

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 19, 2007
4:06 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Chenault called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 4:06:20 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Mike Chenault, Co-Chair
Representative Kevin Meyer, Co-Chair
Representative Bill Stoltze, Vice-Chair
Representative Harry Crawford
Representative Les Gara
Representative Mike Hawker
Representative Reggie Joule
Representative Mike Kelly
Representative Mary Nelson
Representative Bill Thomas Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Richard Foster

ALSO PRESENT

Representative Beth Kerttula; Representative Sharon Cissna

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

ANCHORAGE:

John Stripe, Access Alaska, Inc.; Vern Bussing, Corporations; Gwen Lee, Parent, IRC; Kristen Yearsley, STAR; Nicole Thibodeau, Covenant House; Karen Rogina, CEO, Alaska Hospitality Alliance; Susan Bomalaski, Executive Director, Catholic Social Services; Jesalyn Stanton, Salvation Army; John Kreilkamp, Cruise West; Anne Dennis-Choi, Salvation Army; Janet Mitson, Municipality of Anchorage, Mayor's Office; Pat Luby, Advocacy Director, Alaska Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Anchorage; Suzi Pearson, AWAIC; Karla Jutzi, Alaska Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired; Charlie Hall, Anchorage Pioneer Home; Deanne Harms, Anchorage Pioneer Home; John Donahue, Anchorage Pioneer Home; Bonnie McGrew; Jim Gottstein, President, SOTERIA-Alaska; Aaron Wolf, M.D., Medical Assistant, SOTERIA-Alaska; Faith Myers; Susan Faith, Salvation Army; Joe Mathis, Montana Creek Campground; Mary Elizabeth Rider, NASW; Tammy Griffin, AH&CA & The Hotel Group; Craig Pester, AKHLA; Katy Parrish; Brian Saylor, Health and Human Services; Anna Attla; Pam Vandern Burg, Kid Corp & Head

Start Program, Parent; Janel Kosten, Nurse, Salvation Army Clitheroe Center; Rowena Brown, Head Start; Ruth Rosewarne, President, Anchorage Tourism Industry

GENERAL SUBJECT(S):

The following overview was taken in log note format. Handouts will be on file with the House Finance Committee through the 25th Legislative Session, contact 465-6814. After the 25th Legislative Session they will be available through the Legislative Library at 465-3808.

#HB95

#HB96

HOUSE BILL NO. 95

An Act making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government, for certain programs, and to capitalize funds; making appropriations under art. IX, sec. 17(c), Constitution of the State of Alaska; and providing for an effective date.

HOUSE BILL NO. 96

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.

TIME	SPEAKER	DISCUSSION
4:07:04 PM	Co-Chair Chenault	Brought the House Finance Committee meeting to order to take public testimony from Anchorage on HB 95 & HB 96.
		ANCHORAGE
4:07:41 PM	JOHN STRIPE, BOARD MEMBER, ACCESS ALASKA, ANCHORAGE	Testified in support of Independent Living Grants. He pointed out that funding has been "flat" for the past ten years. Over the past three years, Access has served 112% of the population. He requested a 94% increase for the hearing impaired population.
4:13:03 PM	VERN BUSSING, ANCHORAGE	Worried about the raise of health and workmen's compensation costs to small business people. He encouraged speed in assisting that population.
4:15:09 PM	GWEN LEE, PARENT, MEMBER OF ANCHORAGE RESOURCE CENTER (ARC),	Noted concern for those living in the State with developmental disabilities. She commented that infant learning is a critical component in that budget. She worried about a rate freeze in

	ANCHORAGE	providing services in those communities & pointed out that the Anchorage caucus had indicated concern with loosing those services. There is no methodology when setting rates for such services. She pointed out the difficulty in recruiting and training staff in those fields & urged that the rate freeze be eliminated, with instead a grant increase of 8%.
4:20:00 PM	KRISTEN YEARSLEY, STAR, ANCHORAGE	Spoke in support for further & increased funding for those who have experienced sexual assault, domestic violence and rape. She pointed out the mental health needs associated for those victims. It would be more cost effective for the State to address crisis intervention.
4:24:37 PM	NICOLE THIBODEAU, DIRECTOR, COVENANT HOUSE, ANCHORAGE	Voiced support and appreciation for restoration of the human services matching grants.
4:26:38 PM	KAREN ROGINA, CEO, ALASKA HOSPITALITY ALLIANCE, ANCHORAGE	Testified in support for greater funding for Alaska Tourism marketing. She stressed how much the industry contributes to the State's economy.
4:29:27 PM	SUSAN BOMALASKI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES, ANCHORAGE	Voiced appreciation for continued funding of the community block grants & urged that funding continue at an increased level.
4:31:05 PM	JESALYN STANTON, THE SALVATION ARMY, ANCHORAGE	Voiced support for the Keep the Elders at Home initiative and testified in support for all Adult Day Services. Such services are about keeping families together and helping eliminate stress for those families.
4:34:52 PM	JOHN KREILKAMP, CRUISE WEST, ANCHORAGE	Asked that the Legislature consider the cruise industry as a partner in the tourism industry. He noted, this past year, the tourism industry contributed \$49 million dollars into the State coffers. He highlighted the many communities serviced by the Industry. He urged that the statewide tourism marketing program be fully funded.
4:37:14 PM	ANNE DENNIS-	Voiced support for sufficient funding

