legislature, do you as a legislator, sworn to uphold Alaska's Constitution and its laws, hold to your constitutional obligation (not your personal opinion) to carry out your obligation to the State system of public schools?

I recall that **last fall the voters of Alaska upheld their commitment to our constitution**, voting that it is sufficient, as written, for the needs of Alaska. We did not want a constitutional convention. The statement on public school holds.

The SBA is currently too low to maintain this system. The State is the entity that funds our public schools. This is your work, this is what those who testify here today are telling you is needed. This is a clarion call.

**Please adopt HB 165 as written.** Amendments with significantly lower SBA figures, numbers that do not represent a reasonable increase (and not including recent inflation considerations) are a debasement of the constitutional commitment to public schools. They are, in fact, a travesty and an insult to the State's mandate. Your constituents and all Alaskans, especially its children, deserve better treatment. Our schools are the center of our communities. The buildings represent Alaska's investment in our future. The children inside each building represent a living commitment to Alaska's future.

Alaskans deserve responsible and reasoned discussion on this very vital aspect of the State's responsibility. Rigidity and ideological silliness will get us nowhere.

Thank you for your dedication to professionalism and decorum.

Linda File  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
Alaska resident since 1965, voter since 1973

[REDACTED]

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**From:** James Seidman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 8:51 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Childcare Grant Program testimony

To whom it may concern on the Alaskan House Finance Committee,

My name is James Seidman, and I'm a resident of Juneau, Alaska, where I live with my wife and two children (Ida and Wally, ages 7 and 5, respectively). I'm writing to urge you to approve the proposed \$15 million addition to the child care grant program's budget to support wages for Alaskan childcare (in-home and centers).

In Juneau, we've had multiple daycare facilities close and chronic shortfalls in both center and in-home childcare. Even with a vibrant community of families in downtown Juneau, for example, my son's preschool is barely hanging on. The lack of available childcare, significantly caused by low wages and high regulatory compliance costs, forced my wife out of the professional workforce in 2021 (she had been a lawyer) and has radically disrupted our lives, as well as the lives of many young families around us.

The Alaskan childcare system is on the edge, and no childcare organizations are more fragile right now than the in-home providers and centers that help children too young for public kindergarten and their families. Those providers and centers, and the families that depend on them, need your help. Please consider adding the proposed \$15M to the grant program. The young families of Alaska will not forget it if you do.

Thank you very much, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

James Seidman  
[REDACTED]  
Juneau, AK 99801  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Jenni [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 8:30 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Increase investment for child care

Dear Finance Committee,

Thank you for your work on the state operating budget. Thank you for supporting the proposed support for early childhood. Please consider making an increased investment for child care. The lack of high quality child care has been an issue for my family before/after the pandemic. In fact, I left the workforce for three years. Many of our friends are struggling with the same issue. We are all piecing child care together on a regular basis. This stress is hard on families - and more importantly our children. By investing in child care, Alaska gains a more stable (less stressed) workforce and more children ready for school. Thank you again for all you do and for working to prioritize our young children.

Jenni Pollard

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Maria Guadalupe Mata Rukovishnikoff [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 8:09 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Testimony

Hi. My name is Maria G. Mata Rukovishnikoff. I am a lead teacher at Karousel Kidz Learning Center in Wasilla, Ak. Please add \$15 million to the budget to increase the child care grant for wages, this would greatly help our hard working teachers all around the state that are making a difference in our children's lives. The child care system is going to crumble if something is not done to improve wages this year for our teachers that are here to help out and make a difference for our future generation children. Thank you for reading my testimony.

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Brandi Nelson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 8:03 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Child Care budget increase

Good evening to you, my name is Brandi Nelson. I am currently employed at Alphabet Kids Daycare Center. I am asking for \$15 Million to be added to the budget to increase the child care grant. We are seeing a great decline in workers for the child care industry. I believe if we do not see an increase to the budget for child care, the child care industry will collapse.

Thank you for your time

Sincerely Brandi Nelson

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Celia Cortez [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 8:02 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** FY24

As a provider and owner of child care, I must thank you for the help you gave us, to keep the doors open, otherwise many of us would not have been able to open our doors. Thank you so much for helping us financially.

Martha Reyes.

Cristo Viene  
(Child Care)  
[REDACTED]

**From:** William Browner [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 7:56 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** House finance committee

I have worked with people with intellectual disabilities for decades and am very concerned about the stability of the community providers. It is very important to me that Alaskans with disabilities have an adequate work force to support them. I support bridge funding to support the community-based system through another year. We cannot afford to fail individuals who are dependent upon state and federal support. Please help make funding a reality.

Sincerely,

Dr. William S. Browner

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.

