

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 5, 2013
1:34 p.m.

1:34:26 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Austerman called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Alan Austerman, Co-Chair
Representative Bill Stoltze, Co-Chair
Representative Mark Neuman, Vice-Chair
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Les Gara
Representative Lindsey Holmes
Representative Cathy Munoz
Representative Steve Thompson
Representative Tammie Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Mia Costello
Representative David Guttenberg
Representative Scott Kawasaki, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT

David Katzeek, Self, Juneau; Kathi Collum, Board of Directors, Juneau Youth Services (JYS) Juneau; Joan O'Keefe, Director, Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL), Juneau; Walter Majoras, Executive Director, Juneau Youth Services, Juneau; Peter Freer, Board Member, Juneau Youth Services, Juneau; Monika Carhart, Self, Juneau; Pamela Watts, Executive Director, Juneau Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Juneau; Lindsey Kato, Juneau Suicide Prevention Coalition, Juneau; Ramona M. Ringer, Self, Juneau; Walt Sisikin, National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Juneau; Lilly Killbear, Rainforest Recovery, Juneau; Scott Kissinger, Client, Rainforest Recovery, Juneau; Tony Sholty, Board Member, Juneau Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Juneau; Tom Gemmell, Executive Director, United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters,

Juneau; Jessica Cook, Teacher, Alpenglow Elementary, Eagle River; Tom McNamarra, Polaris House, Juneau; Anji Gallanos, Advocate, Early Childhood Education, Juneau; Joy Lyon, Executive Director, Association for the Education of Young Children in Southeast Alaska, Juneau; Cicely S Byerly, Client, Rainforest Recovery, Juneau; Richard C. Anderson, Self, Juneau; Charles High, Self, Juneau; Kathy Hansen, Executive Director, Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance, Juneau; Donna Burnett, Client, Juneau Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Juneau; Lisa Gardner, Educator, Parents as Teachers Program, Juneau; Gilbert Willard, Self, Juneau; Robert Barr, Director, Juneau Public Library, Juneau; Debra K. Arthur-Wilkinson, Juneau Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Juneau; Michelle Jerome, Teacher, Alpenglow Elementary, Eagle River; Marie Marx, Parent Representative, Harborview Elementary School, Juneau; Valerie Brooks, Reading Specialist, Houghtaling Elementary School, Ketchikan; Ricky Deising, Regional Director, Inlandboatman's Union, Juneau; Sheryl Weinberg, Executive Director, Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC), Juneau; Joe Geldhof, Pacific Coast Counsel, Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association, Juneau; Mary Hakala, Coordinator, Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) Alaska, Juneau; Greg Roth, Program Director, REACH, Juneau; Karol Benroth, Counselor, Bartlett High School, Anchorage; Tom Chard, Executive Director, Alaska Behavioral Health Association, Juneau; Mark Johnson, Alaska Trauma System Review Committee, Juneau; Kenneth Burchfield, Self, Juneau; Jonas Decena, Client, Juneau Youth Services Transitional Living Program, Juneau; Eric Gebhart, Chair, Governor's Council on Disabilities and Superintendent, Nenana City School District, Nenana; Elizabeth McGee, National Education Association and Alaska School Counselor Association, Anchorage; Brad Baldwin, Commercial Fisherman, Juneau; Julianne Curry, Director, United Fishermen of Alaska, Juneau; Ethan Knuthson, Commercial Fisherman, Juneau; Andi Story, Juneau School Board, Juneau; Bruce Wallace, Commercial Fisherman, Juneau; Joan Pardes, Parent, Juneau; Martha Moore, Self, Juneau.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Dan Reum, Former Educator, Cordova; Peter Hoepfner, Cordova School Board, Cordova; Barb Bryson, Best Beginnings, Valdez; Kim Mix, Early Learning and Family Program, Kotzebue; Julie Serstad, Deputy Director, Community Health Services, Barrow; Geanne Gerhardt-Cyrus, Self, Kotzebue; Catherine Jones, Self, Kotzebue; Anthony Cravalho, Self,

Kotzebue; Bree Swanson, Administrator of Social Services for Maniilaq Association, Kotzebue; Vivian Fleming, Behavioral Health Director, Maniilaq Behavior Health Services, Kotzebue; Steven Sundby, Executive Director, Sound Alternatives, Cordova; Peter Hergenrotther, Yukon Health Corporation, Bethel; Vernon Samson, Yukon Health Corporation, Bethel; Dusty Aloralrea, Self, Bethel; Rinda Howell, Wrangell, Best Beginnings; Jenn Allen, Self, Haines; Sarah Chapell, Member of Haines Borough School Board, Haines; Alissa Henry, Self, Haines; Richard Tews, Self, Bethel; Doreen Leavitt, North Slope Borough Health Department, Barrow; Amy Russell, Beringia Center of Culture and Science, Nome; Israel Payton, Self, Wasilla; Jeanne Kitayama, Director, Children' Reading Foundation, Haines; Nicki Shelton, Self, Hoonah; Kevin Tressler, McCann Treatment Center, Bethel; Barbara Spriggs, Kotzebue, Meniilaq Medical Center; Dr. Ella Derbyshire, Kotzebue, Meniilaq Medical Center; Reggie Joule, Mayor, NW Arctic Borough, Kotzebue; Tom Cyrus, Self, Kiana; Anna Sappah, Executive Director, Alaska Addiction Professionals Association (AAPA), Anchorage; Robyn Triest, Alaska Peer Support Consortium, Anchorage; Jennifer Payton, Co-Occurring Disorders Institute (CoDI), Mat-Su; Tina Morgan, Self, Anchorage; Lisa Pierce, Self, Anchorage; John Halloway, Project Coordinator, Criminal Justice System Transformation Project, Anchorage; Donna Maxwell, Self, Anchorage; Dr. Frank Sacco, Trauma Director, Alaska Trauma System Review; Michelle Baker, Southcentral Foundation, Anchorage; Dr. Regina Chenault, Chair, Committee on Trauma, Anchorage; Anna Campbell, Self, Anchorage; Joerene Savikko, Victims for Justice, Anchorage; Faith Myers, Mental Health Advocates, Anchorage; Dorrance Collins, Mental Health Advocates, Anchorage; Stephanie Roads, Self, Anchorage; Jennifer Smerd, Director, Community Relations, Community Mental Health, Anchorage; Brittany Buzzard, Self, Anchorage; Jonathan Teeters, Best Beginnings, Anchorage; Karen Matthias, Anchorage Imagination Library, Anchorage; Jerry Jenkins, Anchorage Community Mental Health, Anchorage; Bruce Linguist, Anchorage Community Mental Health, Anchorage; Jessica Craig, Epidemiologist, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium; Hillary Strayer, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium; Julie Rabeau, Self, Anchorage; Ambrosia Bowlus, Self, Anchorage; Ronald Wilson, Self, Anchorage; Doreen Sihenkenberger, Therapeutic Court Alumni, Anchorage; Pat Reynaga, Volunteer, Cancer Action Network, Anchorage; Kendra Jackson, Self, Anchorage; Leo Tondreault, Self, Anchorage; William Finley, Finance

Secretary, Salvation Army, Anchorage; Paul Albers, Brother Francis Shelter, Anchorage; Suzi Pearson, Executive Director, Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), Anchorage; Julia Luey, Self, Anchorage; Michelle Smith, Self, Anchorage; Hiedi Frost, Statewide Independent Living Counsel (SILC), Anchorage; Rosalie Nadeau, Chief Executive Officer, Akeela House Recovery Program, Anchorage; Janet McCabe, Partners for Progress, Anchorage; Gwen Lee, The Arc of Anchorage, Anchorage; Karin Schaff, Volunteers of America, Anchorage; Kendra Lee, Self, Palmer; Crystal Calice, Akeela, Anchorage; Lindsay McDaniel, Self, Anchorage; Jeffrey Kellerman, Traumatic Brain Injury support, Anchorage; John Crews, Alaska Vocational and Technical Center (AVTEC), Anchorage; Jake Metcalf, PSEA Local 803, Anchorage; Jill Hodges, TBI Support, Anchorage; Grace Snider, TBI Support, Anchorage; Arlene Ludwig, Meeting the Challenge, Anchorage; Deborah Bock, Self, Anchorage; Debi Baldwin, Child Development Director, Rural Cap, Anchorage; Pat Ventgen, Clinical Director, Akeela, Anchorage; Stephanie Berglund, Chief Executive Officer, Thread, Anchorage; Nikos Pastos, Self, Anchorage.

