

**MINUTES**  
**SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**April 13, 2004**  
**6:06 PM**

**TAPES**

SFC-04 # 77, Side A  
SFC 04 # 77, Side B  
SFC-04 # 78, Side A

**CALL TO ORDER**

Co-Chair Lyda Green convened the meeting at approximately 6:06 PM.

**PRESENT**

Senator Lyda Green, Co-Chair  
Senator Gary Wilken, Co-Chair  
Senator Con Bunde  
Senator Fred Dyson  
Senator Lyman Hoffman  
Senator Donny Olson  
Senator Ben Stevens

**Also Attending:** Testifiers are listed in the order they testified in the body of the minutes.

**SUMMARY INFORMATION**

HB 375-APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUNDS  
HB 377-APPROP:MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

The Committee heard public testimony from the Legislative Information Offices in Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue, Fairbanks, Anchorage, Mat-Su and in person in Juneau. The bills were held in Committee.

#HB375  
#HB377

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 375(FIN) am  
"An Act making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government, for certain programs,

and to capitalize funds; and providing for an effective date."

And

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 377(FIN)

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and capital expenses of the state's integrated comprehensive mental health program; and providing for an effective date."

NORMA AYAGALRIA, Tundra Women's Coalition, testified via teleconference from Bethel requesting additional funding for the Tundra Women's Coalition (TWC) program.

WINIFRED KELLY, Tundra Women's Coalition, testified via teleconference from Bethel to thank the Department of Public Safety budget subcommittee for restoring some of the funds removed by the House of Representatives for the victims' services fund. She requested an additional \$600,000 for this program.

BRYAN TIMBERS, Retired Attorney, testified via teleconference from Nome to request restoration of \$125,000 grant for the Alaska Legal Services Corporation. He spoke of the difficulties that could befall those unable to pay for defense counsel in civil matters. He noted that indigent defendants are not provided legal services in civil matters.

BEN ESCH testified via teleconference from Nome in support of funding for the Alaska Legal Services Corporation, as it provides services for those unable to afford legal counsel. He remarked that the request is not for increased funding, but rather to maintain the same level of funds.

LOTTIE JONES testified via teleconference from Kotzebue that she has worked for the Alaska Legal Services Corporation for many years. She stated that the closure of many offices of this Corporation require many residents to request assistance from Anchorage. She expressed that indigent people charged in criminal matters have the right to receive counsel from the Public Defenders Agency and the Office of Public Advocacy; however if involved in civil matters, they rely on the Alaska Legal Services Corporation.

CHERYL EDENSHAW, Alaska Technical Center, testified via teleconference from Kotzebue in favor of funding for the technical center. She told of the employment opportunities in the region and the need for a trained workforce to fill those positions. She also spoke to the high unemployment rate. She stated that to meet labor

market demands, the community must have education available for its workforce.

SUZANNE EDELMAN testified via teleconference from Bethel, about the low cost of birth control medication compared to that of unplanned pregnancy and parenthood. She also spoke to the risks of sexually transmitted diseases and the need for more reproductive health services. She stated that currently, a teenager must wait two months for services to become available. She requested the Committee fully fund public health nursing programs for FY 05.

ZACK FANSLER, Tundra Women's Coalition, testified via teleconference from Bethel, to thank the Department of Public Safety subcommittee for restoration of partial funding for services; however he requested the remaining \$600,000. He detailed the transportation and other services provided by the TWC, stressing the program offers the primary means of safety for victims of domestic violence for the entire region.

DARLENE MILLIGROCK, single parent with five children, testified via teleconference from Nome about the assistance she received from the Alaska Legal Services Corporation while going through her divorce, and again in handling a custody "battle". She requested the local office remain open.

GIA HANNA, Deputy Director, Kotzebue Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), testified via teleconference from Kotzebue about the continuing need to fund the Alaska Legal Services Corporation in the region. She relayed that the Alaska Legal Services Corporation has alleviated the demand for services on the Native corporations. She stated that the local office has allowed residents to receive services locally rather than from Nome or Fairbanks.

AGGIE LEE testified via teleconference from Kotzebue in support of the Alaska Legal Services Corporation. She appreciated that staff travels to villages to provide legal assistance to rural residents.

JENNIFER MEYER, emergency department nurse, and sexual assault nurse examiner with the sexual assault response team, testified via teleconference from Bethel to request full funding for the victims' services programs. She stated that she spends a significant amount of time working with victims of domestic violence. She reported that the team has been seeing more patients in the current year, and therefore the loss of funds would greatly affect their efforts.

