

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 6, 2013
1:32 p.m.

[1:32:37 PM](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Austerman called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Mark Neuman, Vice-Chair
Representative Mia Costello
Representative David Guttenberg
Representative Scott Kawasaki, Alternate

ALSO PRESENT

Don Smith, Self, Anchorage; Tom Doran, Self, Seward.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Lisa Herbert, Executive Director, Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, Fairbanks; Aldean Kilborn, Self, Fairbanks; Eva Norwood, Key Coalition, Fairbanks; Nicholas Clark, University of Alaska- Community and Technical College, Fairbanks; Jim Dodson, President, Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation, Fairbanks; Perry Ahsogeak, Behavioral Health Director, Fairbanks Native Association, Fairbanks; Luke Hopkins, Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough, Fairbanks; Joe Want, Self, Fairbanks; Smokey Don Duncan, Self, Fairbanks; Christina Davis, Independent Living Advocate, Access Alaska; Gary Laursen, Director,

Honors Program, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks; Colin Olnor, Self, Fairbanks; Chris Piech, Self, Fairbanks; Cecilia Bates Hudson, Self, Fairbanks; Bedusha Thomas, Self, Fairbanks; Taber Rehbaum, Arctic Alliance for People, Fairbanks; Nick Gasa, Self, Fairbanks; John Regitano, Executive Director, Family Centered Services of Alaska, Fairbanks; Angela Linn, President, Museums Alaska, Fairbanks; Audrey Jones, President, Fairbanks Native Association, Fairbanks; Cheryl Keepers, Self, Fairbanks; Emily Vockeroth, Self, Fairbanks; Martha Rich, Self, Fairbanks; Phil Osborn, Self, Fairbanks; Stephen Fink, Student, UAF-CTC Paramedic Academy, Fairbanks; Myles Jellison, Student, UAF-CTC Paramedic Academy, Fairbanks; Kraig Bryan, Student, UAF-CTC Paramedic Academy, Fairbanks; Michael Smith, Student, UAF-CTC Paramedic Academy Fairbanks; Chuck Kuhns, Paramedic Coordinator, Paramedic Academy, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks; Don Gray, Self, Fairbanks; Murray Richmond, Self, Fairbanks; Marie Mitchall, Self, Fairbanks; Ashlie Theisen; Shawston Runk, Selves, Fairbanks; Paul Beals, Self, Fairbanks; Gunnar Ebbeson, Owner, Turning Point Counseling Services, Fairbanks; Stephanie Little Wolf, Self, Fairbanks; Jomo Stewart, Energy Project Manager, Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation, Fairbanks; Alan Batten, Self, Fairbanks; Sandy Solenberger, Volunteer Chairman, North Slope Imagination Library, Barrow; Patuk Glenn, Museum Curator, North Slope Borough Inupiat Heritage Center, Barrow; Judi Ruder, Clinician, Behavioral Health, Unalaska; Danita Koehler, Self, Dry Creek; Bryce Wrigley, Alaska Farm Bureau, Delta; David Flynn, Self, Delta; Carol Dufendauch, Delta Imagination Library, Delta; Kristin Miller, Co-Chair, Delta Imagination Library, Delta; Jasmine Well, Co-Chair, Delta Imagination Library, Delta; Rose Loera, City Manager, Dillingham; Dan Pasquariello, Chief of Police, Dillingham; Robin Chaney, Self, Dillingham; Jean Ellis, President, Petersburg Borough School District, Petersburg; Marlene Cushing, Women Against Violence Everywhere, Petersburg; Sunny Rice, Coordinator, Alaska Young Fishermen's Summit, Sitka; Jerry Stuber, Self, Petersburg; Kim Kilkenny, Clinician, Petersburg Mental Health Services, Petersburg; Max Worhatch, President, United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters, Petersburg; Brian Lynch, Executive Director, Petersburg Vessel Owners, Petersburg; Dr. Robert Thomason, Superintendent, Petersburg Borough School District, Petersburg; Susan Ohmer, Director, Petersburg Mental Health Services, Petersburg; Jerry Dzugan, Self, Sitka; Marjorie Hennessey, Self, Sitka; Tracy Gagnon, Coordinator, Fish to

School, Sitka; Clarice Johnson, Self, Sitka; Ellen Frankenstein, Self, Sitka; Gayle Young, Self, Sitka; Lisa Busch, Executive Director, Sitka Sound Science Center, Sitka; Lee Bennet, Director, Sitka Community Hospital, Sitka; Fred Fayette, Self, Sitka; Scott Wagner, Representative, Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association, Sitka; Dorrie Ferrell, Member, Easter Group, Sitka; Sue Hill, President, Association of Alaska School Boards, Fairbanks; Steve Bradshaw, Teacher, Sitka; Susan Smalley, Self, Kenai; Katie Wales, Peninsula Community Health, Kenai; Twyla Bentley, Self, Kenai; Margaret Parrot, Self, Soldotna; Lucy Graham, Self, Kenai; Tina Draper, Self, Kenai; Sammy Crawford, Board Member, Kenai Peninsula Borough School Board, Kenai; Mary Toutonghi, Self, Kenai; Joe Cannava, Director, Peninsula Community Health Services, Kenai; Melissa Baker, Student, Kenai Peninsula College (KPC), Kenai; Shauna Thorton, University of Alaska Anchorage, Coalition Student Leaders, Kenai; Pete Sprague, KPC, Kenai; Scot Wheat, Self, Homer; Kim Burrows, Independent Living Center, Homer; Elanna Sena, Parent, Homer; Rick Malley, Independent Living Center (ILC), Homer; Rachel Romberg, Haven House, Homer; Liz Downing, KPC, Homer; Robert Letson, South Peninsula Hospital, Homer; Susan Drathman, South Peninsula Behavioral Health Services, Homer; Rachelle McAlexander, Kachemak Bay College, Homer; Bonnie Betley, Best Beginnings, Homer; Maria Calhoun, Sprout, Homer; Michael Horton, Behavioral Health, Copper Center; Victoria Kildal, Counselor, Copper River Native Association, Copper Center; Sharron Ables, Online With Libraries (OWL), Glennallen; Sherri Cox, Crossroad Medical Center, Glennallen; Laurie Thomas, Best Beginnings, Ketchikan; Lanetta Lundberg, Ketchikan Medical Center, Ketchikan; Bill Auger, Commercial Fisherman, Ketchikan; Emily Chapel, SAIL, Ketchikan; Kevin Gadsey, SAIL, Ketchikan; Patricia Chapman, Self, Ketchikan; Jessi Chapman, Self, Ketchikan; Charles Haberbush, Self, Ketchikan; Jos Govaars, Self, Ketchikan; Bobbie McCreary, Self, Ketchikan; Vikki Jo Kennedy, Self, Kodiak; Valarie Kingsland, Alaska Association of School Libraries, Seward; Melinda Matis, Self, Seward; Kevin Munson, Mat-Su Health Services, Wasilla; Kelly McBride, Mat-Su School District, Wasilla; Jim Beck, Access Alaska, Palmer; Estrella Lee, PAT Coordinator, Homer; Ruth Allison Reynolds, Best Beginnings, Homer; Dave Branding, Chief Executive Officer, South Peninsula Behavioral Health Services, Homer; Jill Lush, Director, Sprout Family Services, Homer; Sonja Mark, Librarian, Dillingham Public Library, Dillingham; Kay

Andrews, Southwest Region School District, Dillingham; Mary Jo Joiner, Director, Kenai Community Library, Kenai; Mike Frost, KPC, Kenai; Dave Jones, Assistant Superintendent, KPBSD, Kenai; Phillip Miller, KPC, Cooper Landing; Bob Martin, Commercial Fisherman, Petersburg; John Bringhurst, Petersburg Borough School District, Petersburg; Jennifer Ray, Self and Parent, Petersburg; Sarah Bell, Director, Kettleson Memorial Library, Sitka; Dennis Longstreth, Commercial Fisherman, Sitka; John Baird, General Manager, Sitka Sound Seafoods, Sitka; Gretchen Geist, Thrive Mat-Su Prevention Coalition, Mat-Su; Celia Harrison, Self, Kenai; Elizabeth Ripley, Executive Director, Mat-Su Health Foundation, Mat-Su.

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."

Co-Chair Austerman discussed the meeting's agenda.

FAIRBANKS

1:34:26 PM

LISA HERBERT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FAIRBANKS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of the governor's North Slope LNG project and for including the governor's amendment to transfer \$125 million from the Alaska Housing Capital Corporation Fund to the Sustainable Energy Transmission Supply and Development Fund. She stated that the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce's number one priority was reducing energy costs. She related that the high cost of energy was driving business away from her community and had crippled disposable income that could have otherwise been spent in Alaska.