SUMMARY

HB 65 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUNDS

HB 65 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 66 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

HB 66 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#hb65

#hb66

HOUSE BILL NO. 65

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government and for certain programs, capitalizing funds, amending appropriations, and making reappropriations; and providing for an effective date."

HOUSE BILL NO. 66

"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."

JUNEAU

DAVID KATZEEK, SELF, JUNEAU, testified in support of education funding. He stated that Alaskan children were priceless. He felt that the cost of living in Alaska was directly attached to education funding. He felt that creativity and imagination were tied to education, and stressed the need for an investment in Alaska's children.

[1:40:58 PM](#)

KATHI COLLUM, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, JUNEAU YOUTH SERVICES (JYS) JUNEAU, testified in opposition of the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She stated that her oldest son had opposition defiant disorder. She shared that her son had spent twelve months in the behavioral health center, Miller House, which was funded by state money. Her family was also taught how to adjust to his disorder at Miller House. Her son was currently 21, and was a functioning member society. She stressed that mental health providers were extremely underfunded; and reduced mental health funding would result in crime and homelessness. She stressed the importance of not decreasing funding for those that need it the most.

[1:44:19 PM](#)

JOAN O'KEEFE, DIRECTOR, SOUTHEAST ALASKA INDEPENDENT LIVING (SAIL), JUNEAU, testified in support of funding for independent living centers. She explained that the Centers for Independent Living (CILS) served more than 4,000 Alaskans of all ages and all disabilities in approximately 50 communities across the state. She stated that CILS provided a wide array of non-residential services provided by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. She explained that CILS had received state funds for nearly 30 years, in the Department of Labor and Workforce Development budget; and asked that the \$100,000 increment be added back into that budget. She stressed that seniors were the single largest demographic in Alaska. She also requested funding for the Alaska Complex Behavior Collaborative; \$150,000 for disease prevention targeted for

senior fall prevention strategies; fully fund the traumatic acquired brain injury program increment; maintain current funding levels for behavioral services; and restore the \$100,000 in the governor's budget for independent living.

[1:47:20 PM](#)

WALTER MAJORAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JUNEAU YOUTH SERVICES, JUNEAU, testified in opposition of the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. He stated that JYS provided outpatient treatment, mental health services in schools, and residential services. He announced that many of the children and youth at JYS were victims of child abuse, neglect, and child sexual abuse; and added that many of the children in the program had previously attempted suicide. He stressed that Alaska had some of the highest rates in the country for domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, alcoholism, and suicide. He felt that the proposed cut worked directly against the governor's Choose Respect Initiative to end domestic violence and sexual abuse. He stressed that domestic violence and child abuse occurred on a generational cycle. Unless the youth and children were treated; domestic violence and sexual assault would continue to run rampant in the state.

[1:49:04 PM](#)

PETER FREER, BOARD MEMBER, JUNEAU YOUTH SERVICES, JUNEAU, voiced opposition of the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. He remarked that it was becoming nearly impossible to maintain the JYS, because of intense budget cuts. He pointed out that there was currently a mid-year deficit at JYS, and he was working hard to see that the budget be balanced by the end of the year. He stressed that state grants were essential in providing services for families that were not covered by Medicaid.

[1:52:07 PM](#)

MONIKA CARHART, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in opposition of the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She explained that she was a patient at the Juneau Alliance for the Mentally Ill (JAMI). She stated that she had a medical condition that caused a mental break, and she was suicidal. She explained that she had a beneficial experience at JAMI, which improved her life.

1:54:01 PM

PAMELA WATTS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JUNEAU ALLIANCE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL, JUNEAU, testified opposition of the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She explained that JAMI provided emergency and out-patient mental health services for all ages, including 475 adults in Juneau. She stated that the cost of services increased each year. She pointed out that the cost of medication had increased by 50 percent since 2008, with no increase in state funding. She felt that the cost of not treating individuals would be moved to the courts, public safety, corrections, and hospitals.

1:56:32 PM

LINDSEY KATO, JUNEAU SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION, JUNEAU, testified opposition for the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She remarked that the suicide rate in Alaska was twice as high as the rest of the United States. She stated that the Bureau of Vital Statistics had reflected a decrease in suicide by 22 people in Alaska since 2010. She remarked that that number may not seem high, but 22 people was the number of students in a K-12 school in an Alaskan village.

1:58:08 PM

RAMONA M. RINGER, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke opposition for the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She felt that the budget cuts would result in chaos.

2:00:36 PM

WALT SISIKIN, NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, JUNEAU, spoke opposition of the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. He stated that his program relied on grants from the Department of Health and Social Services. He remarked that Alaska did not have probation officers, so when individuals are released on parole, no one is given oversight of that individual. He stated that his program was required to oversee the treatment of drug and alcohol offenders. He felt that the financial burden would be placed on the Department of Corrections, if the behavioral health budget was not restored.

2:02:35 PM

LILLY KILLBEAR, RAINFOREST RECOVERY, JUNEAU, testified in opposition for the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She explained that she and her children had benefited from behavioral health programs. She explained that she had received beneficial behavioral health treatment, and therefore was given the chance to be a functioning member of society.

2:03:34 PM

SCOTT KISSINGER, CLIENT, RAINFOREST RECOVERY, JUNEAU, voiced opposition for the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. He remarked that he did not have insurance, so the state funding had given him the opportunity to receive treatment for substance abuse. He pointed out that Rainforest Recovery had the ability to pinpoint problems for people who were not able to find the ability to deal with their own substance abuse. He felt that the substance abuse treatment had helped him become a functioning member of society.

2:04:51 PM

TONY SHOLTY, BOARD MEMBER, JUNEAU ALLIANCE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL, JUNEAU, testified in opposition for the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. He explained that JAMI was the main provider for mental services in Juneau, and served about 475 people. The proposed cut would likely result in reduced mental health care for some, and no mental health care for others who were in great need of those services. The proposed cut would trigger an increased need for emergency room services, hospitalization, homelessness, police calls, and incarceration.

2:06:47 PM

TOM GEMMELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNITED SOUTHEAST ALASKA GILLNETTERS, JUNEAU, spoke against the reduction of the Southeast Regional Fish and Game funding. He stated that \$550,000 for Sockeye and Chinook salmon identification should be added back to the budget, because the program affected all fisheries in Southeast Alaska. He pointed out that there were complex river systems and waterways in Southeast Alaska; and the fisheries had mixed salmon stock of five different salmon species. He stressed that

management of the fisheries required a detailed port sampling program to collect basic management data on catch-composition, origin, and run timing. He explained that Alaska salmon required a robust science program, which required timely collection of data.

2:10:30 PM

JESSICA COOK, TEACHER, ALPENGLow ELEMENTARY, EAGLE RIVER, testified against the proposed budget cuts to the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED). She felt that early educational development for Alaska's children was extremely valuable. She explained that cutting funds to help parents garner skills to ensure that their child achieves academic success would be greatly detrimental. She stated that cutting funding for early learning programs would limit students' opportunity to build a foundation for their academic success. She pointed to numerous studies that supported early learning programs. She announced that children who participated in early learning programs were less likely to be incarcerated later in life.

2:12:30 PM

TOM MCNAMARRA, POLARIS HOUSE, JUNEAU, testified opposition for the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. He remarked that he was in a hospital for three days after he had his leg amputated. When he returned to Juneau, he was initially homeless, because he was bi-polar. The Polaris House helped him find food, work, and housing.