SHARI NETH, 20-year resident of Bethel, testified via teleconference from Bethel about her concerns of funding reductions

to the public health nursing program. She stated that the region has the highest rates of sexually transmitted disease in the nation. She outlined services she and her foster children receive from the program, as well as friends who also depend on this care. She warned that costs would be higher if needs were not addressed presently.

WILLIAM UPDEGROVE, Bethel Aids Task Force, testified via teleconference from Bethel, to reiterated the importance of public health nursing care. He doubted that telemedicine could provide an adequate level of service to treat and prevent AIDS and other health problems. He also warned that the costs would significantly increase in the future, outweighing any savings garnered this year.

LORETTA KIUNYA, Tanana Women's Coalition, testified via teleconference from Bethel, to request that funding not be reduced for public health nursing.

ELFRIDA NORD, Former Chief, Section of Nursing, retired, and representing the Alaska Nursing Association, testified in Juneau as follows.

AT a minimum I urge you to add back the \$770,000 for Public Health Nursing that the House Finance Committee approved. A look at history will tell you that transitioning of clients has been occurring and PHN basically serve those that are not going to transition for number of reasons, largely, age, lack of funds and confidentiality. Public Health Nurses provide very different services than the private sector and the Health Corporations. Public Health services are not synonymous with individual medical services. It is the client, in this case many of the villagers who will not get needed services.

PHNs have long advocated that their clients have a medical home and are complementary, not in competition with the private sector or Health Corporations.

The loss of Public Health Nurse aides may result in loss of programs like infant car seat program and decreased outreach to Medicaid eligible children, as well as forcing the highly skilled PHN to do a lot of tasks that someone with less skills could do. Generalist PHN positions were saved from cuts because they can provide reduced public health services whereas the aides cannot provide the services that protect the public's health such as communicable disease control. This restructuring plan is not being done because it is a reasonable thing to do, it is an appearance of creating the

least amount of disruption of services to the public. It is being driven by potential loss of resources, not reasonable planning. This doesn't make sense from a vital program point of view keeping in mind that there is a Constitutional mandate under Article VII for the state to provide public health services. Two years ago the Legislature was convinced through the "Back to Basics" increment that the nursing component needed more resources and provided about half of what was requested. Now the proposal is to cut 4 times what was clearly needed only 2 years ago. If cuts like this are necessary for a balanced budget, then it is time to look for new resources.

ART PETERSON, retired attorney, testified in Juneau as follows.

...in support of the House budget bill's inclusion of \$125,000 for the Alaska Legal Services Corporation, in the Department of Community and Economic Development's FY 2005 operating budget. This bill is currently in your committee, and I strongly urge you to retain, or raise, that amount for ALSC.

This appropriation is crucial to the continuing civil-law legal services that ALSC provides to Alaska's low-income people, including seniors, families, battered spouses, and the typically disadvantaged. It thus helps the functioning of the juvenile justice system, itself.

For the last three decades, I have closely observed the operations of ALSC, as a member of its board of directors. And I can assure you that the state gets the most "bang for the buck" from its financial aid to this corporation - efficiency! Its lawyers and support staff work for nominal wages, and put in great amounts of uncompensated overtime, because of their commitment to the principle of equal access to justice.

LARRY WIGET, Executive Direct, Public Affairs, Anchorage School District, testified via teleconference from Anchorage to read a statement into the record as follows.

The Anchorage School District respectfully requests the Alaska Legislature increase the amount of State Debt Reimbursement appropriation in the budget to fully fund the Anchorage School District's State debt reimbursement entitlement.

Our discussions with the State Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) indicate that the Governor's FY 2004-2005 proposed budget, the bill currently before you, does not include funding for the additional \$2,837,383\* of the

Anchorage School District's State debt reimbursement entitlement resulting from approval in January of ASD projects that qualify for State debt reimbursement under the combined authorization of House Bill 2003 and Statewide approval of Proposition C.

The State Department of Education and Early Development notified the Anchorage School District in January of approval of additional projects that qualify for State debt reimbursement. The authorization provides for 60 percent or 70 percent debt reimbursement on school construction projects that received local voter approval back to June 30, 1999. For the Anchorage School District, this involved submittal and approval of projects related to voter approval in April 2000 and April 2002 including portions of bonds refunded in 2002.

The District was required by State regulation to submit an estimated amount of State debt for FY 2004-2005 by October 15, 2003. The District did not include anticipated reimbursement for the April 2000 and April 2002 including portions of bonds refunded in 2002.

