

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

March 3, 2015

1:04 p.m.

1:04:13 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Neuman called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Mark Neuman, Co-Chair  
Representative Steve Thompson, Co-Chair  
Representative Dan Saddler, Vice-Chair  
Representative Bryce Edgmon  
Representative Les Gara  
Representative Lynn Gattis  
Representative David Guttenberg  
Representative Scott Kawasaki  
Representative Cathy Munoz  
Representative Lance Pruitt  
Representative Tammie Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Patty George, Alaska Literacy Council, Juneau; Denise Daniello, Executive Director, Alaska Commission on Aging, Juneau; Dan Etheridge, AK AFLCIO, Juneau; Anita C. Evans, Juneau Interpreters Referral Line, Juneau; Pam Mueller-Guy, Southeast Alaska Independent Living, Interpreter Referral Line, Juneau; Morgan Evans, Southeast Alaska Independent Living, Interpreter Referral Line, Juneau; Christy Montero, Southeast Alaska Independent Living, Interpreter Referral Line, Juneau; Alex Pastorino, Self, Juneau; Lynn Campbell, Southeast Conference, Juneau; Dr. George Brown, Pediatrician, Juneau; Michael Byer, Alaska Learning Network (AKLN), Juneau; Frank Coenraad, AKLN, Juneau; Conor O'Dea, Southeast Senior Services, Juneau; Alyson Currey, Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest, Juneau; Sioux Douglas, KTOO, Juneau; Walter Majoros, Executive Director, Juneau Youth Services (JYS), Juneau; Bob Coghill, Chair, Advisory Board

on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Juneau; Meghan Johnson, THREAD, Juneau; Emily Ferry, Parent, Juneau; Sheryl Weinberg, SERRC, Juneau; Darcy Markovich, SERRC, Juneau; David Dierdorff, Self, Juneau; Samantha Coronell, Juneau Construction Academy, Juneau; Andy Story, Member, Juneau School Board, Juneau; Lynnette Dihle, Self, Juneau; Aura Landau, Parent, Juneau; Lisa Arehart, Parent, Juneau; Marian Clough, Self, Juneau; Lauren Smoker, Parent, Juneau; Jeannie Monk, Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home, Juneau; Averyl Veliz, Parent, Juneau; Emily Coate Thompson, Parent, Juneau; Josh Campbell, Alaska Construction Academy, Juneau; Beth Leban, Director, Juneau Youth Court, Juneau; Madeline Handley, High School Student and Volunteer, Juneau Youth Court, Juneau; Jarmyn Kramlich, University of Alaska Student (UAS), Juneau; Jennifer Walker, Parent, Juneau; Jaeleen Araujo, General Counsel, Sealaska Corporation, Juneau; Satnam Sears, Parent, Juneau; Talea Kellar, Parent, Juneau; Laura Powers, Self, Juneau; Julianne Curry, United Fishermen of Alaska, Juneau; Russ McDougal, Alaska State Homebuilders Association, Juneau; Melinda Messner, Parents as Teachers, Juneau; Mark Miller, Superintendent, Juneau School District, Juneau; Joy Lyon, Executive Director, Association for the Southeast Education of Young Children, Juneau; Rye Sperl, Student Government, University of Alaska Southeast, Juneau; Felix Thillet, University of Alaska Southeast, Juneau; Lisa Skiles Parady, Executive Director, Alaska Council of School Administrators, Juneau; Pam Watts, Juneau Alliance for Mental Health, Juneau; Sabrina Nelson, Parent, Juneau; Laine Rinehart, Discovery Preschool, Juneau; Ray Wilson, Self, Juneau; Kirk Perisich, Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters Local, Juneau; Ryan M. Herbert, Outside Education, Juneau; Albert Judson, Self, Juneau; Dixie Hood, Counselor, Juneau; Doug Blonc, Communities In School and Parent, Juneau; Larry West, Self, Juneau; Ben Goldrich, Marine Engineers Beneficial Association Representative and the Masters, Mates, and Pilots, and the Inlandboatsmen's Union, Juneau; Nancy Seamount, Self, Juneau; David Anderson, General Manager, KBBI Public Radio, Homer; Representative Sam Kito III; Representative Cathy Tilton; Representative Louise Stutes; Representative Dan Ortiz; Representative Mike Chenault.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Richard Malley, Independent Living Center, Homer; Savely Kalugin, University of Alaska, Kachemak Bay Campus Student Association President, Homer; Claudia Haines, Homer Public