2:14:24 PM

ANJI GALLANOS, ADVOCATE, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, JUNEAU, spoke against the proposed budget cuts to DEED. She felt that early educational development for Alaska's children was extremely valuable. The State of Alaska pre-school grants provided quality educational services for needy 4-year-olds. She felt that early formation of cognitive and character skills provide an important foundation for Alaska's youth. She understood that the legislature had valued early education in the four years prior, and hoped that the current legislature would reinstate early education funding. She pointed out that 344 young children had received quality educational services through eight school districts in the 2012-2013 school year; including 64

students in the Juneau School District. She suggested that the budget cut would result in a loss of services for 135 young, vulnerable children who were experiencing poverty, or other at-risk factors who would not otherwise receive quality early childhood education; and the potential loss of 18 positions.

[2:17:01 PM](#)

JOY LYON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA, JUNEAU, spoke against the proposed budget cuts to DEED. She stressed that early educational interventions were contributing to the solution to many of the problems in the state. She voiced support for maintaining the governor's budget as it was the year prior, which would move the new programs forward in a positive way. She explained that Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers were relatively new programs, and needed financial support in order to survive. She remarked that the first one thousand days of a child's life were the most important in human development; but that age group had the smallest directed funding in the budget.

[2:19:14 PM](#)

CICELY S BYERLY, CLIENT, RAINFOREST RECOVERY, JUNEAU, spoke opposition of the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She explained that she and her family had benefited from state funding for behavioral health.

[2:19:59 PM](#)

RICHARD C. ANDERSON, SELF, JUNEAU, testified in opposition of the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. He shared a personal experience regarding his own struggle with mental illness. He felt that behavioral health support had saved his marriage, family, and self-esteem. He stressed that trained professionals were needed to help mental health patients. He remarked that he could not properly function in society without behavioral health services. He felt that the proposed budget cuts would result in more money spent in fixing the problems, rather than preventing problems.

[2:23:22 PM](#)

CHARLES HIGH, SELF, JUNEAU, voiced opposition of the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. He stated that he had dealt with addiction, starting at the age of 16. He had spent 15 years in prison. He stressed that the cost of incarceration was much greater than rehabilitation. He stated that he was a successful member of the community and society, because he participated in state-funded behavioral health and rehabilitation programs.

[2:25:49 PM](#)

KATHY HANSEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SOUTHEAST ALASKA FISHERMEN'S ALLIANCE, JUNEAU, testified in support of funding for port sampling and aerial surveys. She urged the committee to reinstate the \$550,000 for port sampling and aerial surveys. She also testified against the budget reduction for the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI).

[2:27:47 PM](#)

DONNA BURNETT, CLIENT, JUNEAU ALLIANCE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL, JUNEAU, spoke in opposition of the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She remarked that JAMI had helped her rebuild her life. She stated that the services at JAMI had improved her living skills, and the services at JAMI she would be living on the street.

[2:29:12 PM](#)

LISA GARDNER, EDUCATOR, PARENTS AS TEACHERS PROGRAM, JUNEAU, testified against the early childhood education budget reductions. She stressed that there was a wait list for the Parents as Teachers Program, which reflected the importance of the program. She pointed out that she had made a three-year commitment to her assigned families, and asked the committee to honor the State's commitment to those families.

[2:30:26 PM](#)

GILBERT WILLARD, SELF, JUNEAU, testified in support of funding for the Polaris House.

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ROBERT BARR, DIRECTOR, JUNEAU PUBLIC LIBRARY, JUNEAU, voiced support of reinstating funds for Online With Libraries (OWL) and the Live Homework Help Program. He explained that Live Homework Health was funded through DEED for all Alaskan students, grades 4-12. He stated that students could connect online every day to receive help with their homework. He stressed that the program was very inexpensive at only \$7 per session. He stated that the OWL program should be added as a permanent addition to the operating budget.

[2:33:35 PM](#)

DEBRA K. ARTHUR-WILKINSON, JUNEAU ALLIANCE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL, JUNEAU, testified in opposition of the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She stated that she was a recipient of behavioral health services and a provider of community mental health services. She explained that counseling had helped her get control of her depression and move forward with her life to receive a degree in Psychology.

[2:35:58 PM](#)

MICHELLE JEROME, TEACHER, ALPENGLOW ELEMENTARY, EAGLE RIVER, testified against education budget cuts. She explained that the superintendent of Anchorage Schools had announced the elimination of over 200 jobs due to funding deficits in the current year. Anchorage had a \$20 million shortfall, and would only receive \$8 million from the one-time budget request. She remarked that it was difficult to watch the state lay off educators, because Alaska had strong natural and financial resources. She voiced support for an increase in the base student allocation (BSA).

[2:38:18 PM](#)

MARIE MARX, PARENT REPRESENTATIVE, HARBORVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, JUNEAU, spoke in support of critical, predictable educational budget funding. She voiced support of an increase to the BSA. She stressed that there were many remarkable achievements in Alaska schools, and pointed to some current extremely high test scores. She added that many of the after-school and before-school programs were necessary for children to build a foundation for their future educational and professional success.

2:40:40 PM

Co-Chair Austerman stated that the Juneau portion of the public testimony would reconvene at 6:00 p.m. that evening.

2:41:00 PM

VALERIE BROOKS, READING SPECIALIST, HOUGHTALING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, KETCHIKAN, spoke against education funding reductions. She stressed that pre-K funding was necessary, because there were many students who needed the programs because of their financial restrictions. She explained the every student could benefit from increased educational funding. She pointed out that a BSA increase was necessary for the success of all Alaska students.

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CORDOVA AND OFFNETS

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DAN REUM, FORMER EDUCATOR, CORDOVA (via teleconference), spoke in favor of behavioral health funding in HB 65. He discussed high suicide rates in the state. He noted that counselors were sent to rural communities to address prevention, but were only there a short time due to lack of funding. He stressed the importance of prevention programs. He stated that every person needed at least five people they could turn to for support. He stressed the importance of proper training for counselors. He vocalized support for pre-k programs.

PETER HOEPFNER, CORDOVA SCHOOL BOARD, CORDOVA (via teleconference), vocalized support for increased education funding. He discussed the success of the Cordova school district and its students. He pointed to the governor's goal for a 90 percent graduation rate by 2020. He relayed that Cordova had always met the 90 percent rate. He stressed that the lack of funding was hurting the district's students and that three teachers had been lost over the past two years; the district could not replace the teachers due to funding decreases. He addressed the digital

initiative that would allow Cordova's students to access the Alaska Performance Scholarship; the district could not offer the necessary courses to meet eligibility requirements. He relayed the importance of professional development for teachers. He wondered where the district would turn if funding for the digital initiative was cut. He talked about the importance for student preparedness.

[2:57:21 PM](#)

BARB BRYSON, BEST BEGINNINGS, VALDEZ (via teleconference), testified in support of restoration of full funding for Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers programs. She spoke about the initial stages of the Valdez Imagination Library under the guidance of Best Beginnings. She highlighted the benefits of annual training provided by Best Beginnings along with family centered environments and events. Best Beginnings encouraged communities to become self-sufficient with funding in time. She spoke about fundraising for the family events done by the Valdez Imagination Library Board. She pointed out the Best Beginnings website, which contained a wealth of data regarding the stimulation of a child's brain from birth.

[2:59:59 PM](#)

KIM MIX, EARLY LEARNING AND FAMILY PROGRAM, KOTZEBUE (via teleconference), Spoke in favor of restoration of funding to the governor's proposed levels for Best Beginnings. She mentioned that she had relocated from Juneau to Kotzebue and recognized the lack of programs like Best Beginnings and Parents and Teachers that she was accustomed to working with. She stressed the needs in the community for early childhood education. She added that she had worked in the field of early childhood education for 23 years and clearly saw its benefits like increasing graduation rates and decreasing incarceration.

[3:03:01 PM](#)

JULIE SERSTAD, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES, BARROW (via teleconference), urged inclusion of the Alaska Area Health Education Center in the University of Alaska budget for \$395 thousand to support the healthcare professions. She explained that the program exposed students to a variety of health careers. She recently offered a class to junior high and high school students

interested in public health. Suicide prevention was a topic chosen by one of her Alaska native students. She spoke about shortages in the healthcare positions in Alaska.