The Anchorage School District requests the Legislature to increase the appropriation to honor the governor's commitment to fully fund the State Debt reimbursement entitlement.

\*We have reviewed our cash flow needs on all existing projects, including Proposition 4 that was approved on April 6, 2004. The revised amount of additional State debt reimbursement for FY 2004-2005 is \$2,837.383 rather than \$3,570,976 provided legislators early on. The amount is less since not all our propositions passed.

AT EASE 6:37 PM / 6:43 PM

ANDY HARRINGTON testified via teleconference from Fairbanks representing the Alaska Legal Services Corporation. He told of the civil legal assistance provided for low income Alaskans in matters including loss of housing, health care insurance, and employment. He stated that the funding amount approved by the House of Representatives is the same as the previous year, and requested the Committee support the same funding. He noted that Mat-Su would begin participating in the human services matching grant program and he urged the Committee provide adequate funding to allow the community to participate at the same level currently enjoyed by the Municipality of Anchorage and the Fairbanks North Star Borough. He listed and argued against three reasons against funding this

program: the State could not afford to, but he argued that nonprofits could deliver services at a lower cost than government; too many nonprofit organizations currently exist, and countered that any duplication of services could be eliminated; and faith based services should deliver these services, pointing out that many faith based organizations are currently providing these services and require funding to continue to do so.

SUZANNE PRICE, Director, Fairbanks Community Mental Health Center, and Officer, Alaska Mental Health Board, and Officer, Alaska Community Mental Health Services Association, testified via teleconference from Fairbanks to a platform developed, which includes a fiscal plan to ensure adequate resources for State services for vulnerable Alaskans. She noted that funding for mental health grants has reduced each year for last ten to 15 years and providers are encouraged to bill Medicaid for services rendered. However, she said that Medicaid does not adequately fund these services.

CARRIE DERSHIN, Health and Social Services Commission, Fairbanks North Star Borough, testified via teleconference from Fairbanks about the services provided by the local nonprofit organizations, including meal delivery to elderly housebound residents, juvenile justice assistance, and mental health care services. She stated that the State grant funds garner 14 times the initial amount in donations and in-kind services. She stressed the community matching grant program is a cost effective method to deliver services.

ROGER GAY, resident of Big Lake, testified via teleconference from Mat-Su to request the Committee not reduce funding for mental health care services. He expounded on the needs of individuals for mental health services, which he stated is less expensive than institutionalization or no care. He also spoke to the need to provide support for those delivering care.

PAT BALL, Certified Nurse, representing Valley Hospital and the Alaska Nurses Association, testified via teleconference from Mat-Su to request funding for public health nursing. She told of her ten years working with public health workers, particularly in the field of infectious diseases. She stated that these workers are "front line" in addressing these diseases, but are often forgotten because they work behind the scenes. She informed that public health nursing assists in reducing costs that would otherwise go untreated and eventually lead to emergency room visits. She stated that many patients are only willing to confide in public health nurses.

JAMES GARHART, resident of Wasilla, testified via teleconference

from Mat-Su, to thank Senator B. Stevens for efforts "of crediting the constitutionally mandated 25 percent resource royalty toward the amount required for inflation proofing the permanent fund corpus." He asserted that now is the time to change the structure of the general fund budget and implement forward funding. He stated that after inflation proofing and dividends, adequate funding remains in Alaska Permanent Fund Earnings Reserve Fund to fully fund expenditures of the general fund for one year. Afterwards, he said State government could be forward funding. He offered other suggestions for funding Alaska.

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ELLEN KRSNAK, Catholic Social Services, testified via teleconference from Anchorage that reduction to the community matching grants program would greatly impact the delivery of services to Southcentral Alaska by the Catholic Social Services agency. She expressed that more of the funds of the grant are utilized than any other appropriation, as they are matched 100 percent with local funds.

BONNIE JOHNSON, Public Health Nurse for 29 years, Retired, testified via teleconference from Fairbanks in support of fully funding the program. She stated that the current challenges for the program are greater than ever, given bio-terrorism, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), as well as measles, and tuberculosis, which still persist in the State. She expressed this is not the time to reduce funding for this program, which addresses these threats.

EMILY ENNIS, Executive Director, Fairbanks Resource Agency, and Vice President, Key Campaign testified via teleconference from Fairbanks about the services the Agency provides to developmentally disabled children and adults as well as elders with Alzheimer's disease. She reminded of the recent visit to the Legislature by members of the Key Campaign to speak of the needs of the State's most vulnerable citizens. She remarked that funding these programs would provide cost effective services.