Library Youth Services Librarian and Parent, Homer; Cristy Fry, Self, Homer; Mark Robl, Chief of Police, Homer Police Department, Homer; Beth Carroll, Self, Fritz Creek; Virginia Espenshade, Kenai Peninsula Youth Court, Executive Director, Kenai; Terry Bookey, KDLL, Kenai; Jackson Blackwell, Youth Courts of Alaska Board, Soldotna; Laurie Olson, Director of Finance, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD), Kenai; Jim White, Director of Information Services for KPBSD, Kenai; Elizabeth Hardie, University of Alaska Statewide Mining and Petroleum Training Service (MAPTS), Kenai; Glenn Turner, Independent Living Center, Kenai; William Bieber, Executive Director, University of Alaska Mining and Petroleum Training Service, Kenai; Cheryl Tuttle, Kenai Peninsula College (KPC), Kenai; Marsea Hansen, KPC, Kenai; Jayce Robertson, KPC, Kenai; Megan LaCross, Self, Kenai; Justin Dahlgren, Kenai Peninsula Youth Court, Soldotna; Dave Brighton, Self, Kenai; Pepper Pond, Greater Kenai-Soldotna Imagination Library and Best Beginnings, Soldotna; Elena Milette, Self, Kenai; Michael Nelson, Self, Soldotna; Fred Sturman, Self, Soldotna; Mary Jo Mettler, Northern Lighthouse Day Center, Soldotna; Stephanie Queen, Kenai Peninsula College Council, Soldotna; Kris Holdried, Self, Homer; Paul Slenkamp, AK Mental Health Trust/UAA Land Trust Office, Ketchikan; Ed Zastrow, Ketchikan Senior Services and AARP, Ketchikan; Juanita Diaz Camilon, Rendezvous Senior Center, Ketchikan; Licha Kelly King, Executive Director, Rendezvous Senior Day Service Center, Ketchikan; Stewart Whyte, Development Director, KRBD, Ketchikan; Anita Maxwell, Self, Ketchikan; Lisa Pearson, Adult Services Librarian, Ketchikan Public Library, Ketchikan; Margaret Clabby, Self, Ketchikan; Caitlin Jacobson, Librarian, Ketchikan High School, Ketchikan; Mike Jausoro, Alaska Escrow and Title Agency, Ketchikan; Chris French, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Ketchikan; Les Cronk, Employee, Southeast Stevedoring Corporation, Ketchikan; Eric Nichols, Owner, Alcan Forest Products, Ketchikan; Denise Jausoro, District Recorder, Ketchikan Records Office, Ketchikan; Sam Hernandez, Physical Education Teacher, Ketchikan Schools, Ketchikan; Alan Schmitt, Self, Kodiak; Arthur Shultz, Self, Kodiak; Mike Korsmo, Self, Skagway; Jeff Stephans, Manager, United Fisherman's Marketing Association, Kodiak; Marita Kaplan, Director, Adult Service Program, Kodiak; Jonathan Strong, Self, Kodiak; Terry Haines, Self, Kodiak; Nancy Jones, Self, Kodiak; Sonjah Schumacher, Self, Mat-Su; Carl Baker, Self, Wasilla; Brittnie DeLaGrange, Employee, Alaska Construction Academy, Palmer; Chuck Kaucic, District

Manager, Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District, Wasilla; Jonathan Wyckoff, Self, Wasilla; Ingrid Ling, Wasilla Area Seniors, Wasilla; Chuck Foster, Wasilla Area Seniors, Wasilla; Kenni Linden, Self, Palmer; Mark Lackey, Self, Wasilla; Rachel Greenberg, Self, Palmer; Carol Christiansen, Self, Palmer; Tim Walters, President, Mat-Su Education Association, Mat-Su; Helen Mathias, Self, Seward; Valarie Kingsland, Director, Alaska Library Association, Seward; Karen Shemet, Self, Homer.