[3:06:12 PM](#)

GEANNE GERHARDT-CYRUS, SELF, KOTZEBUE (via teleconference), testified for restoration of the proposed \$8.3 million to the behavioral health budget. She shared a personal story about her daughter and her struggles and needs of services funded by the increment. She stated that the lack of appropriate services led to failures. She stressed that support was essential and helped to keep at-risk children in the state.

[3:08:25 PM](#)

CATHERINE JONES, SELF, KOTZEBUE (via teleconference), testified that she had a disability and also had a child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. She spoke about the devastating effects of substance abuse and mental illness in the Northwest arctic region. She commented on the high statistics regarding deaths and injuries resulting from substance abuse and mental illness in Alaska. She stressed that the funding and support prevented more expensive solutions when problems become extreme. She spoke about in-state savings. She spoke about community based services, which benefited people in crisis.

[3:11:21 PM](#)

ANTHONY CRAVALHO, SELF, KOTZEBUE (via teleconference), testified in support of increased funding for behavioral health services, centers for independent living, and the Complex Behavior Collaborative. The centers for independent living allowed seniors and people with disabilities to remain in their homes and out of higher cost facilities. He spoke about various services offered by behavioral health services and the preventative effort offered as a result of the funding.

[3:13:42 PM](#)

BREE SWANSON, ADMINISTRATOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES FOR MANIILAQ ASSOCIATION, KOTZEBUE (via teleconference), testified as a provider and concerned citizen in support of increased funding for behavioral health services. She pointed out

that her region had the highest rates of suicide, domestic violence, sexual assault, traumatic brain injury and substance abuse. She noted that the Maniilaq Association provided the only behavioral health services to Kotzebue and the 11 surrounding villages. She stressed that the state would provide services to those people in need one way or another, whether through corrections, placement with the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) or through institutional care inside or outside the state.

3:15:59 PM

VIVIAN FLEMING, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIRECTOR, MANIILAQ BEHAVIOR HEALTH SERVICES, KOTZEBUE (via teleconference), testified in support of increased funding for behavioral health services. She stated that her region experienced extreme issues such as domestic violence and suicide. She stated that villages in her region received aid for behavioral health issues from the Maniilaq Association alone. Additional programs were not available in the villages. She spoke about the findings suggesting that mental health costs increased when people were transferred out of the region.

3:19:28 PM

STEVEN SUNDBY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SOUND ALTERNATIVES, CORDOVA (via teleconference), stated that he worked to provide behavioral health services in Cordova. He noted that his facility provided emergency services 24 hours per day, every day of the year. The services targeted the seriously mentally ill and emotionally disturbed youth and adults as well as providing outpatient services for substance abuse. He spoke about his clinic and its need for funding. Cuts in funding for behavioral health services affected the Cordova Community Medical Center, Cordova's federally qualified health clinic, the Domestic Violence Sexual Assault (DVSA) program and the school district.

3:21:21 PM

PETER HERGENROTHER, YUKON HEALTH CORPORATION, BETHEL (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding for Bethel therapeutic courts and the Phillips Ayagnirvik Treatment Center (PATC) residential services. The residential center provided an opportunity for a sober environment and addiction education. He spoke about the cuts to funding and

explained the resulting difficulties. He advocated for the villages and the opportunity for addiction education and healthier lifestyles.

[3:24:13 PM](#)

VERNON SAMSON, YUKON HEALTH CORPORATION, BETHEL (via teleconference), testified in support of behavioral health services and funding for PATC. He spoke about the many benefits provided by PATC including the opportunity for rehabilitation of people with painful addictions.

[3:25:03 PM](#)

DUSTY ALORALREA, SELF, BETHEL (via teleconference), testified for restoration of funding for behavioral health services. He spoke about the drinking and drug use that complicated issues in the area of behavioral health. Behavioral health services were essential in the Bethel area.

[3:26:20 PM](#)

RINDA HOWELL, WRANGELL, BEST BEGINNINGS (via teleconference), testified in support of increased funding for Best Beginnings. She supported the spending of state money for preventative reasons. She believed that every state dollar spent now would save nine dollars later.

[3:27:22 PM](#)

JENN ALLEN, SELF, HAINES (via teleconference), testified in favor of restoration of funding for early childhood education. She spoke about the necessity of early childhood education programs and the valuable information provided regarding childhood development. She personally benefitted from the services and her parenting confidence increased.

[3:29:04 PM](#)

SARAH CHAPELL, MEMBER OF HAINES BOROUGH SCHOOL BOARD, HAINES (via teleconference), testified in support of early childhood education. She spoke about the impact that funding cuts to early childhood education programs had on children in all communities in Alaska. She spoke about reinstating funding for Parents as Teachers and Best Beginnings. She stressed the importance of adjusting the

funding for K-12 students for inflation. She added support for HB 95. She requested full funding for the pilot pre-kindergarten program. She requested reinstatement of the governor's budget request for full funding for the Digital Learning Initiative, which provided access to many different high school courses in smaller school districts.

[3:31:59 PM](#)

ALISSA HENRY, SELF, HAINES (via teleconference), testified in favor of funding for the Parents as Teachers program in rural Alaska. The monthly visits allowed her time to focus on children and parenting skills. She spoke about her confidence resulting from the program. She addressed the need for communities to come together to support each other and children.

[3:33:33 PM](#)

RICHARD TEWS, SELF, BETHEL (via teleconference), testified in support of the Bethel sobering center. He spoke about his community and the need to address alcohol related issues. He stated that the use of alcohol created potential for issues with both patients and staff. He discussed the advantages of the center which offered people choices. He urged continued funding for behavioral health programs.

[3:36:51 PM](#)

DOREEN LEAVITT, NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH HEALTH DEPARTMENT, BARROW (via teleconference), testified in support of mental health services. She stated that the North Slope Borough Health Department was the only mental health center on the North Slope and she listed a multitude of services provided by the center. She stated that a slower response time for behavioral health emergencies would occur as a result of funding cuts. She spoke about clients with geographical challenges that also benefitted from the funding, as they were able to stay near home. She also supported the Best Beginnings program.

[3:39:44 PM](#)

AMY RUSSELL, BERINGIA CENTER OF CULTURE AND SCIENCE, NOME (via teleconference), voiced support for a proposal to amend the library construction and major expansion grant program to include museums and cultural centers. She spoke

about the benefits of the museums, which played a key role in education and were critical to the development of communities in Alaska. She noted that educational services benefitted from museums and cultural centers and were closely linked to the library services.

[3:42:35 PM](#)

ISRAEL PAYTON, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), applauded a \$600 thousand funding cut proposed in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) subcommittee for the guide concession program. He believed that the program was not essential and lacked public support.

[3:44:27 PM](#)

JEANNE KITAYAMA, DIRECTOR, CHILDREN' READING FOUNDATION, HAINES (via teleconference), testified in support of increased funding for Best Beginnings. She pointed out the return on the investment for early childhood education. She spoke about the need for foresight and planning for the future. She stated that a child's core brain structure was developed by age four and education at that age was very important.

NICKI SHELTON, SELF, HOONAH (via teleconference), testified for full funding for early childhood education. She spoke about the impact of early childhood education on Hoonah's children. She spoke about the advantages of Parents as Teachers programs. She noted that the specific education provided by Parents as Teachers included home visits which built on activities with children. She stated that strong readiness skills were seen with the developmental screening offered by the program. She added that Best Beginnings offered multiple services for the needs of rural children. She voiced that the Imagination Library added to many home libraries.

[3:51:27 PM](#)

KEVIN TRESSLER, MCCANN TREATMENT CENTER, BETHEL (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for behavioral health services. He spoke about many issues that complicated life for people with mental illness. He stated that the outdoor opportunities increased self-esteem in boys who struggled with substance abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, or had attempted suicide. He stated that

fishing, trapping and hunting were examples of activities enjoyed by the boys in the program. The activities provided alternatives to substance abuse and criminal activities. The program allowed opportunities to progress toward earning a high school diploma.