1:36:01 PM

ALDEAN KILBORN, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified against cuts in the Alaska State Library Budget to the Online With Libraries Program and Tutor.com She stated that the two programs should be made permanent budget items, as proposed by the governor. She was concerned that by cutting the funding, the Legislature was sending the message that rural Alaskans did not deserve digital equality and related that funding would give "bush" communities equal access to the internet. She pointed out that live-homework help was a cheap way to provide students with help and that a lot of students accessed Alaska State Library services. She discussed the value and ease of use of Alaska State Library services.

1:38:34 PM

EVA NORWOOD, KEY COALITION, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), expressed the Key Coalition's support for the \$450,000 in funding for the Complex Behavior Collaborative (CBC). She pointed out that the state should not cut funding for this unique and critical program. She explained that most people with disabilities were easy to care for, but that a small percentage had challenging behaviors; without support, the challenging behaviors escalated into costly problems for the state. She pointed out that the CBC was providing support in the forms of expert assessment, intervention planning, training of family, professional care givers, as well as consultations and evaluations. She stated that funding was allocated to set up the CBC in FY12 and that it had starting serving Alaskans in FY13. She concluded that the CBC worked and was cost effective.

1:40:35 PM

NICHOLAS CLARK, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA- COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), expressed support of funding for the Interior Alaska Area Health and Education Cooperative (AHEC). He related that funding AHEC was vital for students in the healthcare field. He pointed out that AHEC provided small scholarships and internships in hospitals and care facilities throughout the state; AHEC also helped students go outside Alaska for internships in the healthcare field. He added that the program had helped over 2,000 students in 2011-2012.

1:42:09 PM

JIM DODSON, PRESIDENT, FAIRBANKS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of the of the governor's package to advance the LNG trucking project in Fairbanks and for including the governor's amendment to transfer \$125 million from the Alaska Housing Capital Corporation Fund to the Sustainable Energy Transmission Supply and Development Fund. He shared that funding provided Fairbanks with the means to move the project forward; he pointed out that the funding was not a grant, but was a loan. He offered that the funding was making less than 2 percent interest currently, but that the loan would be paid back with 3 percent. He concluded that the loan was the right thing to do.

1:43:27 PM

PERRY AHSOGEAK, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIRECTOR, FAIRBANKS NATIVE ASSOCIATION, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for behavioral health services and stated that behavioral health had not seen an increase in funding in several years. He offered that the reduction in funding could mean the closure of programs, staff layoffs, and reducing the number of people served. He pointed out that other higher-cost facilities, such as emergency rooms, would see an increase in the number of people that would have to be served if the funding was cut. He relayed that Alaska already had limited substance abuse treatment resources and that a funding cut might result in people being sent out of state for treatment. He spoke about the effectiveness of behavioral health services and urged the committee to reconsider budget cuts.

[1:45:21 PM](#)

LUKE HOPKINS, MAYOR, FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of the LNG facility and the distribution project funding legislation, as well as for including the governor's amendment to transfer \$125 million from the Alaska Housing Capital Corporation Fund to the Sustainable Energy Transmission Supply and Development Fund; he pointed out that the amendment would be a loan to help solve the energy issues in Fairbanks and other rural communities.

[1:46:52 PM](#)

Co-Chair Stoltze related that the committee was missing Representative Guttenberg's presence and requested Mr. Hopkins to pass on the comments on behalf of the committee. Mr. Hopkins responded that he had spoken with Representative Guttenberg regarding the issues and thanked Co-Chair Stoltze for his best wishes.

[1:47:38 PM](#)

JOE WANT, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke against funding the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Guide Concession Program. He thanked the committee for removing the fiscal note for the program. He pointed out that DNR already had a system in place that could be modified to address any concerns regarding resource management. He related that the concession program was based on crowding of the resource and trespassing, both of which could already be addressed under current programs, resources, and infrastructure. He discussed the decrease in license sales in the last few years, as well as a decrease in the number of non-resident moose tags, sheep tags, and caribou tags. He expressed concern that the program would hand over to an individual management policies that were currently vested by statute in the Board of Game.

[1:50:17 PM](#)

SMOKEY DON DUNCAN, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified against funding the Department of Natural Resources' Guide Concession Program. He stated that the program was not based on resource management, wildlife conservation, or maximizing the value of the resource;

furthermore, the program did not satisfy the five criteria that were used to justify it. He offered that the program would not have withstood a legal challenge and that 50 percent of the original supporters could no longer support the program. He pointed out that DNR had never been a game manager and that solutions should include broad industry participation. He thanked the committee for not funding the Guide Concession Program and urged not revitalizing it.

[1:52:05 PM](#)

CHRISTINA DAVIS, INDEPENDENT LIVING ADVOCATE, ACCESS ALASKA (via teleconference), spoke in support of restoring the \$100,000 increment for the Centers for Independent Living. She stated that the Centers for Independent Living provided services to over 45 rural communities the prior year, but that large areas of the state still remained underserved. She pointed out that limited funds reduced the already limited options that Rural Alaskans had, particularly among seniors and individuals with disabilities. She pointed out that funding these services would make productive citizens and reduce costs to the state. She concluded that home and community based services were proven effective and cost efficient.

[1:53:35 PM](#)

GARY LAURSEN, DIRECTOR, HONORS PROGRAM, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), expressed support of continued funding for the University of Alaska, the preservation of the UA Press, and a \$50,000 addendum for the University of Alaska's Honors program at UAA, UAF, and UAS. He pointed out that the press gave publishers an outlet and related that all royalties of his publications were going back to the university and into a scholarship fund that supported undergraduate and graduate students' education. He stated that 95 percent of the UAF Honors Program students were graduating and that 90 percent were staying in Alaska.

[1:55:47 PM](#)

COLIN OLNER, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding the Controllership Program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He pointed out that Alaska had a critical shortage of trained senior accountants and controllers and that the demand for these services was

expected to rise over the next few days. He related that he was working for a small company that did around \$30 million a year in business and pointed out that it was having trouble finding a controller because of the high demand. He concluded that the program would help train and develop students that were from Alaska, who knew Alaska's economy.

[1:56:56 PM](#)

CHRIS PIECH, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of funding the Controllershship Program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He shared that Alaska was currently experiencing a shortage of accountants and that the addition of the program would meet the need. He related that a lot of senior accountants and controllers were expected to retire in the next ten years. He concluded that the program would help support Alaskans and create more opportunities.

[1:57:45 PM](#)

CECILIA BATES HUDSON, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support increasing funding to education. She expressed the need for Alaska's schools to keep up with technology. She discussed how a North Pole school had incorporated career technology learning. She shared that her son, who had Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, was enrolled in the North Pole school and was maintaining a 3.8 grade average; furthermore, her son was more exciting about school than he ever had been before. She stated that the West Valley and Lathrup school districts did not have the budget for some of these programs and related how helpful they were for young people. She discussed bringing a student down to Juneau to meet with legislators and related how the experience had changed the child.

[2:00:38 PM](#)

BEDUSHA THOMAS, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), expressed support of funding for the Interior Alaska Area Health and Education Cooperative (AHEC). She related that AHEC had been beneficial in to the UAF Paramedic Academy and had aided the clinical setting. She pointed out that that the cooperative was a great benefit to students in the university's externship program in the Lower 48.

TABER REHBAUM, ARCTIC ALLIANCE FOR PEOPLE, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), expressed support of a \$200,000 increase to the Health and Human Services Community Matching Block Grant and spoke against cutting funding for behavioral health services, Best Beginnings, and Parents as Teachers. She offered that the increase to the matching block grant would allow Fairbanks to fund all the eligible agencies that applied for funding; furthermore, the agencies would provide the services at a fraction of the cost that the state would incur providing them. She shared that prevention saved money in the short-term and the long-term.

[2:03:06 PM](#)

NICK GASA, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of a \$200,000 increase to the Health and Human Services Community Matching Block Grant and SB 70. He related that SB 70 amended the Civil Legal Services Fund to include 25 percent of the court filing system fees. He stated that funding to Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) provided essential human services, but that ALSC also boosted economies across the state by \$17.8 million annually. He concluded every dollar invested ALSC resulted in \$5 dollars of economic benefit for its clients.

[2:04:14 PM](#)

JOHN REGITANO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FAMILY CENTERED SERVICES OF ALASKA, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of restoring the funding cuts to the state's Behavioral Health Grants. He shared that Family Centered Services of Alaska provided mental health and behavioral health services to children around the state. He opined that the budget cuts would result in a dramatically negative effect on social service agencies in the state and that the network would suffer. He discussed the fragile nature of the network of social service agencies in Alaska and pointed out that Family Centered Services of Alaska had already received a ten percent cut in 2003; since that time, there had been no increases in the budget and the number of children the centers served had risen from 100 to 300. He concluded that this was a bad time to cut already struggling social service agencies.

