

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
February 25, 2008
1:45 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Chenault called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at [1:45:09 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 John Harris

ALSO PRESENT

Representative Beth Kerttula

JUNEAU:

Marianne Mills, Program Director, Southeast Senior Services; Pamela Watts, Administrator, Juneau Alliance for Mental Health (JAMI); Jeremy Gieser, Local Chapter President, Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), Juneau Chapter; Lorene Palmer, President & CEO, Juneau Convention and Visitors Bureau; Walter Majoros, Executive Director, Juneau Youth Services & President, Alaska Behavioral Health Association; Jordan Nigro, Residential Director, Juneau Youth Alaska Services, President, Alaska Association for Homes for Children; Heather Swanson, Help Desk Consultant, University of Alaska-Southeast; Kathrin McCarthy, Assistant Professor, University of Alaska-Southeast; Jed Whittaker, Self; Ron Duncan, Self; Mandy O'Neal Cole, Director Services Manager, Aiding Women in Abuse and Rape Emergencies (AWARE), Inc.; Ellen Naughter, Program Services Manager, Aiding Women in Abuse and Rape Emergencies (AWARE), Inc.; Joy Lyon, Executive Director, Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC) in Southeast Alaska; Kevin Skeet, Vice President, Student Government, University of Alaska-Southeast (UAS); Mary McDowell, Vice President, Pacific Seafood Processing Association; Jerry McCune, United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA); Jacqueline Hardy, Social Worker,

Anchorage Office for Children's Services; Michael Powell, Social Workers Board & Community Worker; Matt Felix, Director, Division of Alcohol & Drug Abuse, Juneau

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Paul Kendall, Self, Anchorage

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.

^STATEWIDE PUBLIC TESTIMONY
JUNEAU

TIME	SPEAKER	DISCUSSION
1:45:09 PM	Co-Chair Chenault	Convened the House Finance Committee in order to hear testimony from participants in Juneau on the operating budget.
		JUNEAU
1:47:13 PM	MARIANNE MILLS, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, SOUTHEAST SENIOR SERVICES	Noted that she represents a group called Age-Net that advocates for vulnerable older Alaskans. She indicated support for the increased Medicaid reimbursements @ 4%. Ms. Mills urged increases for the Senior Services Community Grant Program, which would be considerably cheaper to the State of Alaska compared to costs associated with nursing homes.
1:51:47 PM	PAMELA WATTS, ADMINISTRATOR, JUNEAU ALLIANCE FOR MENTAL HEALTH (JAMI)	Noted support for the 4% Medicaid reimbursements for seniors. She stated that costs for services have risen for the severely mentally ill adults group living. She indicated supported for the Senior and Behavioral Health Grant.
1:56:31 PM	JEREMY GIESER, LOCAL CHAPTER PRESIDENT, ALASKA TRAVEL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (ATIA), JUNEAU	Spoke in support of funding to the Alaska Travel Industry Association in the amount of \$8 million for Alaska tourism marketing and a \$1 million dollar independent grant. He asked that there be greater funding than the proposed amounts.
1:59:25 PM	LORENE PALMER, PRESIDENT & CEO, JUNEAU CONVENTION AND	Spoke in support of funding to the Alaska Travel Industry Association, Governor's request of \$8 million for Alaska tourism marketing and a \$1