[3:54:07 PM](#)

BARBARA SPRIGGS, KOTZEBUE, MENIILAQ MEDICAL CENTER (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the health center. She stated that the Level Four trauma center requested for Kotzebue would help stabilize and transition people to higher levels of care. She understood that \$2 million was removed from the trauma funding and she encouraged its reinstatement. She stated that the reduction of morbidity and mortality was accomplished as a result of the health center. She spoke about the need for fetal monitors and incubators. She stated that 35-40 trauma cases per week were addressed in the center.

[3:57:26 PM](#)

DR. ELLA DERBYSHIRE, KOTZEBUE, MENIILAQ MEDICAL CENTER (via teleconference), testified in favor of a statewide common network as opposed to funding cuts for trauma care in Alaska. She stated that her remote region required the promotion of a trauma network.

[3:58:01 PM](#)

REGGIE JOULE, MAYOR, NW ARCTIC BOROUGH, KOTZEBUE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for public safety. He thanked the legislature for their support of funding for the Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) program in the rural parts of Alaska. He stressed that the needs for VPSOs in his region had increased. He thanked the committee for the support in the form of revenue sharing with communities. He thanked the committee for the support with the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) responsibility and he recognized the difficulty in finding a solution to the issue. He requested support for early childhood education.

[4:01:24 PM](#)

TOM CYRUS, SELF, KIANA (via teleconference), requested funding restoration for the budget//. He noted the high

rate of suicide in his region. He added that the support of individuals added to the success. He noted that the services could be rendered by members of the communities. An added benefit was the savings of money. He discussed multiple services offered by community support. He urged the maintenance of services.

[4:04:05 PM](#)

AT EASE

[4:12:15 PM](#)

RECONVENED

ANCHORAGE

ANNA SAPPAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA ADDICTION PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION (AAPA), ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in opposition to the \$8.3 million funding cuts to behavioral health services. She discussed that addiction treatment programs had allowed her to parent her children and return to school; she had been sober for 18 years. She discussed suicides related to untreated mental illness and substance abuse. She emphasized that money spent on substance abuse prevention saved costs related to emergency medical services, criminal justice services, court systems, and lost productivity. She pointed to opiate addiction in the state and limited treatment options. She stressed that the behavioral health field provided support for individuals and jobs in the state. She urged the committee to keep funding in the behavioral health base.

[4:15:59 PM](#)

ROBYN TRIEST, ALASKA PEER SUPPORT CONSORTIUM, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to the therapeutic courts and behavioral health. She stressed that people were struggling to get support and help in the state; without support people ended up in high cost services. She shared that prevention would help save the state money. She encouraged support for people in their local communities that would allow for quicker recovery; emergency room visits would be decreased and fewer people would go to jail. She accentuated that cuts would hurt the state in the long-term.

[4:18:31 PM](#)

JENNIFER PAYTON, CO-OCCURRING DISORDERS INSTITUTE (CODI), MAT-SU (via teleconference), testified in favor of continued funding for the Department of Behavioral Health. She shared that CoDI worked to shorten the length of stay for youths in out of state residential treatment; the reduced stays equated to cost savings for the state. She explained other intervention and preventative approaches of the institute.

[4:20:09 PM](#)

TINA MORGAN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), vocalized support for maintaining behavioral health services funding. She made a personal statement about her family. She stressed that money would be spent on corrections and in other unnecessary areas if funding was diverted from behavioral health. She urged support for therapeutic courts funding. She noted that it was difficult to operate a behavioral health system in a silo.

[4:21:07 PM](#)

LISA PIERCE, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of behavioral health services. She stated that individuals with chronic mental illness were the most vulnerable. She emphasized that behavioral health services assistance and support provided a gateway to wellness. She stated that the reduction in funds would deny individuals treatment or access to necessary support.

[4:22:07 PM](#)

JOHN HALLOWAY, PROJECT COORDINATOR, CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION PROJECT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of continued funding for behavioral health. Continued funding for behavioral health in communities decreased the chances that individuals would become a burden on the state. He discussed his personal experience and the importance of treatment programs.

[4:23:18 PM](#)

DONNA MAXWELL, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), vocalized opposition to funding cuts for traumatic brain injury victims. She shared her family's personal experience with traumatic brain injury. She struggled had experienced

difficulty locating experienced staff to help provide in-home living skills for her daughter. She worried about her daughter's future. She stressed that there were currently not enough resources for individuals with traumatic brain injuries. She stressed that the state should invest more funding to help the individuals.

[4:26:03 PM](#)

DR. FRANK SACCO, TRAUMA DIRECTOR, ALASKA TRAUMA SYSTEM REVIEW (via teleconference), spoke in support of a trauma system for the state. Alaska had one of the highest rates of deaths from injury in the nation. He stressed that trauma systems had been shown to reduce the mortality rate from serious injury by 25 to 30 percent. He discussed a trauma fund bill that passed in 2010; subsequently half of the state hospitals were now participating in a trauma program. He was dismayed at the elimination of money for the fund from the budget. He accentuated that tangible results had been witnessed from the fund. He discussed that the program was proven. He urged the committee's support.

[4:28:26 PM](#)

MICHELLE BAKER, SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the Southcentral Foundation that provided behavioral health services to Alaska Natives and American Indians in the Anchorage and Mat-Su areas. The organization relied on federal, state, and private funding sources. She relayed that cuts would hurt Alaskans and would put individuals at a higher risk for institutionalized care. She emphasized that serving people at home would save money. She stressed that behavioral health cuts would marginalize the state's working poor and would increase costs in other areas for the state such as law enforcement and correctional facilities. The organization had worked to provide behavioral health consulting services to minimize emergency room visits and other. She reiterated her opposition to proposed funding cuts.

[4:30:41 PM](#)

DR. REGINA CHENAULT, CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON TRAUMA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), vocalized support for the Trauma Care Fund. She relayed that Senator Coghill's bill had brought some amazing education and systems building for the

response to injured people in the state. She stressed that most other states were much more advanced in the area. She stated that Anchorage was the largest city in the country that was not providing a designated level of trauma care to every injured individual. She relayed that cutting funds would lead to 25 percent more people with permanent immobility or mortality from traumatic injury. She stressed that trauma care saved lives. She asked for a reinstatement of trauma funds.

[4:32:36 PM](#)

ANNA CAMPBELL, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the removal of funds from drug treatment programs. She shared her personal experience with addiction and treatment. She discussed that the program had helped her to change her path in life and to be a better mother. She communicated that without treatment programs more individuals would end up in jail and children would end up in state custody. She urged the committee to reconsider the cuts.

[4:34:12 PM](#)

JOERENE SAVIKKO, VICTIMS FOR JUSTICE, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of victims for justice funding. She relayed her personal story and attested to the effectiveness of the services. She discussed federal funding received by the state for underserved crimes. She stated that the recommended survey of victims' needs was not being met in Alaska. She communicated that bringing the state into compliance would not add to the Department of Public Safety budget; the funding already existed in the federal grant. She stressed that the failure to bring the state into compliance could result in the loss of federal funds.

[4:36:57 PM](#)

FAITH MYERS, MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of mental health programs. She emphasized that good programs existed and spoke against the \$8.3 million cuts. She believed the community of advocates should be able to make its own recommendations. She stated that society had difficulty incorporating disabled individuals into the community. She stated that Alaska has some of the worst grievance

procedure laws in the nation for disabled people. She stressed that the laws needed to be improved.

[4:38:59 PM](#)

DORRANCE COLLINS, MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of restoring funds for mental health. She shared stories about mentally ill individuals who were denied services. She reiterated her support for mental health funds and improvements to the grievance procedure law for disabled psychiatric patients. She asked the committee to include the funds.

[4:40:18 PM](#)

STEPHANIE ROADS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against the \$8.3 million reduction in behavioral health grants. She supported funding for therapeutic courts. She shared that 42 percent of inmates in 2006 in Alaska were impacted by mentally illness, developmental disabilities, dementia, traumatic brain injury, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, or alcoholism. She stressed that the individuals had an increased likelihood of criminalization. She accentuated that the state currently paid a high price inadequate mental health and substance abuse treatment. She pointed to overcrowding in prisons. She discussed the need for hands-on judicial supervision of treatment plans to promote public safety. She pointed to acute and costly care.