[2:06:49 PM](#)

ANGELA LINN, PRESIDENT, MUSEUMS ALASKA, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of increasing the funding for the Alaska State Museum's Grant and Aid Program to \$150,000 and an additional line item of \$25,000 to support the internship program, which was currently included in the Alaska State Museum's Grant and Aid Program budget. She pointed out that the grant and aid program supported projects in Alaska museums in the areas of collections care, facility upgrades, and exhibit development. Over its 32 year history, the program had provided over 80 of Alaska's cultural institutions with funding or interns. The funding provided valuable assistance for Alaska's smaller and rural museums, cultural centers, visitor centers, historical societies, and historical holdings. She discussed how the state museums benefited Alaska's economy, communities, and cultural wealth.

[2:08:44 PM](#)

AUDREY JONES, PRESIDENT, FAIRBANKS NATIVE ASSOCIATION, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified against the budget cuts to behavioral health services and voiced support for the Controllershship Program at UAF. She related that approval of the proposed budget would devastate communities and would create a huge deficit in services. She shared that the Fairbanks Native Association's behavioral health services provided a community based option for the substance abuse treatment of youth, adults, and families. She shared a personal story regarding her own and her family's experiences with substance abuse; with the help of behavioral health services, she was able to turn her life around. She concluded that detoxification, residential treatment, and aftercare services provided a new start and hope for many families.

CHERYL KEEPERS, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), expressed her support for a \$200,000 increase to the Human Services Community Matching Block Grant, an increase in funding for the early childhood programs, and the restoration of funding for behavior health services programs. She pointed out that the state dollars were matched by borough and local sources and were leveraged 17 times its value. She stated that Best Beginnings dollars were well spent in her community.

[2:12:02 PM](#)

EMILY VOCKEROTH, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), supported the governor's proposed funding for the Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers Programs. She stated that her community had greatly benefited from both of the programs. She mentioned that Best Beginnings had funded several projects including improving literacy education for childcare providers, establishing a website with multiple resources, and a community wide campaign to disseminate early childhood development information. She warned that the proposed cuts by the Education Subcommittee would jeopardize projects. She offered that the kindergarten profile for this year indicated that only 17 percent of Alaska's children arrived at school ready to learn and opined that there was a lot of work that needed to be done.

[2:13:18 PM](#)

MARTHA RICH, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified against the cuts in funding to behavioral health services. She discussed the 13 different behavioral health service programs that she had on a list and stated that she did not want any of the programs to be cut. She pointed out that behavioral health services served individuals with mental illnesses, substance abuse disorders, intellectual and developmental disorders, and seniors. She offered that the people that behavioral health services served were at a higher risk for institutional care, which would cost the state a lot more money than keeping the social services.

[2:14:49 PM](#)

PHIL OSBORN, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), supported restoring the funding for behavioral health services. He opined that the people who benefited from these programs were the neediest in our society and that the highest function of government was to help those who needed help more than others. He discussed the death of Hugo Chavez and related that he had been guiding light to help the poor among his citizens.

[2:15:54 PM](#)

STEPHEN FINK, STUDENT, UAF-CTC PARAMEDIC ACADEMY, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), expressed support of funding for the Interior Alaska Area Health and Education Cooperative (AHEC). He pointed out that the paramedic academy had a two

to three month required internship in the Lower 48 and that AHEC supported the travel costs of the internship, as well as orientation at hospitals.

[2:16:48 PM](#)

MYLES JELLISON, STUDENT, UAF-CTC PARAMEDIC ACADEMY, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Interior Alaska Area Health and Education Cooperative (AHEC). He offered that he was from out of state and pointed out that the paramedic program at UAF was a driving factor of why he chose to attend the University of Alaska. He shared that the support of AHEC provided students with training and experience to become competent medics and allowed the students to go outside the state for internships. He concluded that continued funding would keep more students coming in from outside Alaska and would provide a steady supply of highly trained EMS professionals in the state.

[2:18:20 PM](#)

KRAIG BRYAN, STUDENT, UAF-CTC PARAMEDIC ACADEMY, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the Interior Alaska Area Health and Education Cooperative (AHEC). He pointed out that AHEC played a vital role in the paramedic program at UAF and that it helped coordinate to make local healthcare facilities available to students. He discussed the financial support AHEC provided for required internships out of the state.

[2:19:17 PM](#)

MICHAEL SMITH, STUDENT, UAF-CTC PARAMEDIC ACADEMY FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the Interior Alaska Area Health and Education Cooperative (AHEC). He shared that he had been a volunteer and professional EMT in the Fairbanks for five years. He related that he was able to increase his training through the use of AHEC. He concluded that when someone called 911, they wanted a fully qualified medical provider to respond and that the AHEC and the university would make that happen.

[2:19:58 PM](#)

CHUCK KUHNS, PARAMEDIC COORDINATOR, PARAMEDIC ACADEMY, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), expressed support of funding for the Interior Alaska Area Health and Education Cooperative (AHEC) and its regional centers. He related that UAF's paramedic program was the only nationally accredited program in the state and trained about 20 students a year; the program had 90 percent of its students passing the national test on the first attempt. He stated that AHEC's regional center in Fairbanks provided "almost foundational" support to the Paramedic Academy. He related that AHEC assisted students with the expenses of the required internships outside of Alaska and helped coordinate with the hospitals.

[2:21:17 PM](#)

DON GRAY, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke against the proposed cuts to behavioral health services and in support of funding education. He shared that funding behavioral health services would prevent state expenditures in the future that would result from incarceration, institutionalization, and hospitalization. He relayed that the future relied on the education of Alaska's children and urged that public schools were critical for the state's future.

[2:23:30 PM](#)

MURRAY RICHMOND, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of the restoration of adequate funding for the health and social services and education budgets. He offered that the sexual assault rate in Alaska was too high and was sometimes higher than the graduation rate in certain areas. He stated that people with problems had children with the same problems and that putting less money towards the problem did not help. He stated that "throwing money" at problem was not the issue, but that doing nothing would not make them go away.

[2:25:04 PM](#)

MARIE MITCHALL, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), expressed support of the restoring funding to behavioral health services, a \$200,000 increase to the Human Services Community Matching Block Grant, an increase in funding for the early childhood programs, as well as restoring funding

to the Complex Behavior Collaborative Program. She supported the testimony of previous testifiers and discussed the demand and benefit of behavioral and social service programs. She pointed out that the Key Coalition of Alaska had data that supported the Complex Behavior Collaborative Program. She relayed the difficulty of getting help for a loved one or family member with complex behavior and stated that the programs provided stability and allowed those affected to live a normal life.

2:27:36 PM

ASHLIE THEISEN; SHAWSTON RUNK, SELVES, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke against cuts in funding to behavioral health services, and supported funding for mental and substance abuse programs, particularly the Womens and Childrens Center for Inner Healing in Fairbanks. She related that she was currently a client of the Womens and Childrens Center for Inner Healing and that the services had been life changing for herself, her son, and her family. She shared that the treatment program had changed a lot of women's lives and that it was one of the only centers in the state that allowed women and children to attend. She relayed a personal story about her experiences with mental and substance abuse and expressed a desire to see treatment programs continue. She read from a prepared statement by Shawston Runk. The statement relayed concerns that cuts in the budget would have a negative effect on mental health and substance abuse facilities at the women's and children's center.

2:30:23 PM

PAUL BEALS, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified against the cuts to behavioral health services. He shared his role on the Community Action Planning Committee, the Suicide Prevention Taskforce, Fairbanks Prevention Coalition, as well as Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption. He related that Fairbanks Counseling and Adoption had lost its psychiatrist and was unable to replace the position; as a result, they had lost their ability to serve Medicaid patients and he had lost his job. He stated that his experience in the industry was in suicide prevention and expressed fears that the \$8.3 million in funding cuts would result in lost lives. He pointed to Alaska's high rate of suicide and offered that the system was "overtaxed." He concluded that Fairbanks' behavioral health service

organization was going through a much needed reorganization and that the cut would have a very negative effect on that agency. He concluded that it was difficult to retain qualified providers and practitioners and urged that this was not the time to cut funding.

2:33:33 PM

GUNNAR EBBESON, OWNER, TURNING POINT COUNSELING SERVICES, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke against the budget cut for behavioral health services. He discussed the DUI Court and the potential of lost funding for that program. He offered that the DUI Court was one of the most researched and effective programs in the nation and that it was very cost effective in comparison to jailing someone. He stated that the recovery programs of the court were intensely monitored. He related a personal story about how treatment had helped him and urged the restoration of funding for behavioral health services. He discussed how Los Angeles County was experiencing high rates of individuals in jails with mental illnesses, which was a direct result of the lack of funding for medication.