	CHOI, THE SALVATION ARMY, ANCHORAGE	for statewide behavioral grant programs. She mentioned the high rate of alcohol dependence in the State of Alaska and that alcohol abuse impacts the Alaskan economy in many expensive ways. That grant funding is critical.
4:40:09 PM	JANET MITSON, MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE (MOA), DIRECTOR OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET, MAYOR'S OFFICE, ANCHORAGE	She urged funding for municipal revenue sharing for MOA. Ms. Mitson added concern about receiving support for the Alaska Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) and the Teacher's Retirement System (TRS) costs. Ms. Mitson indicated support for full funding of costs for the MOA traffic streetlight signals. The State's share of those costs show up as a separate appropriation within the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities. The true costs are established under auditing costs for the City of Anchorage and as a result, MOA taxpayers subsidize costs. She mentioned support for full funding property tax for seniors and those with disabilities.
4:46:05 PM	PAT LUBY, ADVOCACY DIRECTOR, ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED PERSONS (AARP), ANCHORAGE	Testified in support of continued funding for the Longevity Bonus Program as needs based. He noted support also for the Senior Care program. The concern is the amount proposed funding to cover health care costs. He added support for Keeping the Elders at Home Initiative & all the services for keeping seniors at home.
4:48:11 PM	SUZI PEARSON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, AWAIC, ANCHORAGE	Voiced appreciation for the support for women experiencing domestic violence through the State Department funding. She pointed out the decrease to the AWAIC shelter's funding and the costs associated with health insurance, amounting to 11.25% of their budget. The agency is supported through the State and private funding.
4:50:33 PM	KARLA JUTZI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA CENTER FOR THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED, ANCHORAGE	Voiced support for greater funding for those that are visually impaired. She pointed out that the increase of diabetes is the leading cause of blind and hearing disorders statewide.
4:53:02 PM	CHARLIE HALL, ANCHORAGE	Testified in support for full funding for the Alaska Pioneer Homes. He said

	PIONEER HOME, ANCHORAGE	that he really appreciates being able to live in the Pioneer Home in Anchorage.
4:54:02 PM	DEANNE HARMS, ANCHORAGE PIONEER	Voiced support for full funding for the Alaska Pioneer Homes, indicating that she likes living in that environment. She was grateful to be at the Anchorage Pioneer Home. She said the staff was very caring. She worried about the elevators and other equipment in the 30 year old building.
4:56:04 PM	JOHN DONAHUE, ANCHORAGE PIONEER HOME, ANCHORAGE	Testified in support for full funding for the Alaska Pioneer Homes. He said that he really appreciates being able to live in the Pioneer Home in Anchorage. He noted that the CNA staff has "dwindled" lately. The overall staff is remarkable.
4:58:03 PM	BONNIE MCGREW, ANCHORAGE	Noted support for the assisted living homes. She testified in support of Independent Living Grants.
5:00:45 PM	JIM GOTTSTEIN, PRESIDENT, SOTERIA- ALASKA, ANCHORAGE	Requested that the increment be added back to fund SOTERIA-Alaska, mental health patients statewide.
5:03:17 PM	ARON WOLF, M.D., MEDICAL ASSISTANT, SOTERIA- ALASKA, ANCHORAGE	Spoke in support of funding for mental health programs.
5:05:25 PM	FAITH MYERS, SELF, ANCHORAGE	Spoke in support of funding for mental health programs.
5:07:32 PM	SUSAN FAITH, SALVATION ARMY, ANCHORAGE	Testified in support of funding for Senior Community Grants and the Keep the Seniors at Home Initiative.
5:10:06 PM	JOE MATHIS, MONTANA CREEK CAMPGROUND, ANCHORAGE	Voiced support for tourism marketing funding.
5:13:00 PM	MARY ELIZABETH RIDER, SELF, NASW, ALASKA	Spoke in support of funding for mental health programs, especially for youth. Recommended full funding for senior care programs.
5:18:03 PM	TAMMY GRIFFIN, AH&CA & THE HOTEL GROUP, ANCHORAGE	Voiced support for tourism funding and the Truth in Marketing for the State program.
5:20:36 PM	KATY PARRISH,	Noted support for full funding for

	SELF, ANCHORAGE	children with disabilities. She urged early intervention services. She pointed out that on the federal level, there has been a 6% decrease to Special Education funding. Alaska is vulnerable to providing services to those individuals.
5:23:25 PM	BRIAN SAYLOR, CHAIRMAN, HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION, MOA, ANCHORAGE	Indicated support for the human services component & block grant funding. These are the most vulnerable Alaskans and they need that funding. The need greatly exceeds the resources available.
5:25:21 PM	ANNA ATTLA, ANCHORAGE	Spoke in support for funding Infant Learning.
5:26:08 PM	PAM VANDERN- BURG, KID CORP & HEAD START PROGRAM, PARENT, ANCHORAGE	Indicated the need for increased funding for the Head Start Program. The goal is to service lower income families first. Head Start has been flat funded for the past 10 years. There are always wait lists for the program.
5:29:46 PM	JANEL KOSTEN, NURSE, SALVATION ARMY CLITHEROE CENTER, ANCHORAGE	Testified in support of funding for alcohol treatment programs & detox centers.
5:31:15 PM	ROWENA BROWN, HEAD START, ANCHORAGE	Voiced support for greater & continued funding for the Head Start Program. Head Start has been flat funded for the past ten years. There are many children on the Head Start wait lists.
5:33:39 PM	RUTH ROSEWARNE, PRESIDENT, ANCHORAGE TOURISM INDUSTRY, ANCHORAGE	Testified in support of greater funding for Alaska Tourism. She said it was "shameful" that Alaskans lack education about their own State. She stressed the importance of the Industry.
5:36:08 PM	Co-Chair Chenault	<u>ADJOURNMENT</u> The meeting was adjourned at 5:36 PM.
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