[4:44:02 PM](#)

JENNIFER SMERD, DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY RELATIONS, COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in opposition to reduced mental health funding. She discussed that the agency had a waiting list for its programs. She relayed that access to services equaled recovery. She asked the committee to consider reinstating funding.

[4:45:16 PM](#)

BRITTANY BUZZARD, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), voiced support for mental health funding. She shared a personal experience. Through treatment she learned to believe she could succeed and understood many people would benefit from mental health treatment. She stressed that the

funding was important for individuals desperately needing benefits.

[4:46:33 PM](#)

JONATHAN TEETERS, BEST BEGINNINGS, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), asked for the restoration of funds for the Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers programs. He pointed to the importance of the programs. He communicated that every \$1 invested in early childhood could return up to \$7 in positive impacts and avoided costs to the state. He discussed that the programs generated over 100 percent return on every public dollar used. He urged the committee to fund the programs at the governor's proposed funding level.

[4:47:59 PM](#)

KAREN MATTHIAS, ANCHORAGE IMAGINATION LIBRARY, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged reinstatement of the governor's proposed funds for the Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers. She stated that the programs provided parents with tools that would enable young children to succeed in school. She emphasized the importance of books in children's lives; books encouraged brain development and provided important family time.

[4:49:26 PM](#)

JERRY JENKINS, ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke for reinstatement of the governor's proposed mental health funds. He that grants reductions would mean fewer services. He discussed treating children impacted by trauma; treatment resulted in improvement in life areas such as at home and in school. He stated that the grant reductions would restrict the ability to provide needed services that were in high demand.

[4:51:28 PM](#)

BRUCE LINQUIST, ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of mental health funds. He asked the committee to consider the lives of the constituents they were representing. He pointed to challenges the individuals had on a daily basis. He emphasized that the individuals deserved the opportunity for an improved life. He understood the committee was faced

with pressure related to the budget. He asked the committee fund the governor's initiative for sexual assault and domestic violence. He stressed that when support was taken away risk factors were increased for the individuals.

4:53:30 PM

JESSICA CRAIG, EPIDEMIOLOGIST, ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM (via teleconference), asked the committee to reinstate money for the Trauma Care Fund. She communicated that injuries were a leading cause of hospitalization and death. She shared that the trauma registry helped to compile reports and to inform program and policy decisions. The identification of trauma was of particular concern in the tribal health system. She stated that the registry had helped to identify the high number of gun related injuries and to secure funding to promote gun safety in communities. She urged reinstatement of the funds.

4:54:44 PM

HILLARY STRAYER, ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM (via teleconference), spoke in favor of the reinstatement of money for the Trauma Care Fund. She shared that losing the fund would substantially reduce support of collection of medical trauma data. She pointed to high rates of trauma related deaths in the state. She shared that rural staff struggled to reduce injury rates with diminishing funds. The fund helped to reduce the types of injuries through prevention such as suicide and other. She stated that medical centers were already struggling to obtain needed data.

4:56:48 PM

JULIE RABEAU, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of restoring funds for the Trauma Care Fund. She had seen improved chances of survival when patients received trauma care. She emphasized that trauma centers were supported through the purchase of life saving equipment, education, and training. She stated that legislators were some of the users who relied on the trauma registry data to be timely, accurate, and available. She stressed that the data could not be maintained without funds. She shared that seven trauma centers were established in 2007 alone. She relayed that the cuts in funding would impact rural trauma centers the most. She

stated that the funds would help prepare the centers for disasters.

[4:59:19 PM](#)

AMBROSIA BOWLUS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the recapitalization of the Trauma Care Fund in the Department of Health and Social Services budget. She stated that the fund enabled hospitals to collect trauma data. The data was current for the first time and was critical for the health of Alaskans. The registry enabled many organizations to prioritize health issues including behavioral health, suicide, and brain injury.

[5:00:29 PM](#)

RONALD WILSON, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), asked the committee to reinstate funding for mental health and urged support for a restoration of funds to the DWI therapeutic court program. He shared a personal story about his experience with substance abuse and an anxiety disorder. He was an Anchorage Alumni Group member that provided outreach for victims. He believed that peer to peer support was essential to recovery and breaking the cycle of incarceration.

[5:02:37 PM](#)

DOREEN SIHENKENBERGER, THERAPEUTIC COURT ALUMNI, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), asked the committee to restore the \$689,000 increment for the DWI therapeutic courts. She discussed a 93 percent success rate from the therapeutic court. She graduated from the program in 2005 and had been sober from that point on. She discussed her work with court participants. She shared a personal story related to the harmful effects of alcohol. She had regained her life after wellness court and was currently a home and business owner. She shared that she and her children had succeeded in breaking her family's cycle of alcoholism.

[5:06:14 PM](#)

PAT REYNAGA, VOLUNTEER, CANCER ACTION NETWORK, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of maintaining a strong tobacco prevention program in the state. She was a nurse and had seen the devastating effects of tobacco use.

She pointed to progress made as a result of prevention and cessation efforts over the past 10 years. She stated that the program had helped to reduce youth tobacco use by 50 percent and by 20 percent in adults. She shared that Alaska's youth used tobacco at higher rates than in other states. She stressed that cutting the program would not offset increased Medicaid costs that would result from increased illness caused by smoking.

[5:08:06 PM](#)

KENDRA JACKSON, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of substance abuse prevention funding. She shared her personal experience fighting substance abuse. She believed a reduction in funding to prevention programs would be detrimental to society.

[5:08:55 PM](#)

LEO TONDREAUULT, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of substance abuse prevention and mental health treatment. He discussed his personal fight with substance abuse and shared that residential treatment had changed his life considerably. He stressed that cutting funds would be detrimental. He was incredibly grateful for the health services he had received.

[5:10:05 PM](#)

WILLIAM FINLEY, FINANCE SECRETARY, SALVATION ARMY, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), vocalized support for behavioral health services. He shared that the program saved lives when people had no other place to go. He stated that less funding meant reduced services. He urged the committee to look at where funding would be cut. He was deeply concerned about unallocated funding cuts. He pointed out that being asked to change accounting practices and procedures overnight was much more difficult than implementing a long-term plan for saving money.

[5:12:36 PM](#)

PAUL ALBERS, BROTHER FRANCIS SHELTER, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged full funding for the traumatic brain injury (TBI) program. He shared the story of an individual who had been homeless and had been denied vocational rehabilitation services based on a psychiatric evaluation.

He furthered that the Alaska Brain Injury Network had given the individual a grant; with continuing support the person would have the ability to move into an apartment. He shared that the event would not have been possible without the funds the legislature was considering making cuts to. He communicated that funding the TBI program could help reduce homelessness in Anchorage.

[5:14:28 PM](#)

SUZI PEARSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ABUSED WOMEN'S AID IN CRISIS (AWAIC), ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), thanked the Department of Public Safety subcommittee for recommending the inclusion of \$287,500 increment for victims' service programs. She asked the committee to maintain support for the increment that would assist programs in meeting increases in basic costs such as utilities, energy, and transportation of victims to and from villages and hub communities.

[5:15:14 PM](#)

JULIA LUEY, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), shared her personal story of cocaine and alcohol addiction. She revealed that she was admitted into the Akeela House Recovery Program in 2008. She stated that her recovery was instrumental in gaining the benefit of honest living. She stated that she had celebrated many years of recovery and was able to conceive a child and parent her well. She encouraged the restoration of funding for behavioral health services.

[5:17:04 PM](#)

MICHELLE SMITH, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the residential treatment program at the Akeela House Recovery Program. She stated that her recovery from addiction was a long-term challenge.

[5:18:25 PM](#)

HIEDI FROST, STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNSEL (SILC), ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in favor of funding for Alaskans that required independent living assistance. She stated that she suffered a head injury from a car accident caused by a drunk driver. She voiced that

the restoration of \$100 thousand increment for independent living in the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's budget allowing centers for independent living to continue outreach to rural Alaska.

[5:20:51 PM](#)

ROSALIE NADEAU, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, AKEELA HOUSE RECOVERY PROGRAM, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the program. She feared that a cut in behavioral health programs would make it difficult to operate the necessary programs in Southeast Alaska. She stated that the pressures placed on those who operate programs were great. She mentioned the unfunded mandate requiring the accreditation of the program, which proved expensive.