2:36:01 PM

STEPHANIE LITTLE WOLF, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), expressed support of funding for Native students and families and for maintaining control of the Title 7 Indian Education Funding. She stated that putting the money in the same pool of funds would violate the trust responsibility that the federal government had in the education of Alaska Native, American Indian, and Native Hawaiian students. She stated that there were over 2,000 Alaskan Native or American Indian students, which represented hundreds of tribes, in her school district and that she was advocating for each one of those students to have a voice in their own education. She stated that local education agencies currently housed the money for Title 7 and urged the congressional delegation to take active measures to insure that all tribes were represented and students' academic and cultural needs were met. She acknowledged the achievement gap in "our" students and that it was time for all the stakeholders to become proactive. She pointed out that strong development in cultural responsive education would help deliver an appropriate and successful education.

[2:38:19 PM](#)

JOMO STEWART, ENERGY PROJECT MANAGER, FAIRBANKS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of the governor's amendment to transfer \$125 million from the Alaska Housing Capital Corporation Fund to the Sustainable Energy Transmission Supply and Development Fund. He related that the funding was critical to provide the capital necessary for the support of the transition to lower-cost, cleaner burning North Slope natural gas. He added that the fund transfer also insured that the Sustainable Energy Transmission Supply and Development Fund had adequate capitalization in order to make funds available in the future for other energy projects in other communities. He concluded that Fairbanks realized it was not the only community that had energy cost and air quality issues.

[2:39:51 PM](#)

ALAN BATTEN, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of restoring funding to the education and behavioral health services budgets. He pointed out that the future of Alaska was dependent on the education of its children and that it was an area that deserved funding. He stated that the pre-K pilot program was receiving favorable reviews and should be instituted more broadly instead of being cut. He offered that support for community based behavioral services was very important, effective, and cost effective. He related the high rate of alcoholism, substance abuse, and suicide in Alaska. He concluded that state needed to support these communities based services with stable funding.

[2:41:24 PM](#)

DON SMITH, SELF, ANCHORAGE spoke against the \$25 million in cuts to the Anchorage School District's budget. He pointed out that there was a constitutional requirement for education in Alaska. He discussed the expected reductions every year to the school district's budget and suggested that the state law be changed so that the school board had the ability to raise funds. He shared that currently, the school district had no authority or ability to raise any kind of money. He opined that if the school board was given taxing authority, it could have the city assembly add the needed funding to the taxes of Anchorage. He expressed

the need for giving more local control to the school districts. He offered that the board could vote on issues with funding as they arose, but stated that "carte blanche" authority should not be given. He concluded that there should be some way for the district to raise a limited amount of money that clearly needed to be raised.

[2:44:30 PM](#)

AT EASE

[3:06:10 PM](#)

RECONVENED

SITKA, PETERSBURG, BARROW, DILLINGHAM, UNALASKA, DELTA
JUNCTION

[3:06:49 PM](#)

SANDY SOLENBERGER, VOLUNTEER CHAIRMAN, NORTH SLOPE IMAGINATION LIBRARY, BARROW (via teleconference), testified in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers. She stressed that the programs served children ages zero to 4, and pointed out that children had flourished in these programs. She explained that the success of the programs was directly tied to the training of the administrators of the programs. She remarked that she was able to clearly see which children had completed these early education programs, based on their high achievements later in life.

[3:09:29 PM](#)

PATUK GLENN, MUSEUM CURATOR, NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH INUPIAT HERITAGE CENTER, BARROW (via teleconference), testified in support for the grants and aide program for museums in the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) budget. She stated that the North Slope Borough Inupiat Heritage Center was an educational institution that promoted and perpetuated Inupiat heritage through museum operations. She expressed that museums and cultural centers contributed to the economy and well-being through employment and cultural tourism. Museums educated children and adults; and enriched communities.

[3:11:25 PM](#)

JUDI RUDER, CLINICIAN, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, UNALASKA (via teleconference), testified against the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She stressed that funding for behavioral health supported programs like mental health treatment; substance abuse treatment; detox services; services for youth with severe emotional disturbances; peer support services; suicide prevention; tribal behavioral health services; services for seniors and elders; and domestic violence prevention and intervention. She furthered that behavioral health services encouraged mental health patients to remain in their home communities. She stressed that without behavioral health support in the small communities, those behavioral health patients may be subjected to incarceration or hospitalization. She felt that all Alaskans could lead meaningful and productive lives.

[3:14:36 PM](#)

DANITA KOEHLER, SELF, DRY CREEK (via teleconference), testified against the budget reduction for trauma care funding. She explained that in 2010, Governor Parnell had signed the regional trauma care law. She stressed that some emergency care service centers were shutting down in the small villages, due to lack of funding. Many small villages and communities did not have easy access to trauma care facilities, so the broad range of availability was necessary for the safety of the residents of small communities. She felt that the trauma care funding and access to trauma care treatment would benefit all Alaskans.

[3:17:24 PM](#)

BRYCE WRIGLEY, ALASKA FARM BUREAU, DELTA (via teleconference), testified in support of \$181,000 for the Farm to School program. He stressed that the Farm to School program was necessary for children to eat healthy and local food in schools; while receiving invaluable agriculture education. He explained that the program was entering its third year, so the funding was necessary to keep the program alive. He stressed that his request was not an increase, but perhaps left out of a recent bill due to a clerical error.

[3:19:18 PM](#)

DAVID FLYNN, SELF, DELTA (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Complex Behavior Collaborative. He explained that the cost of psychiatric facilities was much higher than local preventative costs. He explained that there were many applicants for the Complex Behavior Collaborative, with very good success of families that included people with behavioral health issues. He shared a story of an autistic child's family who had benefitted from the behavioral health counseling and funding from the Complex Behavior Collaborative.

[3:24:39 PM](#)

CAROL DUFENDAUCH, DELTA IMAGINATION LIBRARY, DELTA (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for early childhood education. She spoke specifically for the Best Beginnings. She remarked that it was important to read to children, beginning at a very young age, in order to encourage proper literacy and learning skills.

[3:25:46 PM](#)

KRISTIN MILLER, CO-CHAIR, DELTA IMAGINATION LIBRARY, DELTA (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for Best Beginnings. She asked that the Best Beginnings program return its funding to the governor's original proposed budget. She stressed that the program was essential for young children's development. She explained that the Delta Imagination Library could not function without funding from the Best Beginnings grant program.

[3:25:46 PM](#)

JASMINE WELL, CO-CHAIR, DELTA IMAGINATION LIBRARY, DELTA (via teleconference), testified in support of reinstating funding for the Best Beginnings program. She stressed that the Imagination Library depended on funds from the Best Beginnings grant program. She explained that Best Beginnings was approximately 60 percent of the Imagination Library's budget. She shared that 200 children were enrolled in the Delta Imagination Library, and in order to serve those children, adequate funding was necessary to continue the program.

[3:28:48 PM](#)

ROSE LOERA, CITY MANAGER, DILLINGHAM (via teleconference), testified in support of the \$2 million for community and regional jails, and continued funding for community revenue sharing. She stated that Dillingham was a transportation hub, so the jail felt the burden of many out of town perpetrators. The Dillingham jail had an eight bed capacity and often operated over capacity. She stated that Dillingham could not operate programs that cannot be financially supported. She stressed that the community jail funding would allow for the Dillingham's budget to be balanced.

[3:33:51 PM](#)

DAN PASQUARIELLO, CHIEF OF POLICE, DILLINGHAM (via teleconference), spoke in support of the \$2 million for community and regional jails, and continued funding for community revenue sharing. He explained that the Dillingham jail was often over capacity, because Dillingham was a transportation hub. He stated that the Dillingham jail often held inmates from neighboring communities. He announced that Dillingham was a criminal justice hub, and stressed that Dillingham would appreciate compensation for the actual cost of housing inmates.

[3:33:51 PM](#)

ROBIN CHANEY, SELF, DILLINGHAM (via teleconference), testified in support of restoring \$137,000 for Best Beginnings. She stated that there were over 200 children in Dillingham who were enrolled in the Dillingham Imagination Library program, and received a book each month in the mail. She stated that many villages do not have any access to books for children. She stressed that the Imagination Library was the only source for early childhood education in many Alaskan communities.

[3:36:03 PM](#)

JEAN ELLIS, PRESIDENT, PETERSBURG BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), spoke against the \$250,000 reduction in the DEED budget, and further supported an increase the governor's proposed DEED budget. She stressed that education costs were growing, but education was an essential part of the budget-as it is mandated in the constitution. She stressed that many communities could not function properly without proper education funding. She

felt that education expectations were growing, while education funding was decreasing.