SAMMYE POKRYKI testified via teleconference from Mat-Su, in support of community matching grants. She stated this allows residents a cost-effective way to continue services. She requested the same level of funding as passed by the House of Representatives.

PETER BURCHELL testified via teleconference from Mat-Su about the

need for planning in delivery of services thought the community matching grants programs. He remarked that many organizations have stopped delivering services due to inadequate funding and he requested that the remaining be allowed to continue.

JACKIE DEBENEC, Vice President, Arctic Alliance, and representing, Adult Learning Programs of Alaska, testified via teleconference from Fairbanks that nonprofit human service agencies provide the most cost-effective way of delivering services. She listed the needs of some programs and the funding needs that would go unmet. She noted that if those studying for general equivalency diplomas (GED) to attain jobs are hungry and in poor health, they would be unable to complete their education despite their efforts and would therefore be unable to become self-supporting.

JEANETTE GRASTO, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and Alaska Mental Health Board, and advocate for the mentally ill, testified via teleconference from Fairbanks that the State must develop a fiscal plan that would provide adequate funding for the most vulnerable Alaskans. She charged that the proposed budget reductions would create a "false economy", because more funds would be required later to address the consequences of unmet needs. She remarked that treating Alaskan children in facilities located outside the state is not beneficial because the children return to a home that has not been addressed.

Co-Chair Green requested the witness contact her, as she could clarify some information.

GREG HILL, Librarian, Fairbanks North Star Borough, testified via teleconference from Fairbanks on behalf of himself in support of the budget subcommittee's recommendation for funding libraries. He also requested the Committee increase funding to that passed by the House of Representatives.

Senator Dyson understood that some archived material would be lost due to poor storage conditions. He asked if the witness felt the matter was being adequately addressed.

Mr. Hill qualified he is not an expert in the field of archiving, but noted that reduced funding has limited the ability for these activities.

RIKI SIPE, Member, Fairbanks North Star Borough Health and Social Services Commission, testified via teleconference from Fairbanks about proposed budget reductions to the community matching grant programs. She reiterated that although appropriations garner 14

times the actual dollar amount, volunteer efforts are immeasurable. She stated that the local agencies are able to determine the needs and provide services to address specific needs. She listed the Boys and Girls Club, the Salvation Army, dental services and other program that would not be funded without this grant.

ANNIE HOPPER testified via teleconference from Fairbanks, that ten agencies that requested grants would not receive funds if the community matching grant program were not fully funded. She expressed social responsibility to provide these services, including providing housing for homeless children and keeping families intact.

IAN MICHAL HEBERT, Government Relations Director, Association of Students, University of Alaska, testified via teleconference from Fairbanks in favor of SB 283. He stated that Alaskans are anxiously awaiting the outcome of the free conference on this bill. He appreciated the \$15.8 million included for the University in this bill, noting the increased Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and Teachers Retirement System (TRS) expenses.

ANNETTE FREIBURGER, Member, Arctic Alliance for People, testified via teleconference from Fairbanks, that the Alliance provides a wide range of services for residents in community. She stated that the Alliance has discussed the need for efficiency of services. She also reported that she has been advised that the University system is a model for the nation.

JERRY BROWN, Commissioner, Fairbanks North Star Borough Health and Social Services Commission, testified via teleconference from Fairbanks in favor of the community matching grant program. He requested the Committee consider the value placed on the services provided by this program. He remarked that the State has a responsibility to provide essential health and social services to communities, which he said has been passed to local communities. He reported that communities have done a commendable job of delivering these services, but would be unable to continue at this level without sufficient funding. He noted that \$1 million would not be adequate given that the Mat-Su region would be joining the program.

JOHN CANNON testified via teleconference from Mat-Su to urge the Committee to collaborate with Governor Frank Murkowski and the House of Representatives to develop a fiscal plan that provides adequate funding for vulnerable Alaskans. He asked for support in restoring funds for the mental health court in Anchorage as well as establishment of additional courts in the State, citing the need in the Mat-Su. He also requested that Alaskan children receive

treatment within the State, and services be made available for disabled homeless people. He asked for no further funding reductions to community matching grants or Medicaid waivers. He warned that good services have been developed, but "this safety net is in danger" and "has eroded".