[5:24:30 PM](#)

JANET MCCABE, PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), requested the restoration of funding for the DUI therapeutic courts, as submitted by the court system and proposed by the governor. She stated that an addictive offender who entered a therapeutic court was faced with many challenges and opportunities as a participant of therapeutic courts. She stated that the addictive offenders were often repeat-offenders. She stressed that those offenders who participated in therapeutic courts benefitted greatly.

[5:26:46 PM](#)

GWEN LEE, THE ARC OF ANCHORAGE, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the reinstatement of the proposed \$8.3 million in funding for behavioral health services. She stated that the pressure to provide services was greatly reduced by the decrease in funding. She pointed out that the state funding provided 17 percent of the operating costs. She voiced that deferring those in need to waiting lists led to devastating results.

[5:28:44 PM](#)

KARIN SCHAFF, VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of restoration of funding for behavioral health programs in Alaska. She stated that many of the youth affected with mental health

issues benefitted from the funding, which saved the state money with the preventative effort.

[5:30:43 PM](#)

KENDRA LEE, SELF, PALMER (via teleconference), testified in favor of funding for traumatic brain injury programs. She shared a story about a beneficiary of the program's funding. She stated that she worked with girls suffering from mental and emotional disturbances. She requested the reinstatement of the funding.

[5:32:35 PM](#)

CRYSTAL CALICE, AKEELA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified as a recovering addict. She voiced that the programs offered at Akeela were instrumental in her success and her sobriety. She stated that she moved into transitional housing after completing the treatment program. She revealed that she was an active participant in her child's school and was able to provide a safe and sober home. She asserted that she was a productive member of society since receiving help from Akeela.

[5:33:53 PM](#)

LINDSAY MCDANIEL, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified that she was a recovering addict, who spent three weeks recovering at the psychiatric ward at the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital and then continued recovery at Akeela. She stated that her time at Akeela helped her learn how to take care of herself and her responsibilities.

[5:35:11 PM](#)

JEFFREY KELLERMAN, TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for TBI programs. He himself was a victim of a traumatic brain injury and requested reinstatement of funding for the programs. He stated that many tools were available for people suffering from TBI. He advocated for independent living for those with TBI. He stated that he lost his marriage as a result of TBI. He spoke to the benefit of a clean and clear mind. He believed that the funding should be provided for the very important program.

[5:39:06 PM](#)

JOHN CREWS, ALASKA VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL CENTER (AVTEC), ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in favor of restoration of funds for AVTEC in the operating budget. He pointed out that the governor discouraged an increase in AVTEC's tuition while the legislature removed funding that would help to train Alaskans in critical fields. He suggested that Alaska required additional trained mechanics and other positions provided by AVTEC. He explained that community members such as plumbers, mechanics and electricians were valuable to the communities.

[5:41:53 PM](#)

JAKE METCALF, PSEA LOCAL 803, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for public safety in Alaska. He stated that Alaska had serious issue with public safety. He requested the restoration of the governor's request. He advocated for the funding of all 21 positions. He detailed the needs in rural Alaska.

[5:44:28 PM](#)

JILL HODGES, TBI SUPPORT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of mental health services. She stated that her brother suffered a TBI in California where resources existed. She stated that the government funding was essential to her brother's recovery. She urged full funding for the TBI program and others. She discussed the importance of basic mental health resources.

[5:47:08 PM](#)

GRACE SNIDER, TBI SUPPORT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), stressed the importance of funding for traumatic brain injuries, the Complex Behavior Collaborative, and the \$8.3 million for behavioral health services. She urged the committee's support. She told a personal family experience with traumatic brain injury. She discussed a person with a brain injury and mental illness who was currently being denied services. She emphasized that she had personally greatly benefited from existing peer support resources. She urged the committee support for the funding increments.

[5:49:09 PM](#)

ARLENE LUDWIG, MEETING THE CHALLENGE, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), vocalize support for addiction treatment programs. She was a recovering from addiction and as a result of treatment programs she had been able to hold a job for the past 6 years. She stressed that going to a treatment center had saved her life. She asked the committee to reconsider \$8.3 million cuts to behavioral health services. The services were vital to individuals.

5:50:30 PM

DEBORAH BOCK, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of mental health funds. Mental health services saved the state money by keeping individuals off the street, out of jail, and out of hospitals. She spoke against any cuts to the Division of Behavioral Health.

5:51:06 PM

DEBI BALDWIN, CHILD DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, RURAL CAP, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), encouraged funding for pre-k programs. She stressed that the funds included in the proposed budget did would maintain services for pre-k programs, Best Beginnings, and Parents as Teachers. She stated that the decrements could result in the loss of services children and families. She was concerned about the information and justification the House Finance Subcommittee had used to cut services for children. She stressed that the services were not duplicative. She stated the programs all had proven results and increased parent involvement.

5:53:38 PM

PAT VENTGEN, CLINICAL DIRECTOR, AKEELA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for behavioral health, mental health, and substance abuse programs. He asked the committee to restore full funding for behavioral health in the budget. He stressed that treatment saved lives; for many Akeela clients the treatment was a last resort. He emphasized that treatment also saved money. He pointed to a McDowell Group report showing that treatment reduced substance abuse and court costs. He asked the committee to study the report that would provide additional insight on the importance of full funding for behavioral health.

5:56:12 PM

AT EASE

6:06:47 PM

RECONVENED

STEPHANIE BERGLUND, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THREAD, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of childcare and early educators. He asked the committee to restore cuts for children to ensure health and safety for young Alaskans. She encouraged the reinstatement of \$250,000 for strengthening families, \$400,000 for early childhood mental health, pre-k, Best Beginnings, and \$242,000 for Parents as Teachers. She emphasized that the programs provided critical education and community services for educators and families. She stated that many of the investments were the best investments that could be made. She stressed that investing early on helped better prepare children for school, work, and life.

6:09:35 PM

NIKOS PASTOS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of TBI funding. He requested full funding for the program. He asked the committee to continue and potentially increase funding for behavioral health. He shared his personal experience related to traumatic brain injury. He stated that the cost of institutionalizing an individual cost at least five times the cost of living at home. He was committed to advocating for people. He urged the committee to put more money into TBI treatment.

6:12:16 PM

JUNEAU

RICKY DEISING, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, INLANDBOATMAN'S UNION, JUNEAU, spoke in opposition to the elimination of ferry passes for future employees and retirees of the Alaska Marine Highway System. He communicated that the change would impact hundreds to thousands of people who had expected to receive the pass. He detailed that the benefit had been agreed to during a collective bargaining agreement 40 years earlier; the employees had tried to get step and merit increases at the time. The step and merit increases had not been provided, but it the passes had been approved as part of the benefit package. He emphasized that the

passes did not represent a cost to the state; they were space available only. He equated the reduction to Alaska Airline employees' benefit that allowed them to fly standby on planes. He urged the committee to think about what the change would do to future employees. He had received over 100 calls in the past day in opposition to the change. He stated that the pass was revenue positive; individuals spent money on food and state rooms on the ferry. He thanked the committee for its time.

6:16:13 PM

SHERYL WEINBERG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SOUTHEAST REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER (SERRC), JUNEAU, asked the committee to consider restoring the \$100,000 for the rural transition program. She explained that rural transition was a priority in the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority comprehensive plan. She stated that an investment equaled cost savings and increased quality of life for students when they aged out of the system. She pointed to five important facts for transition planning including effective transition planning for high school students with disabilities, facilitate success in adult life, access to adult services, comprehensive vocational plan, securing a job by high school graduation, and parent participation. She stated that there were insufficient partnerships between the business community and schools for the purpose of enhancing employment opportunities to students with disabilities. The Rural Transition program addressed the issues through professional development.