[3:38:13 PM](#)

MARLENE CUSHING, WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE EVERYWHERE, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for domestic violence prevention and intervention. She explained that Women Against Violence Everywhere (WAVE) had a broad base of support, including law enforcement and mental health providers. She stressed that funding was necessary for volunteers to provide services that included advocating and safe haven for clients. She felt the domestic violence prevention and intervention funding would help in continuing to help domestic violence victims and families of victims.

[3:40:01 PM](#)

SUNNY RICE, COORDINATOR, ALASKA YOUNG FISHERMEN'S SUMMIT, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Young Fishermen's Summit in the University of Alaska (UA) budget. She explained that the Young Fishermen's Summit was a cooperative effort with the fishing industry. Commercial fishing groups and other industry members worked with the Young Fishermen's Summit to help provide basic funding, and help participants with travel costs. She encouraged the networking among new entrants and industry leaders that were provided through the Alaska Young Fishermen's Summit.

[3:41:51 PM](#)

JERRY STUBER, SELF, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), opposed budget cuts for mental health care funding. He stressed that the costs for mental health treatment would be shifted to more costly programs like health care and public safety. He felt that all Alaskan communities needed mental health care funding.

[3:42:40 PM](#)

KIM KILKENNY, CLINICIAN, PETERSBURG MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She stated that Petersburg had experienced a lock down for three separate gun and other violent threats against numerous

residents, including children. She announced that she had assisted the police in a stand-off with an intoxicated, suicidal, homicidal individual. She pointed out the heroin epidemic in Petersburg. She felt that behavioral health funding could assist in intervention and prevention of these community problems.

[3:43:58 PM](#)

MAX WORHATCH, PRESIDENT, UNITED SOUTHEAST ALASKA GILLNETTERS, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), testified against the \$550,000 budget cut for stock identification. He stressed that port sampling would allow managers to adjust fishing time, and adjust to maximum possible yields. He stated that code wire tag codes, identified through port sampling, allowed managers to assess wild Coho salmon numbers, enabling the managers to adjust fishing time to allow for adequate escapement and maximum sustained yield. He stated that, because of port sampling, a mixed stock fishery in Chatham Strait had managers who were able to identify Coho and Sockeye salmon stock bound for the Upper Lynn Canal and Taku. He stressed that identifying the Sockeye stocks allowed managers to prosecute a Pink salmon fishery, while closely monitoring Sockeye salmon returns.

[3:45:34 PM](#)

BRIAN LYNCH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PETERSBURG VESSEL OWNERS, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), testified against the \$550,000 budget cut for the Southeast Port Sampling Program. He felt the funds were critical to the region's management of all salmon species and fisheries in Southeast Alaska. The loss of funding would greatly reduce the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) ability to sustainably manage Alaska's commercial fisheries, and would likely result in reduced fishing opportunities. This budget could also result in significant economic harm to fisherman, Southeast Alaska communities, and Alaska's overall economic health.

[3:47:33 PM](#)

DR. ROBERT THOMASON, SUPERINTENDENT, PETERSBURG BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), testified in support of increasing the base student allocation (BSA). He remarked that it was currently the fourth consecutive year that the BSA had remained flat. Each of the preceding

years, one-time funds had been provided outside the BSA to assist in funding district operations. He felt that one-time funding made is difficult for districts to budget and plan for the future, which placed undue stress on district personnel.

[3:49:16 PM](#)

SUSAN OHMER, DIRECTOR, PETERSBURG MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), spoke against the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She understood that funds needed to be utilized wisely, and felt that behavioral health funding was necessary. She explained that the proposed budget cut would cut the Petersburg Mental Health Services budget by one-third. She stated that the one-third cut would result in a loss of three service providers. She stressed that Petersburg faced a mental health and substance abuse crisis. She explained that the death rate in Petersburg was over eight times the state average. She pointed out that Petersburg was a small town that experienced homicide and suicide rates that were unusual for such a small town. She felt that treatment, support, and violence intervention were necessary to Petersburg. She stressed that cutting the budget would not keep Alaskans safe. She reiterated that reducing the budget for behavioral health care would result in diverting costs to other departments. She stated that since 2005, Petersburg had recorded 32 recorded suicide attempts; four drug-related deaths; and multiple community lockdowns due to death and mass-murder threats.

[3:52:17 PM](#)

JERRY DZUGAN, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in support of funding the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association. He explained that the safety of the families of fisherman was important for all fishermen. He pointed out that the skills that were taught in the class directly affected the safety of many fishermen. He also voiced support of funding the Young Fisherman's Summit. He felt that the summit gave young people an edge in the fishing industry, by providing useful skills to succeed in the fishing community and industry. He also voiced support of the Fish to School program.

[3:55:03 PM](#)

MARJORIE HENNESSEY, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in support of the Fish and Farm to School program. She stressed that the Fish to School program allowed children to eat and connect with local food, and encouraged local economic growth. She remarked that fishing was the agriculture of Sitka; and held significant economic, social, and cultural importance to the people of Sitka. The Fish to School program created awareness of food security issues; improved health by providing fresh seafood to local students; supported the local fishermen; helped students understand the value and importance of local food; instilled a new way thinking about food; and encouraged the community to question where their food originates.

[3:56:10 PM](#)

TRACY GAGNON, COORDINATOR, FISH TO SCHOOL, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke in support of the Fish to School program. She stated that, because of a partnership with the Farm to School program, the Fish to School program was now able to serve over 1500 students with locally caught seafood in the school lunch program. She remarked that there was tremendous success with the program, and the fourth year of funding was critical to the program's success.

[3:57:09 PM](#)

CLARICE JOHNSON, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), vocalized support for the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association and the Fish to Schools program. She stated that students were taught how to catch and process fish. She felt the program would help children understand the importance of the local commercial fishing industry. She stressed that her family had directly benefited from the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association. She furthered that marine safety education kept children alive.

[3:59:17 PM](#)

ELLEN FRANKENSTEIN, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in support of the Fish to School program. She stated that she was a documentary film maker, and had observed the recent benefits of local foods in communities. She also urged level funding for the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association.

4:00:38 PM

GAYLE YOUNG, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke against the \$8.3 million behavioral health budget reduction. She remarked that many behavioral health clients were young children who may be dealing with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). She remarked that FASD had many behavioral symptoms, and could directly benefit from behavioral health funding. She asserted that the funding could help families of children with FASD; because the funds would provide support and tools in assisting those individuals with FASD.

4:02:48 PM

LISA BUSCH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SITKA SOUND SCIENCE CENTER, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in support of the Fish Tech Program within the Maritime Initiative of the UA budget. She stressed that many Alaskans love salmon and the tradition of the commercial fishing industry. She felt that the expansion in the budget was critical in strengthening the Fish Tech Program, which was already enhancing the commercial fishing industry. She furthered that the program offered classes based on the needs of the aquaculture industry, and the expansion would benefit students who were living in small communities. The program would train and support individuals in places like Dillingham, Wrangell, and Sitka. She also urged support of the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association.

4:04:41 PM

LEE BENNET, DIRECTOR, SITKA COMMUNITY HOSPITAL, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in support of continued funding for trauma care. He explained that the Sitka Community Hospital provided care of all patients without discrimination. He explained that the funding would update and maintain equipment; and provide new positions at the Sitka Community Hospital. He stated that the Sitka Community Hospital provided 24/7 emergency room coverage; and anticipated approximately 200 emergency room visits in 2013. He added that it was anticipated that the Sitka Community Hospital would provide about \$1.5 million of uncompensated care for patients that were presented as uninsured or underinsured. He stressed that the funding would provide the ability to keep the charges as they are, with no increase.

4:06:35 PM

FRED FAYETTE, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in support of the Fish to School. He felt that children should be educated about the health benefits of eating fish. He stated that he had personally contributed to the Fish to Schools program. He remarked that his donation was taken from his cold storage that was intended to be sold. He felt that his donation was a valuable investment, because the education that the Fish to Schools program was invaluable. He shared that he had observed some students while they ate the fish, and felt that the children were enthusiastic in understanding how the fish were caught and processed. He also urged support for funding the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association.

4:08:27 PM

SCOTT WAGNER, REPRESENTATIVE, NORTHERN SOUTHEAST REGIONAL AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in support of the Fish Tech Program within the Maritime Initiative of the UA budget. He stressed that many Alaskans love salmon and the tradition of the commercial fishing industry. He felt that the expansion in the budget was critical in strengthening the Fish Tech Program, which was already helping the commercial fishing industry. He furthered that the program offered classed based on the needs of the aquaculture industry, and the expansion would benefit students who were living in small communities. The program would train and support individuals in places like Dillingham, Wrangell, and Sitka. He also urged support of the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association.