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Helping Alaskans with Differing Abilities Experience Hope since 1968.



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Rebecca Butikofer [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 7:47 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Child care funding

Hi, my name is Rebecca Butikofer. I 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 am very passionate about my job, but without wage increases I will have to find employment elsewhere. My coworkers and I simply cannot afford to live without this pay increase. The daycare system is falling apart and it will not get better unless we can afford to live.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Maria [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 7:38 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB39 & HB 41 GCDSE DD Act

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.

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]

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**From:** Hermon Morgan [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 3:20 PM  
**To:** House Finance

Give full PFD to Alaska . Big boost to economy and pull many out of poverty level. Money will kickstart AKs economy.  
20 thousand to family. Buy cars, boats motor, snowmachine , groceries etc. Money would circulate in AK

36 % of Alaskans on welfare ??  
Becoming a Communist State with government workers

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Kayla McMaster [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 7:03 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Support Parents as Teachers

Dear Finance Committee Members,

I am writing to show my support for Parents as Teachers. They have been very instrumental in the way I am raising my children. I enrolled in Parents as Teachers in the spring of 2021 after I had my first child and my husband had just left for a year long deployment to the Middle East. My home visits were very important as they provided me a supportive way to vent about the hardships of parenthood, gain child development knowledge as to why my child was acting or responding a certain way, and most of all, gave me tools and suggestions on how to remedy these problems. They continue to provide support with weekly and monthly activities for my toddler to socialize and engage with other children and for me to connect with other parents.

Parents as Teachers in Juneau has had a historic waitlist for their program, and most parents have to wait until another family moves or ages out of the program. I feel that it would be vastly beneficial to the parents of Alaska to increase the budget for AEYC's Parents as Teachers program to help keep up with the cost of inflation to keep the program running, but also to be able to provide access to more families in our community and across the state of Alaska.

I would ask that action is taken during this legislative session to help provide increased access to any parent in need of support while raising young children.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kayla McMaster

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Alina Tykalsky [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 6:12 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Testify

Hi my name is Alina Tykalsky and I am CCA at Karousel Kidz Learning Center in Wasilla. Please add \$15 million to the budget to increase the child care grant for wages, this would greatly help our hard working teachers all around the state that are making a difference in our children's lives. The child care system is going to crumble if something is not done to improve wages this year for our teachers that are here to help out and make a difference for our future generation children. Thank you for reading my testimony.

Alina Tykalsky

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Chey Katchatag [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 6:11 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Karousel Daycare

Hello my name is Cheyenne Katchatag I work at Karousel daycare I'm all over the place watching all different kinds of age groups and I'm a baby aide at the end of the day. Add 15 million to the budget to increase care grant for wages. I'm sure the child care will crumble if something eventually not done to improve wages this year. Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Suzi P [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 6:03 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** HB41/HB39 AWAIC for CDVSA budget

Dear House Finance Committee members,

My name is Suzi Pearson and I am the Executive Director of Abused Women's Aid In Crisis or AWAIC in Anchorage. AWAIC is the only emergency domestic violence shelter in Anchorage with 67 beds, a 24-hour crisis line, transitional housing programs, and nonresidential support. AWAIC's funding comes from multiple sources however the largest funder for our shelter program is CDVSA.

The crimes of domestic violence and sexual assault is a scourge on our state. Last year AWAIC served 519 adults and children. With four months to go in this fiscal year we have already served 587. Additionally, we provided support via our crisis and support line to 6,425 last year and this year we have already responded to 8,582 calls. The demand for our services is increasing. Recruitment and retention have been extremely challenging for the past two years. We currently have nine vacant positions in shelter. We have been filling them with on call staff and overtime which has put stress on our team and is causing burnout.

Shelter programs funded by CDVSA have received flat funding for the last five years. There has been no increase to address the rising costs of utilities and staffing for our programs. One of the main issues has been because our wages do not compete with other companies and organizations who can pay an equal or higher amount without the stress of working in a crisis shelter. To adjust to market rates, AWAIC needs an additional \$150,000 to attract qualified candidates to fill the front-line positions of those working with a very vulnerable population.

In the state's budget there is a \$3 million one-time increment of general funds and \$3.5 million federal appropriation through Senator Murkowski. Without these one-time increments, services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault would be \$6.5 million short from previous year's funding. AWAIC supports this funding. One, AWAIC is requesting that the one-time general funds be put in the base for CDVSA to create a sustainable income source. Second, we are asking for additional funds to address the flat funding and that the state prepare to fill the hole when there is no longer an appropriation from the federal government to cover the gap to assist domestic violence and sexual assault programs throughout the state.

Thank you so much for your consideration of AWAIC's request.