SUMMARY

HB 72        APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUNDS

HB 72 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 73        APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

HB 73 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#hb72

#hb73

HOUSE BILL NO. 72

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government and for certain programs, capitalizing funds, making reappropriations, and making appropriations under art. IX, sec. 17(c), Constitution of the State of Alaska, from the constitutional budget reserve fund; and providing for an effective date."

HOUSE BILL NO. 73

"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."

[1:04:22 PM](#)

Co-Chair Neuman discussed that the committee would hear public testimony on the operating and mental health budgets.

Co-Chair Thompson asked members of the public to leave the room after testifying to make room for additional testifiers.

Co-Chair Neuman read public testimony protocol. He understood that the budget was complex in the current year; the committee had made extra time available to accommodate the high volume of anticipated public testimony. He stressed that public testimony, both verbal and written, was considered by the committee.

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY: JUNEAU

1:10:22 PM

PATTY GEORGE, ALASKA LITERACY COUNCIL, JUNEAU, spoke in favor of funding for the Alaska State Literacy Association. She provided information about the organization. The organization supported literacy for all, lifetime learning, and informed decision making. She urged the committee to fund Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, and Pre-K programs. She discussed the improvement in children's kindergarten entry testing scores after participating in the Imagination Library program. She communicated that 1,000 Juneau families had participated in the program in 2014. She discussed that the kindergarten readiness score had risen by 11 percent during the same period. She stressed the importance of books in children's homes. She thanked the committee for its time.

Co-Chair Neuman welcomed Representative Sam Kito III to the committee room.

1:12:49 PM

DENISE DANIELLO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING, JUNEAU, spoke against cuts to the Alaska Senior Benefits Program administered by the Division of Public Assistance and to the Adult Day Services senior grant program. She emphasized that the senior benefits program provided a critical safety net for more than 11,000 Alaskans aged 65 and older who lived on a fixed income. The program helped pay for food, fuel, and maintenance. The average recipient was 75 years of age and the majority of recipients were women. The proposed reduction of \$500,000 for adult day services would result in program closures and reduced services for seniors. The adult day services

program was the primary senior program that directly benefitted working family caregivers caring for a loved one with dementia at home. She stated that without the services people may be faced with placing their loved one in a higher cost care setting. She shared that 416 seniors had been served by the program in 2014; many of the recipients had dementia. She spoke to the unintended consequences of a reduction in funding.

[1:15:03 PM](#)

DAN ETHERIDGE, AK AFLCIO, JUNEAU, testified in support of the reinstatement of funds for the Alaska Construction Academy. He emphasized the importance of the funds for individuals seeking work. He discussed the increase of non-resident hire in Alaska and stressed the importance of training for residents. The academy provided training for high school students, retired military personnel, and other. He referred to the high number of out-of-state workers in the construction and mining industries. He asked for the reinstatement of OSHA safety program funding. He relayed that seafood processors had made great strides in the area safety; a major reduction in injuries had taken place.

[1:17:11 PM](#)

ANITA C. EVANS, JUNEAU INTERPRETERS REFERRAL LINE, JUNEAU, urged support of funding for interpreters. She shared information about her background and the multitude of places she had acted as an interpreter. She spoke to the range of skills and adaptability required for interpreters. She discussed that an interpreter had to think on their feet; technology could not do it all. She stated that auditory information coming from a variety of directions meant that auditory technology was not a workable solution. She spoke to the importance of interpreters for the state's deaf community. Without funding, deaf people throughout the entire region would be impacted.