4:09:26 PM

DORRIE FERRELL, MEMBER, EASTER GROUP, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for behavioral health. She explained that the Easter group worked directly with the homeless, and those individuals who were at risk of homelessness. She felt that behavioral health funding benefitted Sitkans Against Family Violence, the Youth Advocates of Sitka, the Sitka police, the Sitka Library, and the trauma care at the hospital. She stressed that the Youth Advocates of Sitka were successful at serving youth who had left their homes, and were trying to complete school without maturity or skills to succeed in

the adult world. She felt that prevention and mediation that the youth advocates offered were vital to the community. She urged the committee to fully fund the behavior health budget.

[4:11:48 PM](#)

SUE HILL, PRESIDENT, ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of DEED funding. She remarked that she expected the legislature to produce a responsible and conservative budget. She shared that her family had experienced a financial crisis, but her family was strategic in how prioritize their spending. She shared the four principles that her family used in their budget strategy: cover the rising costs of essentials; maintain preventive health care like dental care and immunizations; targeted professional development in equipment that would translate into additional dollars; and cut or mothball parts of their business and family that were nice, but not necessary. She urged the committee to follow those same guidelines with the budget. She stressed that education costs were growing, but education was an essential part of the budget, as it is mandated in the constitution. She remarked that even with an addition of \$100 per student, Fairbanks would still feel the pressure to increase class sizes. She also urged support of Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers.

[4:14:41 PM](#)

STEVE BRADSHAW, TEACHER, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for DEED. He felt that there were many new state standards that required funding. He suggested that poverty issues directly related to mental health issues. He urged support of funding behavioral health programs. He remarked that, in light of recent events in Newtown, Connecticut, it was the wrong time to reduce the state's mental health care budget. He stressed that every school in the state had some level of concern regarding an individual who may not be taking their medication, which would result in possible fatalities. He remarked that oil companies were given tax cuts; so educational and health needs should be given adequate funding.

[4:16:52 PM](#)

AT EASE

4:25:18 PM

RECONVENED

HOMER, KENAI, KETCHIKAN, KODIAK, MAT-SU, GLENNALLEN, TOK,
AND SEWARD

TOM DORAN, SELF, SEWARD, asked the committee to remove intent language that would take annual standby ferry passes away from Alaska Marine Highway employees. He stressed that the passes did not cost the state money.

SUSAN SMALLEY, SELF, KENAI (via teleconference), testified in support of tobacco cessation funding. She stressed that Alaska was a leader in its efforts to reduce tobacco use. She spoke about the tobacco companies and their marketing techniques. She strongly encouraged the committee to provide funding for tobacco prevention.

4:28:00 PM

KATIE WALES, PENINSULA COMMUNITY HEALTH, KENAI (via teleconference), advocated for continued behavioral health services funding. She and others ran a psycho-social recovery center that provided services to individuals with mental illness and substance abuse issues. She spoke about the benefits of the center. She believed that without the center, clients would be at risk for institutionalization, going to jail, using emergency room services more frequently, and other.

4:30:01 PM

TWYLA BENTLEY, SELF, KENAI (via teleconference), testified in favor of an increase in funding for behavioral health services. She shared a personal story and her successes resulting from the program at Peninsula Community Health. She stated that she was president of a group that advocated for community events. She spoke about her many skills built with the help of her care coordinator. She transitioned throughout the system successfully.

4:33:10 PM

MARGARET PARROT, SELF, SOLDOTNA (via teleconference), testified in support of behavioral health services including the Cottonwood Behavioral Health services and the Birchwood Center. She noted that the community support helped her meet her goal of reentering the work force. She worried that without the programs she would backslide and that her suicide desires may overcome her. She implored the committee to maintain proposed funding for the services.

[4:34:46 PM](#)

LUCY GRAHAM, SELF, KENAI (via teleconference), testified in support of mental health services funded with state dollars. She shared information about her personal battle with mental illness. She revealed that she learned much from her classes at the facility. She stated that the facility encouraged sobriety and helped her to feel good about herself.

[4:37:01 PM](#)

TINA DRAPER, SELF, KENAI (via teleconference), opposed funding cuts to behavioral health services. She stated that she benefitted greatly from the services; without the services she would be homeless or in jail. The services at Peninsula Community Health made her feel safe. She noted that decreased funding had a negative effect on multiple citizens. She mentioned the variety of services provided.

[4:39:06 PM](#)

SAMMY CRAWFORD, BOARD MEMBER, KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL BOARD, KENAI (via teleconference), expressed concern about cuts to education funding. She stressed the importance of support for the state's districts given new state standards and teacher evaluations. She believed that the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) budget should be increased rather than decreased. The board was also concerned about bond debt reimbursement. She opined that it was important for the legislature to continue providing reimbursement support. She spoke about the capital budget increments for major deferred maintenance.

[4:41:04 PM](#)

MARY TOUTONGHI, SELF, KENAI (via teleconference), testified in favor of increased funding for early childhood education. She pointed to successes of the Head Start program. She stated that her children received an excellent education in her district. She spoke about her children's accomplishments. She stated that a reduction in funding or increase in teacher/pupil ratio would negatively impact the children and their education.

[4:43:54 PM](#)

JOE CANNAVA, DIRECTOR, PENINSULA COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES, KENAI (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for behavioral health services. He stressed that the funding sources were essential to retaining services in the area. He stated that the agency used a proactive approach, which reduced the need for emergency room services. He added that the cost to the state was reduced as a result of the agency's services. He urged the committee to maintain \$8.3 million in the budget for behavioral health services.

[4:46:03 PM](#)

MELISSA BAKER, STUDENT, KENAI PENINSULA COLLEGE (KPC), KENAI (via teleconference), testified in support of education funding. She believed that the cuts would impact the ability for students to be well educated. She spoke about the negative impact on children when education funding was cut.

[4:47:06 PM](#)

SHAUNA THORTON, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE, COALITION STUDENT LEADERS, KENAI (via teleconference), testified in favor of funding for the university and for DEED. She spoke to the power of the stories offered in the prior testimonies. She believed that education cuts were detrimental to the state's future workforce.

[4:49:06 PM](#)

PETE SPRAGUE, KPC, KENAI (via teleconference), testified in favor of funding for the University of Alaska, KPC, and for the annual operation and maintenance of the Career and Technical Center. The new facility was geared towards workforce development programs including process technology, computer electronics, and other. He stated that

the Board of Regents had budgeted \$296,000 to operate the facility, but the legislative subcommittee process deleted the increment from the budget. He respectively requested restoration of funds for the Career and Technical Center.

[4:50:57 PM](#)

SCOT WHEAT, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in favor of the Independent Living Center's Total Recreation and Independent Living Services (TRAILS) funding. He believed more money would be saved through prevention services than with belated treatment. He relayed that he had received federal and state benefits; he hoped to pay back the state. He reiterated his support for funding prevention services.

[4:52:14 PM](#)

KIM BURROWS, INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER, HOMER (via teleconference), read a letter on behalf of an independent living consumer. She testified in support of funding for independent centers in Alaska. She stated that the center was essential for her husband who suffered a spinal cord injury. She pointed to the professionalism and compassion of the workers. She noted that many workers were volunteers. She spoke about poor attitudes regarding disabled people. Funding cuts would take away independence for many impacted individuals.

[4:55:34 PM](#)

ELANNA SENA, PARENT, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in favor of the Parents as Teachers programs. She shared a personal story about parenting a child with special needs. She spoke about the home visits and the benefits of the advocacy services. She stated that the support allowed her to remain in Homer. She added that many communities in Alaska lacked the services. She noted that the program allowed her son a bright future as opposed to another more dire option. She saw the program as a life line.

[5:00:42 PM](#)

RICK MALLEY, INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC), HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of the governor's proposed \$100,000 increase to the independent living center budget. He stressed that every bit of funding helped. He

stated that the center provided recreational opportunities to seniors and people with disabilities. The organization provided counseling and advocacy for individuals. He asked the committee to maintain the governor's proposed ILC increment.

[5:02:24 PM](#)

RACHEL ROMBERG, HAVEN HOUSE, HOMER (via teleconference), requested restoration of funding for Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers to the governor's proposed amount. She spoke about the benefits of the programs and the support offered by the options. The programs offered families with chances for health, happiness, and success that they may not otherwise have. She worked for a domestic violence agency and she saw the difference that early childhood programs made for women and children in the shelter.

[5:04:46 PM](#)

LIZ DOWNING, KPC, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for education. She discussed that the university budget required additional funding. She stated that KPC had needed a student advisor for years, but had never received the funding. She spoke to school enrollment increases. She stressed that the advisor position would help students succeed.

[5:07:21 PM](#)

ROBERT LETSON, SOUTH PENINSULA HOSPITAL, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of funding the state trauma fund and for Level 4 trauma facilities. He mentioned the various costs required to open the trauma center. He shared that the hospital's trauma preparation had come a long way in the past two years as a result of the trauma care fund. He believed cutting funds would be short-sighted when hospitals had come so far the past few years.