BERNARD GATEWOOD, Fairbanks North Star Borough Health and Social Services Commission, testified via teleconference from Fairbanks, to urge the Committee to reconsider and fund the community matching grant program at least \$1 million, although he pointed out that \$1.5 million is necessary with the inclusion of the Mat-Su region in the program. He spoke to the good rate of return of the funds invested in communities in Alaska. He surmised that if this was a stock with a return of 14 to 1, Committee members would "jump on it" and invest funds.

CARL EVERTSBUSCH, Key Coalition, testified via teleconference from Anchorage, to reiterate Emily Ennis and John Cannon about the increasing need for services for developmentally disabled through Medicaid waivers. He remarked on the remarkable outcomes of programs. He relayed that the membership of the Coalition support a fiscal plan and that members were willing to forgo a portion of the permanent fund dividends and would also consider taxes.

Senator Bunde thanked the witness for offering suggestions on how to raise revenue.

STEVE WILLIAMS, Project Manager, Anchorage District Coordinated Resources Project, also known as the mental health court, testified via teleconference from Anchorage to encourage funding for the program in Anchorage and to expand the program to other communities. He stated that when it was decided to reduce incidences of institutionalization of those with mental illness, prison populations increased with a significant portion of inmate populations suffering from mental illness. He spoke to unmet treatments of mentally ill people and criminal acts often committed. Once labeled a criminal, he remarked that an individual is more likely to re-offend and be returned to criminal justice system rather than receive treatment for the mental illness. He told of the reduced incarceration rates since the implementation of the mental health court program and subsequent savings to the Department of Corrections and local communities. He pointed to the added benefit that "it's the right thing to do" and also improves quality of life.

Co-Chair Green clarified that the witness understood that funding has not been reduced for this program.

Mr. Williams did.

DEWAYNE HARRIS, Program Director, Brother Francis Shelter, testified via teleconference from Anchorage in support of the community services matching grant program. He qualified that the Shelter does not received funds from this grant program, although, because the Shelter only provides housing for individual adults, many families are in need of services provided by organizations that do receive the grant funds. He described the emotional harm in separating families and homelessness on children.

BOB BUNDY, Board Member, Alaska Legal Services Corporation, testified via teleconference from Anchorage in support of funding for the Alaska Legal Services Corporation and the community matching grants program. He detailed his experience as an attorney. He noted that most attorneys are problem solvers and the Corporation attorneys provide advice to low-income clients to avoid more serious and more expensive legal problems later. He emphasized that these attorneys work for "laughable" salaries, and are not involved in criminal matters, or class action suits that garner large awards.

BRENDA MOORE, Christian Health Associates, testified via teleconference from Anchorage, that the Association does not receive any funds from the community matching grants program. She told of efforts to increase capacity in faith-based organizations to provide more services. However, she warned that without the current level of funding, faith-based organizations would have more difficulty filling the gap. She told of efforts with emergency shelters to develop a contingency plan to shelter families with children who currently do not have services available.

SARA JACKSON, Director, Saint Frances House, Catholic Community Services, testified via teleconference from Anchorage and read a statement into the record as follows.

St. Frances House provided food assistance to 4,925 individuals last month.

Additionally, we facilitated the distribution of 236 boxes of USDA [United States Department of Agriculture] Food, a program that targets the elderly, pregnant women and children. By March, we were the only significant source for financial assistance in Anchorage that still had funds. That month we distributed nearly \$11,000.00 for the prevention of eviction and utility shut-off to 38 families including 54 children.

When we resume the financial assistance program next winter, the funds we received through HSMG will determine how many families we can prevent from becoming homeless. Community belt tightening is felt the most at the bottom and reductions in family support services have dramatically increased the need for emergency assistance. Many people tell us they have been unable to secure adequate employment before unemployment benefits run out. Unemployment and hunger are at an extreme level in villages resulting in families moving to Anchorage seeking relief from their situation. We have 95 families from Mat-Su on our food pantry database and we serve families as far as Girdwood. Our client load is up 20% over the last year. Our staff is up 0%. The HSMG helps to fund one of our four staff positions, the essential position of Resource and Volunteer Coordinator. Through the funding of that single person, St. Francis House leveraged 1.240 hours of donated labor by 45 volunteers in March. Some of the people that we rely on to help us deliver services are people who also rely upon St. Francis House to provide them with a user friendly setting in which to develop social and job skills. We are a work site for developmentally delayed students, adult and youth offenders and community restitution programs. The work of St. Francis House is simple enough for anyone to be successful and meaningful enough to strengthen the weakest self-esteem, and soften the hardest attitude. This is a win-win exchange that provides immeasurable benefits to the community. Please reconsider your recommendation to cut this important lifeline to so many Alaskans during this very difficult economic period.