[1:19:25 PM](#)

PAM MUELLER-GUY, SOUTHEAST ALASKA INDEPENDENT LIVING, INTERPRETER REFERRAL LINE, JUNEAU, testified in support of Southeast Alaska Independent Living. She was concerned about the elimination of funding for the interpreter referral line; she accessed the program on a weekly basis

for meetings. She stressed that replacing live interpreters with technology was not an effective way to provide the best communication. She spoke to the importance of an interpreter to allow for the best clear conversation. She stated that the Americans with Disabilities Act was established to provide equal services to individuals with disabilities. She stressed that interpreters allowed her and others to have equal access to employment and other. She urged that the committee restore the funding for interpreters. She thanked the committee for its time.

Co-Chair Neuman thanked Gerlene Davis for interpreting and for her work with the hearing impaired.

[1:21:51 PM](#)

MORGAN EVANS, SOUTHEAST ALASKA INDEPENDENT LIVING, INTERPRETER REFERRAL LINE, JUNEAU, spoke in support of SAIL and the interpreter line [through an interpreter]. He thanked the committee for its time. He stated that the interpreter line allowed him to have independence. He noted his involvement in various activities (e.g. ski team, Cub Scouts, work, training, and other) that he needed an interpreter for. He believed that the budget cut was discriminatory against the deaf. He communicated that a live interpreter acted as a role model. He shared that interpreters to the deaf were very valuable to deaf people.

[1:24:17 PM](#)

CHRISTY MONTERO, SOUTHEAST ALASKA INDEPENDENT LIVING, INTERPRETER REFERRAL LINE, JUNEAU, expressed her concern about the elimination of funding for the Interpreter Referral Line [a copy of her written testimony was provided to committee members (copy on file)]. Her written testimony stated that the cut would "make it difficult or impossible to achieve effective communication as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. I know the state has less money to work with trying to balance the Alaska budget, but isn't it important not to eliminate this program." She stated that most of the deaf community could not afford the high-speed internet connections like many wealthy Alaskans could afford at home. Her testimony stated that interpreters were needed to provide a "clear understanding especially in very important areas, such as with the courts, hospital staff, public safety, schools, or possible job prospects." She urged the committee to restore the

funding to the referral line and thanked the committee for its time.

[1:26:36 PM](#)

ALEX PASTORINO, SELF, JUNEAU, thanked the committee for passing one-time grant funds for education the prior year. She stressed the importance of restoring the funds. She spoke in support an increase in the Base Student Allocation funding that occurred the previous year. She emphasized the importance of making the state's children a priority. She asked the committee to restore the one-time grant funds for children.

[1:28:26 PM](#)

LYNN CAMPBELL, SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, JUNEAU, spoke strongly against proposed cuts to the Division of Forestry budget. He stated that the cuts would result in the closure of all of the division's Southeast offices. He testified that many of the state's rural communities statewide had converted to woody biomass fuel sources and would run out of supply. He stated that a lack of timber sale revenue and timber purchasers would cease to provide road maintenance. He relayed that hundreds of miles of roads would need to be closed, which would impact road access and firefighting efforts. He believed the cuts would cripple the timber industry in the state. He urged the committee to not turn its back on an industry.

[1:30:13 PM](#)

DR. GEORGE BROWN, PEDIATRICIAN, JUNEAU, spoke to the importance of investing in children. He stated that prevention worked. He asked the committee to think about what was right and to think optimisitcally about the future. He stated that Alaska was capable of overcoming the current fiscal crisis. He respected the committee's public service.

[1:31:49 PM](#)

MICHAEL BYER, ALASKA LEARNING NETWORK (AKLN), JUNEAU, spoke in support of restoring AKLN funds for online remedial, enrichment, vocational, and other education courses. He shared information about the program. He stated that online learning was the future and was efficient. He detailed that

many students in small rural schools offered limited courses needed for success and that met the requirements of the Alaska Performance Scholarship.