[5:09:00 PM](#)

SUSAN DRATHMAN, SOUTH PENINSULA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in favor of funding of mental health services. She spoke about community members needing to leave the community to receive services in other areas; the situation was difficult on families. She spoke about the costliness and the negative outcomes of

institutional care. She spoke about the Bring the Kids Home program that existed to bring home children who have been in out of state institutions. She spoke in support of Complex Behavior Collaborative.

[5:12:33 PM](#)

RACHELLE MCALEXANDER, KACHEMAK BAY COLLEGE, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of funding a student success advisor at the college. She was a cancer patient as a result of serving in multiple wars. She stated that she was inspired by an article she read in AARP magazine related to seniors returning to school. She shared that the student advisor had helped her determine the right path related to classes and financial assistance. She requested funding to keep advisors in place.

[5:14:37 PM](#)

BONNIE BETLEY, BEST BEGINNINGS, HOMER (via teleconference), requested restoration of funding for the Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers programs to the governor's proposed level. Parents as Teachers was one of the few programs offering home visits. She shared that one of the most successful ways to decrease domestic violence and negative childhood experiences was home visiting. She stressed that reduced funds would have adverse effects. She encouraged the committee to fund the increment at the governor's proposed level.

[5:17:16 PM](#)

MARIA CALHOUN, SPROUT, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in favor of restoring funds for Best Beginnings. She discussed providing services in homes for areas that were underserved and remote. She shared that the group partnered with a local domestic violence agency. She shared that Sprout would serve 90 families in March. She believed the potential for life-long success was greater when early education was provided. She urged the committee to continue funding for children.

[5:20:39 PM](#)

MICHAEL HORTON, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, COPPER CENTER (via teleconference), spoke against the proposed \$8.3 million cut to behavioral health services. He referred to high

alcoholism and suicide rates in the state. He shared that suicide rates had been reduced due to prevention programs. The state continued to be number one for completed suicides and had high rates of domestic violence and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. He urged the committee to reconsider the cuts to behavioral health grants.

[5:24:46 PM](#)

VICTORIA KILDAL, COUNSELOR, COPPER RIVER NATIVE ASSOCIATION, COPPER CENTER (via teleconference), testified in opposition to cuts to behavioral health services. She pointed to brain research showing that care and support provided by services caused brain growth in patients. She accentuated that without the services the growth was unlikely to occur. She discussed mental health problems impacting individuals. She strongly urged the committee to maintain funding for behavioral health services.

[5:26:19 PM](#)

SHARRON ABLES, ONLINE WITH LIBRARIES (OWL), GLENNALLEN (via teleconference), spoke in favor of OWL program and live homework help funding. She relayed that children who did poorly were not exposed to as many words prior to kindergarten as successful children. She shared that the programs were making great strides in rural Alaskan villages. She stressed the importance of skilled and educated people in the state. She strongly urged the restoration of the governor's proposed funding.

[5:28:07 PM](#)

SHERRI COX, CROSSROAD MEDICAL CENTER, GLENNALLEN (via teleconference), spoke in support of the trauma care fund and level 5 trauma center funding. Emergency services had been reduced due to a lack in funds. She stated that as of March 31, 2013 federal funding had stopped. She encouraged the committee to keep the funding in place for emergency care.

[5:30:53 PM](#)

LAURIE THOMAS, BEST BEGINNINGS, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers. She stressed that the funds were important to support safe placement for young

children in foster care. The community was working towards a court program due to Best Beginnings. She relayed that the program did not require financial qualifiers and reduced stigma associated with other programs. She asked the committee to consider funding at the governor's proposed level.

[5:33:41 PM](#)

LANETTA LUNDBERG, KETCHIKAN MEDICAL CENTER, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke against decreased funding for the Alaska Area Health Education Center increment in the University of Alaska budget. She pointed to decreased federal funding. She emphasized the importance of a strong and healthy healthcare workforce in the state. She relayed that residents would continue to need healthcare services. She asked the committee to maintain the governor's proposed increment in the budget.

[5:35:47 PM](#)

BILL AUGER, COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), was opposed to cuts to the commercial fishing industry. He stated that federal pacific salmon treaty funds had been supplementing state general funds. He pointed to important tax revenue provided by the fishing industry. He emphasized that fisheries should be managed for the maximum return to the state.

[5:37:15 PM](#)

EMILY CHAPEL, SAIL, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), vocalized opposition to cuts to independent living centers. She shared services provided by the organization that met the needs of disabled individuals. The organization worked to meet the growing needs of disabled individuals and the senior population. She asked the legislature to restore the \$100,000 increment to the program.

[5:38:23 PM](#)

KEVIN GADSEY, SAIL, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding for SAIL. He explained that there had been construction projects built in Ketchikan and disability access had not initially been included; the items had been fixed due to a request by SAIL. He pointed to the difficulty individuals with disabilities had with

the court system; the organization had helped the individuals solve the issue.

5:40:20 PM

PATRICIA CHAPMAN, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke against cuts for behavioral health and for traumatic brain injury funding. She was in favor of Complex Behavior Collaborative funding. The services provided tools for families and helped individuals. She relayed that the increment would help stop abuse. She explained that many individuals had tried to commit suicide as a result of past behavior that was embarrassing. She stated that the funding would support four to five times more people in their home communities. She asked the committee to keep the funding in the budget for the health and traumatic brain injury programs.

5:43:38 PM

JESSI CHAPMAN, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in favor of traumatic brain injury funding. She used an augmented voice device to testify as a result of a traumatic brain injury. She shared her personal frustration with her inability to respond quickly to questions. She stated that if funding was cut there would be fewer resources available to help individuals with brain injuries to overcome frustration and anger caused by their injuries. She urged the committee to restore the funding for traumatic brain injury program and the Complex Behavior Collaborative program.

5:44:58 PM

CHARLES HABERBUSH, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the traumatic brain injury program. He shared his personal experience with a traumatic brain injury. He stated that it was difficult to rely on others for help. He detailed that because of SAIL he had spent many months learning about the brain; the organization had connected him with the Alaska Brain Injury Network. He was working to reach others in need. He emphasized the important support provided by SAIL. He continued to share experiences related to brain injury. He asked the committee to restore funding for brain injury resources.

[5:48:47 PM](#)

JOS GOVAARS, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of SAIL and traumatic brain injury funding. He emphasized the significant level of support that SAIL provided to the community.

[5:49:25 PM](#)

BOBBIE MCCREARY, SELF, KETCHIKAN, requested continued funding for the Complex Behavior Collaborative that served people with traumatic brain injury. She spoke about her personal experience as a friend of a person with a traumatic brain injury. She shared that support training was critical to helping individuals with injuries. She communicated that funding had allowed individuals to avoid institutional care.

[5:51:18 PM](#)

VIKKI JO KENNEDY, SELF, KODIAK (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to funding for the Alaska Aerospace Corporation. She admonished the legislature for its time spent on HB 69; she stated the bill would pit local law enforcement against federal agents regarding federal gun laws. She believed the Alaska Aerospace Corporation was a money pit. She recommended providing the funding to behavioral health instead. She provided a quote. She spoke in support of education.

[5:54:22 PM](#)

VALARIE KINGSLAND, ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES, SEWARD (via teleconference), spoke in support of library funding. She requested full financial support for the OWL project and live homework help. She was in support of the online education program. She spoke in support of broadband services to rural communities in the state.

[5:56:16 PM](#)

MELINDA MATIS, SELF, SEWARD (via teleconference), read a letter on behalf of Carla Norman who was unable to speak due to a traumatic brain injury. She shared Ms. Norman's story related to her brain injury. She had been able to move out of a nursing home, which had saved the state money. She stressed that her ability to leave the nursing

home had saved the state over \$100,000 per year. She spoke in support of the \$100,000 increment for the traumatic brain injury.

[5:57:49 PM](#)

KEVIN MUNSON, MAT-SU HEALTH SERVICES, WASILLA (via teleconference), vocalized opposition to behavioral health services cuts. He stressed that cuts would increase emergency room visits, incarceration, and placement of individuals in out of state institutions. He shared that early childhood trauma had significant impacts on the lives of individuals; reduced funding would decrease individuals' lifespans. He urged the committee to reconsider cuts.

[6:00:23 PM](#)

KELLY MCBRIDE, MAT-SU SCHOOL DISTRICT, WASILLA (via teleconference), encouraged restoration of funds for Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, and other early education programs. She pointed to Head Start waiting lists. She stressed the importance of public and private partnerships with state and local support. She was surprised to see how much the budget included for the Department of Corrections compared to funds included for the Department of Education and Early Development. She pointed to long-term planning for the education of the state's children.