Sincerely,

**Suzi Pearson**  
**Executive Director**

**Abused Women's Aid In Crisis, Inc.**

907-743-5726 (office)

907-272-0100 (crisis)

100 W 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Anchorage, AK 99501



**Dena'inaq ełnen'aq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu. (Dena'ina)**

*I live and work on Dena'ina land. (English)*



[REDACTED]

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**From:** Diana Chambers [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 5:35 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** PAT Program funding

Hi,

My name is Diana Harl; I have an 11 month old daughter Ruth. We love the PAT program and staff. I urge you to act this session and increase the funding for this vital program! This funding increase is needed to help keep up with inflation and the cost of running the program.

There are so many challenges facing us new parents today. In Juneau we have such difficulty finding supplies, getting childcare, etc, and PAT is one resource we have to get the knowledge and support we need to nurture and care for our babies.

My PAT teacher, Mary, has been an amazing help to my family. She has helped me find solutions to my baby's sleep problems, given me resources for parenting, helped me identify her milestones, and shown me fun ways to play with and teach and engage my child. I love this program and I want even more families to be able to benefit from this program. Please increase funding for this program so even more parents and children can have access to this incredible resource.

-Diana Harl.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Cassidy Drake [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 5:25 PM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** Written Testimony

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed budget cuts to the Alaska State Library. Big Lake Public Library depends on the Public Library Assistant Grant to supplement our material budget each year. Without the full \$7,000 we would not be able to provide access to new materials that our patrons have come to know and love. Please do not make the proposed \$402,700 cut, public libraries around the state depend on those funds.

In addition I am writing to let you know I support the \$635,000 in additional funding for the SLED databases and the Alaska Library Catalog. These services connect Big Lake and other small libraries to the rest of the state, and the world as a whole. Without these services Big Lake becomes a small island. Our patrons need access to this service.

Thank you for listening,  
Cassidy Drake  
Big Lake Public Library Director

Cassidy Drake

Big Lake Librarian  
Big Lake Library

[REDACTED]  
Monday-Thursday 8:30 am to 6:30 pm

Currently reading *Hell Bent* by Leigh Bardugo

3/8/2023-

Dear Anchorage Finance committee Members.

Hello my name is Marlenis Perez De La Cruz  
Thanks to this KCI Program, I am very  
grateful because it has helped me a lot  
in my daughter's education, so much so  
that she is far ahead, it has also  
helped me with the opportunity to  
work while she is school it has  
helped me so much emotionally when  
I need it, it has also helped me  
with things that I needed, both  
in diapers and when you put  
things in.

Marlenis Pérez



  
Anchorage  
Alaska 99501.

March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Dear Anchorage Finance Committee,

My children are enrolled at the Kids Corps Head Start program in Anchorage. We have been using this program for the last 9 years and has made a tremendous help to my children and I. Being a single teenage mother alone was not easy but they have been here for us every step of the way. Head Start is a high quality program that supports Alaska's families and prepares children for kindergarten. PLEASE SUPPORT FULL FUNDING LEVELS FOR HEADS TART.

With best regards,

[REDACTED]  
Anchorage, AK 99502

Emelina Nicole Haring-Furment



3.8.2023

March 8, 2023

Dear Anchorage, Finance Committee Members,

My child was enrolled in the Kid's Corps Head Start program in Anchorage. Participation in Head Start has made a positive difference for my child and my family.

KCI Head Start helped me get quality childcare during a difficult time in my life. I was homeless and going through a divorce. My child Fabian, who is now 9 years old, did not know his letters or numbers at 4 years old. KCI helped him be prepared for kindergarten. They helped me as a single father connect with my community and other parents & families facing hardships like my own. Now I work for KCI for 4 years.

Head Start is a high quality program that supports families and prepares children for kindergarten. Please support full funding levels for Head Start.

Freddy D. Camarena, Jr.

*Freddy D. Camarena, Jr.*

[REDACTED]  
Anchorage, AK 99507.

March 8, 2023

Dear Anchorage Finance Committee Members,

My child is enrolled in the Kids' Corps Head Start Program in Anchorage.

Participation in Head Start has made a positive difference for my child and my family.

Please support full funding levels for Head Start.

Rasha AbdulaZiz

Rasha

[REDACTED]

Anchorage, AK 99503

March 8, 2023

Dear Anchorage Finance Committee members.

My children are enrolled in the Kids Corps Head

Start program in Anchorage. participation in

Head Start has made a positive difference for my

child and family, my son Israel was

non-verbal he also was 1 year behind now

My son is speaking fluent English it is amazing

What the teachers and staff do for the education

of my children. please consider them for funding

Our kids deserve a bright future

Tamara Duroso

Tamara Duroso

Anchorage Alaska