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DIANE DISANTO, Municipality of Anchorage, Mayor's Office, testified via teleconference from Anchorage, to thank Representative Mike Hawker for restoring funding for the municipal matching grants program. She expressed disappointment that the Senate reduced funding especially given that Mat-Su would be added to the program. She pointed out that Anchorage serves as a hub for the entire state and serves those who travel to Anchorage and find themselves in need. She stated that agencies funded with this grant provide a critical role in getting basic services for individuals. She informed that in the recent municipal election, voters approved the development of a long-range fiscal plan for the State by a ration of two to one.

PATRICIA SENNEL, Alaska Nurses Association, testified via teleconference from Anchorage to request the Committee adopt the funding approved by the House of Representatives for the public health nursing program. Given the increased risk of infectious diseases, she was unable to understand why funding would be reduced from the amount recommended by the Governor. She supported an increase in the tobacco tax.

KJERSTI LANGNES, Clare House, testified via teleconference from Anchorage that funds received through the community matching grant program pays the salaries for six staff positions. She explained the shelter provides emergency shelter for women and children. She warned that if it becomes necessary to close the shelter during daytime hours infants and toddlers would likely spend days in libraries, laundry mats, and shopping malls.

R. BRUCE PARHAM, President, Alaska Historical Society, and Archivist, National Archives and Records Administration in Anchorage, testified via teleconference from Anchorage in support of funding for the programs and services provided by the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums and the Office of History and Archeology. He pointed out that since he began supporting these programs in 1976, the budgets for these agencies has been reduced 40-60 percent. He told of the resulting staff reductions and reduced services. He requested funding to restore the position of curator at the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, to add an electronic archivist position in Juneau and a record analyst position in Anchorage. He noted that other states have electronic archivist staff, and that a record analyst is needed for Anchorage to ensure that the large number of State agencies regularly transfer their records to archives. He warned of potential litigation if unable to retrieve and produce records.

RONALD TAYLOR testified via teleconference from Anchorage about the Alcohol Safety Action Program. He stated that funding for the Adult portion of the program was removed from the budget, and although some grant funds have been restored, funding for personnel services, travel and other expenses was not. He stated that the office could not function and provide the same level of services with only seven staff positions, half of the current number. He also spoke to the increased match requirement from \$150,000 to \$370,000 and stressed this requirement could not be met unless revenue from client fees increased, which he stated is unlikely given the low income of the clients.

Co-Chair Green requested the witness contact her office to receive updated information about funding for this program. She expressed

efforts to identify methods to ensure all fees are paid before offenders are released by the court system.

BARBARA SMITH, Alaska Historical Society, testified via teleconference from Anchorage, about her concerns of proposed funding for Alaska state museums, libraries, and archives. She understood Co-Chair Wilken's efforts to increase funding for this division and encouraged the Committee to consider the House of Representatives funding level.

MARIE LAVIGNE, Alaska Public Health Association, testified via teleconference from Anchorage, urges SFC to restore full funding to Department of Health and Social Services for nurse funding. Public Health Nursing is necessary. Disease control services especially vital.

V. KAY LAHDENPERA, Alaska Nurses Association, testified via teleconference from Anchorage that she was a public health nurse with the Municipality of Anchorage for 35 years and is now retired. Public health, she remarked, has been an essential part of the health care system in this country for the past 100 years and should not be reduced. She did not want health aides in rural communities to be reduced, as these positions are important to public health nurses. She warned that if services are reduced, private providers would be unwilling to serve the low-income patients.

ANNA ATTCA testified via teleconference from Anchorage on behalf of People First and to request no elimination of Medicaid waivers. She spoke of people with disabilities and their options in life to live in group homes, etc.

D VERA JAMES, Alaska Native Health Board, testified via teleconference from Anchorage to share information contained in written testimony as follows.

The Alaska Native Health Board strongly encourages that funding for the Human Service Matching Block Grant be retained at \$1.16 million. The Senate's reduction of the block grant to \$667,000 will negatively impact shelters, food for the hungry, disaster assistance, oral health care, prescriptions, and meal delivery service to the frail elderly.

Please retain the full \$1.16 million as introduced by the House for Human Service Matching Grant funding.

AT EASE 8:13 PM / 8:13 PM

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**ADJOURNMENT**

Co-Chair Lyda Green adjourned the meeting at 08:14 PM