[6:01:59 PM](#)

JIM BECK, ACCESS ALASKA, PALMER (via teleconference), was opposed to cuts to the independent living program in Alaska. He shared that the program was 20 percent state funded. He strongly urged the committee to restore the \$100,000 increment for independent living and to restore behavioral health cuts. He asked the committee to support funds for the traumatic brain injury program and other. He urged funding for the Complex Behavior Collaborative.

[6:04:59 PM](#)

ESTRELLA LEE, PAT COORDINATOR, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in favor of pre-k funding and the Parents as Teachers program. She explained that the programs increased graduation rates and helped people to be better parents when they grew up. She discussed the importance of parent education related to prenatal care and other. She stated

that early childhood programs helped reduce costs to the child welfare system. She encouraged support for the programs.

[6:07:25 PM](#)

RUTH ALLISON REYNOLDS, BEST BEGINNINGS, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers. She shared her personal experience parenting a child with developmental delays. She stressed that the Parents as Teachers program had helped her provide her daughter with the services she needed.

[6:08:58 PM](#)

DAVE BRANDING, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SOUTH PENINSULA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for behavioral health services and against the proposed \$8.3 million reduction to the services. He detailed that the grant funds primarily went to emergency services in Homer. He spoke about the needs of people without health insurance, who had no alternative funding sources. He spoke about the funding for the department For Behavioral Health. He was concerned about the reduction of funds for the Complex Behavior Collaborative. He accentuated that services dramatically improved the quality of life for impacted individuals and their families.

[6:11:08 PM](#)

JILL LUSH, DIRECTOR, SPROUT FAMILY SERVICES, HOMER (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for the Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers programs. She stated that raising children in Alaska was challenging; she pointed to parents that worked long hours and families living in remote areas. She spoke about the concerns addressed by Parents as Teachers. She relayed that home visitors provided developmental support for children, encouraged social connections and other. She requested reinstatement of funding proposed in the governor's budget.

[6:13:23 PM](#)

SONJA MARK, LIBRARIAN, DILLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY, DILLINGHAM (via teleconference), testified in support of broadband and the Alaska OWL project. She shared that the

internet access connected the remote community with the rest of the world. She urged full funding for the Alaska OWL project along with the live homework help for rural students.

[6:14:39 PM](#)

KAY ANDREWS, SOUTHWEST REGION SCHOOL DISTRICT, DILLINGHAM (via teleconference), asked the committee to restore the \$5.7 million cut to the Department of Education and Early Development budget. She emphasized that every bit of funding helped children for programs such as pre-k, digital learning, or Jobs for Alaska's Graduates. She stated that the Southwest Region School District is an Alaska Rural Education Attendance Area and served seven school sites, but the district was only able to provide pre-k programs at three of the schools. She spoke about the increase in graduation rates. She spoke to the critical nature of the funding.

[6:17:07 PM](#)

MARY JO JOINER, DIRECTOR, KENAI COMMUNITY LIBRARY, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in favor of full funding for education including broadband, the Alaska OWL project, and for live homework help. She pointed to the broad range of educational opportunities supported by the OWL project; improved bandwidth allowed access to state and federal e-government services. The funds leveraged \$2 million of federal funding for bandwidth. She added that the restoration of the funding would allow online tutoring service for students. She stated that homework assistance for multiple subjects was also an advantage.

[6:20:05 PM](#)

MIKE FROST, KPC, KENAI (via teleconference), testified in support for university funding as proposed by the University of Alaska Board of Regents. He spoke about three aspects of the university operations that would be affected by the cuts. He communicated that the cuts would eliminate KPC's student advisor who kept students on track with classes and career paths. Other items that would be cut were the safety and security position and operating funds for the Career and Technical Center.

[6:21:19 PM](#)

DAVE JONES, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, KPBSD, KENAI (via teleconference), testified in favor of funding for education and 21 additional Alaska State Trooper positions. He requested the restoration of funding for all of the proposed positions. School safety in Kenai and across the state would benefit from the restoration of the funding.

[6:22:48 PM](#)

PHILLIP MILLER, KPC, COOPER LANDING (via teleconference), voiced support for university funding. He appreciated the support provided to the University of Alaska in previous years. He communicated that KPC had used deferred maintenance funding to repair leaky roofs, replace single pane windows, replacement of old boilers, and other. The state finances were complicated, but the university was worthy of financial support. He asked the committee to fully fund the Board of Regents budget request for FY 14.

[6:24:24 PM](#)

BOB MARTIN, COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), testified in favor of salmon stock identification funding. He stressed that the funding was vital to getting the most out of the state's salmon resource. He stated that without stock identification fisheries managers would be required to restrict fishing opportunities. He emphasized that the fisheries managers required crucial tools to get the most out of the resource without threatening weak stocks.

[6:25:30 PM](#)

JOHN BRINGHURST, PETERSBURG BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), testified in favor of increased funding for education. He supported the high priority that President Obama and Governor Parnell placed on the education of young people. He felt that the priority of the State of Alaska appeared to be elsewhere. He noted that reduction of \$250,000 in the education budget was of great concern to Petersburg residents. He stated that if the budget continued to shrink, the insidious effects would eventually become evident. He urged action and financial support for education.

[6:28:05 PM](#)

JENNIFER RAY, SELF AND PARENT, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), testified in support of full funding for mental health funding. She shared a story about her daughter who suffered from mental illness. Services provided by Petersburg Mental Health were integral for her daughter's growth and stability. The facility offered counseling to help parents understand how to help their children. She was working to bring the National Alliance on Mental Illness Family to Family program to Petersburg. She urged full funding for behavioral health services.

[6:29:53 PM](#)

SARAH BELL, DIRECTOR, KETTLESON MEMORIAL LIBRARY, SITKA (via teleconference), vocalized support for full funding of the annual \$761,000 increment for the OWL program. The program provided broadband access to most libraries across the state. She shared an example of the use of OWL to schedule a conference with the governor in Sitka. She noted examples of how the system was used throughout the state. She accentuated that during economic struggles, library access became more critical for many individuals. She informed the committee that the funds leveraged \$2 million in federal e-rate funding. She mentioned online homework help for students.

[6:32:43 PM](#)

DENNIS LONGSTRETH, COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in opposition to the Department of Fish and Game budget cuts. The cuts included \$550,000 to the port sampling budget and the much needed biometrician position. He emphasized that port sampling was critical for salmon stock assessment and in Pacific Salmon Treaty functions; it would not be possible to harvest reasonable numbers of fish without identifying which stocks they came from. He stated that the majority of salmon management in Southeast was paid with federal salmon treaty funds. He noted that the state had become too dependent on the federal funds, which were beginning to diminish. He was concerned about the decision to cut the biometrician position.

[6:35:48 PM](#)

JOHN BAIRD, GENERAL MANAGER, SITKA SOUND SEAFOODS, SITKA (via teleconference), echoed the testimony of Mr. Longstreth. He emphasized that the Department of Fish and Game increments were critical for aerial surveys and port sampling for fisheries. He urged the committee to restore the \$550,000 increment. He appreciated the committee's consideration.

[6:36:40 PM](#)

GRETCHEN GEIST, THRIVE MAT-SU PREVENTION COALITION, MAT-SU (via teleconference), testified in opposition funding cuts to the statewide underage drinking media campaign. She shared statistics related to youth reports of drinking and access to alcohol. She stressed the importance of outreach to convey the impact alcohol had on youths. The campaign would also use funds from other sources.

[6:38:45 PM](#)

CELIA HARRISON, SELF, KENAI (via teleconference), voiced support for mental health funding. She stressed that the proposed \$8.3 million cuts to the behavioral health services budget was disturbing and shameful. She stated that individuals impacted by mental health issues were not responsible for their illnesses. She accentuated that society should provide a helping hand. She questioned why individuals with mental health problems should have to prison due to a lack of support. She spoke to the high costs of prison in comparison to treatment services. She spoke about other negative impacts surrounding prison and lack of mental health services. She stated that the reality was well documented and she wondered about the motives of state decision makers. She appreciated hearing the prior testimony related to mental health.

[6:41:12 PM](#)

ELIZABETH RIPLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MAT-SU HEALTH FOUNDATION, MAT-SU (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for prevention of substance abuse. The Alaska Wellness Coalition aimed to change the way that the issues were discussed in the state. She mentioned the goal to reduce underage drinking in Alaska. She spoke about conserving resources and expanding the reach. She pointed to the costly impact of alcohol and drug abuse in 2010. The legislature had made a special \$9 million appropriation in

FY 13 to address substance abuse. The organization had invested funds to the issue with the understanding that the state was also a critical funder. She spoke about an intelligent investment in the state. She urged the committee to closely examine cuts to ensure that increased costs were not created and more lives were not harmed.

Co-Chair Austerman CLOSED public testimony. He noted that budget amendments would be addressed the following Monday afternoon.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

[6:43:35 PM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.