[1:33:10 PM](#)

FRANK COENRAAD, AKLN, JUNEAU, testified in support of funding for AKLN. He referred to a program brochure that had been passed out to committee members. He discussed what college and career-readiness meant in addition to what made students successful. He stated that college eligible, did not necessarily mean college ready. He shared information about a college-ready math course that helped to prepare students. The program included English and had expanded into advanced placement and career technical education courses. He referred to Alaska science and geology courses that were offered; the courses were developed by Alaska teachers for Alaska students. He spoke to an indigenous studies program.

[1:35:24 PM](#)

CONOR O'DEA, SOUTHEAST SENIOR SERVICES, JUNEAU, spoke in support of a reinstatement of \$500,000 for the Adult Day Program. The decrease in funds would mean cuts in services for Adult Day Programs, which would mean families would need to find services in other places. He noted that due to a lack in long-term care the decrease in services would result in seniors leaving Alaska, which meant dollars would leave the state as well. He stated that the increment represented a 5 percent cut. He suggested spreading out the cut to other grants including the Senior In-Home, Traumatic Brain Injury Education, Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia Education, and Adult Day Programs. He stated that spreading out the cut would mean that the adults in the program to continue receiving services. He spoke to the crucial role the program played for Alaska's aging population.

[1:37:32 PM](#)

ALYSON CURREY, PLANNED PARENTHOOD VOTES NORTHWEST, JUNEAU, asked the committee to reinstate funds of \$360,000 from the prior year for the final year of the Chlamydia Campaign. She spoke in support of funds for Planned Parenthood. She communicated that the organization operated four health centers statewide; it served over 13,000 people in 2013.

She stressed the high rates of chlamydia in Alaska and asked the committee to help protect Alaskans overall reproductive health outcomes. She stressed that untreated chlamydia could lead to infertility and ectopic pregnancy. She asked the committee to fund sensible solutions such as accessible sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment. She testified in support of funding for Medicaid expansion. She stressed that access to affordable healthcare should not depend on who a person is and where they live and work. She elaborated that the expansion would ensure that individuals would remain productive members of the economy. She emphasized that the state could not afford to wait to expand Medicaid.

[1:39:41 PM](#)

SIOUX DOUGLAS, KTOO, JUNEAU, testified in support of public broadcasting. She stated that to underfund the program by 60 percent would be detrimental to broadcasting. She currently chaired the Legacy Foundation at KTOO. She spoke as a beneficiary of the services and programs provided by the public station. She understood the complex situation facing the state and legislature financially, but stressed the importance of the statewide services provided by public broadcasting. She stressed that keeping Alaskans connected was imperative in a large state with many separate regions.

[1:42:01 PM](#)

WALTER MAJOROS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JUNEAU YOUTH SERVICES (JYS), JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for behavioral health services. The agency provided a range of children's behavioral health services including emergency, community-based, residential. The agency served approximately 450 youth and families annually; it additionally coordinated the Suicide Prevention Coalition. He communicated that most of the clients had experienced significant childhood trauma (e.g. abuse, neglect, witnessing domestic violence and substance abuse in the family, and other). He spoke to reducing abuse and neglect. He stated that children who experienced trauma were at a much higher risk of serious physical and mental health problems including suicide. He stressed that there had not been a Medicaid rate adjustment for behavioral health residential services since 2006 and for community-based services since 2008. He urged funding for Medicaid behavioral health to help reduce trauma experienced by children.

1:44:06 PM

BOB COGHILL, CHAIR, ADVISORY BOARD ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE, JUNEAU, spoke in support of treatment programs. He thanked the committee for recognizing the importance of people in the state by providing funding to the Department of Health and Social Services. He stated that board staff had assisted the governor with creating a budget that would keep treatment programs in the budget. He recognized that the ball was still in the air. He stressed that treatment helped and worked. He shared a story about a baby born with heroin in her system; she was currently receiving services as a young adult. He hoped for a positive outcome.