6:19:32 PM

JOE GELDHOF, PACIFIC COAST COUNSEL, MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION, JUNEAU, pointed to intent language on page 38 of CSHB 65. He believed the legislative intent was to get rid of the free passage of vehicles for state agencies, which was different than the employee pass for retired and current ferry workers. He recommended that the committee consider dropping the language after "state agencies" to separate it from state employees. He relayed that state employees had bargained for the space-available pass many years earlier. He encouraged the committee to ask the Legislative Affairs Agency to conduct research project on the cost of the pass. He informed the committee that the intent language would not come up until the next bargaining cycle in one year. He urged the committee to eliminate the

second clause following "state agencies" on page 38 of the bill.

[6:22:12 PM](#)

MARY HAKALA, COORDINATOR, SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING MATH (STEM) ALASKA, JUNEAU, shared that the program was primarily funded by the U.S. Department of Defense; funds had begun to diminish. There had been capital budget appropriations made in the past couple of years for STEM and First Robotics. She communicated that the program did not anticipate any new federal funds. She asked the state to invest in the program that was about jobs and workforce development. She pointed to a handout provided to the committee. She welcomed the committee to a First Robotics event in Anchorage; there were 36 teams across the state.

[6:25:03 PM](#)

GREG ROTH, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, REACH, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for behavioral health. He discussed the population in need of services. He shared an example of a young girl with autism who could not be in public because she screamed to communicate. He stated that a direct service professional had tried to work with the girl, but had left after a couple of days; however, she was making progress with the Complex Behavior Collaborative. He urged support for funding of mental health.

[6:27:45 PM](#)

KAROL BENROTH, COUNSELOR, BARTLETT HIGH SCHOOL, ANCHORAGE, spoke in opposition to education cuts in the proposed budget. She urged support for students. She shared examples of students who arrived at school without eating first because they had no food at home; other students worked full-time jobs to help support their families. She stressed that the issues got in the way of students' learning. She emphasized the importance for education funding. She pointed to the importance of teachers. She shared that high school counselors in her district had completed over 150 suicide interventions in the current year; there had been 3 suicides. She stressed that cuts would be far reaching and that students would pay the price.

[6:31:01 PM](#)

TOM CHARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, JUNEAU, spoke in support of behavioral health funds. He discussed the makeup of the association and described the activities of behavioral health providers. He stated that the proposed \$8.3 million cut to the Division of Behavioral Health would directly limit the ability to help Alaskans achieve and maintain recovery. He was overwhelmed by the number of public testifiers and stories that had been shared in opposition to proposed cuts. He pointed to discussion about using a capital budget appropriation from the prior year to cover the cuts in the division. He stated that the money appropriated the prior year was a one-time increment. He emphasized that plugging the hole temporarily meant there would still be an \$8.3 million hole in the budget in future years.

[6:34:16 PM](#)

MARK JOHNSON, ALASKA TRAUMA SYSTEM REVIEW COMMITTEE, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for the Alaska Trauma Care Fund. He discussed the history of past trauma care center authorization. He relayed that four rural hospitals and the Alaska Native Medical Center had become certified. Subsequently, seven other hospitals had been reviewed, but no progress had been made towards their certification. He relayed that the legislature had passed legislation to provide a trauma care incentive fund three years earlier. He discussed the fund's success. The goal was for every hospital in the state to meet the certification. He discussed that the governor proposed funding in the FY 14 budget and the review committee supported the request. He urged the committee to restore the funds.

[6:36:51 PM](#)

KENNETH BURCHFIELD, SELF, JUNEAU, shared his personal story. He had been incarcerated and had attempted suicide several times in the past year. He had received a grant to go to the Juneau Alliance for the Mentally Ill (JAMI). He stressed the importance of mental health services and funds. He stated that without the support services he would not be alive today. He shared that his life had changed for the better and he had started a small business. He was very thankful for all of the grants and assistance he had received.

[6:38:04 PM](#)

JONAS DECENA, CLIENT, JUNEAU YOUTH SERVICES TRANSITIONAL LIVING PROGRAM, JUNEAU, communicated his personal story. He had experienced physical and emotional abuse at home growing up and had been homeless at the age of 17. He had heard about the transitional living program from a friend and felt hopeful for the first time. The program had increased his self-esteem and had allowed him to focus on becoming an adult and getting a job. He shared that he felt empowered to take charge of his life for the first time.

[6:40:19 PM](#)

ERIC GEBHART, CHAIR, GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SUPERINTENDENT, NENANA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, NENANA, spoke in support of the restoration of \$8.3 million for behavioral health services. He was in favor of multiple programs including early intervention programs, suicide prevention, therapeutic courts, supported housing, keeping families together, and the promotion of economic and personal independence. He vocalized strong support for funding the Complex Behavior Collaborative. The items built capacity in individuals and communities. He favored Department of Labor and Workforce Development funds for supported employment, \$100,000 for rural transition services, and pre-k funding.

[6:42:48 PM](#)

ELIZABETH MCGEE, NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AND ALASKA SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION, ANCHORAGE, spoke in opposition to education funding cuts. She pointed to homelessness impacting students at schools, students without food, students wanting to pay for college and wanting to know how they would be able to do so. She stressed that there were talented students in the state with harsh realities. Without funding graduation rates would decline and students would not be able to compete with students from the Lower 48. She stressed that education funding was imperative for the future.

[6:44:39 PM](#)

BRAD BALDWIN, COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN, JUNEAU, spoke against cuts to the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) budget. He pointed to salmon catch in 2013. He stated that ASMI helped fishermen receive the most for their product.

[6:46:36 PM](#)

JULIANNE CURRY, DIRECTOR, UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA, JUNEAU, spoke in support of the Department of Fish and Game and ASMI budgets; the organization supported the two items in the governor's proposed budget. She stated that the commercial fishing industry brought millions of dollars in tax revenue to the state and was the number one private sector employer for the state.

[6:48:01 PM](#)

ETHAN KNUTHSON, COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN, JUNEAU, spoke against ASMI cuts. He discussed that with genetically engineered salmon consumers could become more reluctant to buy salmon. He believed the issue could pose a significant threat to the fishing industry. He agreed that spending needed to be cut, but not from the commercial fishing industry. He stated that the industry directly pulled its own weight. He believed cuts would be irresponsible.

[6:50:27 PM](#)

ANDI STORY, JUNEAU SCHOOL BOARD, JUNEAU, thanked the committee for its support of several programs. She stated that the board supported increased funding for K-12 education. She stated that increased funding was needed to cover increased costs and to hire more teachers in order to meet the requirements of the Alaska Performance Scholarship. She emphasized that the district would be required to cut \$1.7 million; it had cut \$4.7 million the prior year. The cuts would mean position cuts, less custodians, less art, and other. She could not guarantee adequate student achievement with continued education cuts. She urged the committee's support for a stable education plan.

[6:53:03 PM](#)

BRUCE WALLACE, COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN, JUNEAU, spoke in support of the commercial fishing industry. He stressed that ASMI and the Department of Fish and Game needed funding. He emphasized that the funding was critically important to help ASMI respond to issues in the global marketplace.

[6:54:25 PM](#)

JOAN PARDES, PARENT, JUNEAU, vocalized support for education. She stressed that education was sinking. Without reliable resources nothing succeeded. She asked for investment into a solution. She relayed her personal experience as a Juneau School District parent; teachers and administrators were working extremely hard. She knew six families that had left the state in the past six months because of the lacking education system. She loved Alaska and Juneau, but she believed she may have to face the fact that she was doing a disservice to her child. She stated that as a parent, kids come first. She pointed out that there were many educated people in the state and many who value education for their children. She implored the committee to support for education for the benefit of the state.

[6:57:11 PM](#)

MARTHA MOORE, SELF, JUNEAU, vocalized support for the Trauma Care Fund. She stated that the fund helped hospitals to become certified trauma care centers and supported the coordination of services into an organized system of care. She discussed that studies showed that trauma centers resulted in decreased mortality rates. She shared that a doctor had testified in a recent House Health and Social Services Committee meeting that a trauma system could improve the survivability of head injured patients. She noted that many challenges existed in the state; she stated that many of the challenges were out of the state's control, but trauma care was something that could be addressed.

Co-Chair Austerman discussed the schedule for the following day.

HB 65 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

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#

ADJOURNMENT

[7:00:36 PM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.