	VISITORS BUREAU	million dollar independent grant. She added that in reality, the industry needs \$20 million dollars in today's funds.
2:05:00 PM	WALTER MAJOROS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JUNEAU YOUTH SERVICES & PRESIDENT, ALASKA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION	Addressed the behavioral health issues contained in the proposed budget. He noted his supported for the 4% Medicaid funding, which includes several increases to lost federal funding. He testified in support of greater funding for behavior and mental grants; many clients do not qualify for Medicaid that the medical health grants would be used in those circumstances. Mr. Majoros pointed out the importance of the community and early intervention grants and suicide prevention programs. He added greater support for funding of substance abuse prevention and treatment programs.
2:09:35 PM	JORDEN NIGRO, RESIDENTIAL DIRECTOR, JUNEAU YOUTH ALASKA SERVICES, PRESIDENT, ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HOMES FOR CHILDREN	Echoed previous testimony for full funding for the Medicaid health budget. She added supported of the incremental grants not included in the proposed House budget. She indicated support for funding for the behavior and mental programs and the support of funding for behavior and mental grant programs.
2:13:16 PM	HEATHER SWANSON, HELP DESK CONSULTANT, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA- SOUTHEAST	Spoke in support of full funding for the University's proposed budget. She pointed out that the funding level was less than Governor's funding proposal and should be increased for University programs.
2:17:29 PM	KATHRIN MCCARTHY, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA- SOUTHEAST	Spoke in support of reinstating the \$600 thousand dollars of the Governor's proposal for the Head Start program. She explained how the support of the funding those dollars dramatically effect early childhood development as it is a comprehensive early childhood development program.
2:21:02 PM	JED WHITTAKER, SELF	Spoke in support of full funding for the University of Alaska; while he encouraged that the Legislature look at the salaries currently being paid to the University president.
2:23:17 PM	RON DUNCAN,	Noted support of funding for substance

	SELF	abuse prevention and treatment programs statewide. He directed his statements to the favor of Rainforest Recovery Unit and their funding.
2:26:31 PM	MANDY O'NEAL COLE, DIRECT SERVICES MANAGER, AIDING WOMEN IN ABUSE AND RAPE EMERGENCIES (AWARE), INC.	Spoke in support of Governor's proposed funding for domestic violence and sexual assault programs in the State. She stressed that training programs are very important in that funding.
2:30:36 PM	ELLEN NAUGHTER, PROGRAM SERVICES MANAGER, AIDING WOMEN IN ABUSE AND RAPE EMERGENCIES (AWARE), INC.	Spoke in support of Governor Palin's proposed increase of \$436 thousand dollars funding for domestic violence and sexual assault programs. The increase would encourage the shelter programs to increase and expand services.
2:33:37 PM	JOY LYON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN (AEYC) SOUTHEAST ALASKA	Spoke in support of the Governor's proposal for funding the Head Start programs statewide. She stressed the needs and rights of all the State's children.
2:37:49 PM	KEVIN SKEET, VICE PRESIDENT, STUDENT GOVERNMENT, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA-SOUTHEAST	Spoke in support of full funding for the University funding as proposed by the Governor in the amount of \$7 million dollars. He explained that the University is addressing climate change research.
2:40:50 PM	MARY MCDOWELL, VICE PRESIDENT, PACIFIC SEAFOOD PROCESSORS ASSOCIATION (PSPA)	Spoke in supported for fully funding the Department of Fish and Game budget as proposed by Governor. She addressed the economic benefits to the State when supporting the fishery programs. She concluded that it is a wise investment for the State to support the fisheries.
2:44:27 PM	JERRY MCCUNE, UNITED FISHERMEN OF	Indicated support for the Governor's proposed operating budget for the Department of Fish and Game and the

	ALASKA	proposed amendments to replace federal monies.
2:47:50 PM	JACQUELINE HARDY, SOCIAL WORKER, ANCHORAGE OFFICE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES	Voiced support for funding of the Medicaid increases. She addressed the foster care program funding, pointing out that there has not been a rate increase since 1999. Ms. Hardy added support of full funding for all substance abuse and prevention treatment programs.
2:51:42 PM	MICHAEL POWELL, SOCIAL WORKERS BOARD & COMMUNITY WORKER	Testified in support of funding for substance abuse prevention and treatment programs as they relate to statewide crime. Many of the people in prisons in Alaska are there because of substance abuse addictions.
3:01:03 PM	MATT FELIX, STATE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE, JUNEAU	Testified in support of funding for substance abuse prevention and treatment programs statewide. He encouraged that legislators support the budget as proposed by Governor Palin.
3:05:33 PM	PAUL KENDALL, SELF, ANCHORAGE	Voiced support for saving money in the proposed budget rather than spending it on too many social service projects. He added that he would not recommend any energy saving projects in the State.
	<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>	The meeting was adjourned at 3:16 P.M.
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