1:46:21 PM

MEGHAN JOHNSON, THREAD, JUNEAU, stressed the importance of reinstating funding for young children and families. She spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings. She testified in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers program. She spoke in support of full funding for Pre-K programs. She stressed that the programs were critical and had long-lasting benefits for children and the state's economy. She stated that the investment was the best that the state could make. She shared that there were approximately 80,000 children in Alaska with two parents in the workforce; unfortunately, Alaska's current early care and learning could only meet approximately 50 percent of the need. She spoke to a high financial return on investment provided by early learning programs.

1:48:45 PM

EMILY FERRY, PARENT, JUNEAU, urged the reinstatement of \$1.1 million that had been funded to Juneau schools the prior year. She stressed that education was the priority. She spoke in strong support of funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). She discussed that many individuals had made travel plans for the upcoming summer based on the published ferry schedule. She detailed that money spent by marine highway travelers in communities may not occur if the ferry service was not available. She stated that the cuts to Lynn Canal service were particularly confusing; she referred to high demand in conjunction with a proposed cut to service by 25 to 50 percent.

[1:50:56 PM](#)

SHERYL WEINBERG, SERRC, JUNEAU, testified in support of funding for education. She asked the committee to retain a two-year one-time increment for the second year of a STEM pilot program. The agency provided statewide education services. She spoke in support of a competitive STEM pilot project passed the prior year that would serve underserved and underrepresented middle school students. She relayed that the pilot was based on previously successful SERRC programs; it served a cohort of 45 students. She provided detail about the program.

[1:53:26 PM](#)

DARCY MARKOVICH, SERRC, JUNEAU, asked the committee to continue funding a two-year one-time increment for the second year of a STEM pilot program. The program served 45 6th grade students and was designed to serve students throughout their middle school careers. The program recipients represented 15 school districts and 28 communities. The program was based on prior SERRC programs that had been proved successful. She stressed that the services made a difference in children's lives. She shared a story about a student. She urged the committee to fund the program.

[1:54:42 PM](#)

DAVID DIERDORFF, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in opposition to a 60 percent reduction proposed by the finance subcommittee. He urged support for public broadcasting. He communicated that public broadcasting provided a balanced content of local, state, national, and international news. He stressed the importance of keeping informed. Public radio improved the quality of residents' lives and provided excellent resources for citizens of all ages. He shared a personal story about his lifelong experience with public radio.

[1:56:59 PM](#)

SAMANTHA CORONELL, JUNEAU CONSTRUCTION ACADEMY, JUNEAU, spoke in strong support of a SERRC Learning Connection service and the Juneau Construction Academy. She communicated her interest in working with her hands and in welding; the construction academy had taught her how to

weld. She had been given the confidence to work in a field that was not dominated by females. She commented on her work as an apprentice carpenter with North Pacific Erectors. She had been working full-time and was happy to be self-sufficient. She shared the story of two classmates. She understood that the budget was tight, but the program had been extremely important for her.

[1:58:51 PM](#)

ANDY STORY, MEMBER, JUNEAU SCHOOL BOARD, JUNEAU, urged the reinstatement of \$1.1 million for the Juneau School District. She spoke to the importance of an excellent education system. She shared that school boards across the state had worked to improve education; the efforts were paying off. Current graduation rates in Juneau were the highest they had ever been at 80 percent. The state's economic well-being was tied to the success of its students. She asked for restored funding for the Alaska Construction Academy, Pre-K, Best Beginnings, and other.

[2:01:16 PM](#)

LYNNETTE DIHLE, SELF, JUNEAU, asked for the restoration of one-time education grant funds. She recalled Senator Lisa Murkowski's statement that during tough times for farmers to not use the "seed corn." She likened education as a large amount of seed corn for the state's future. She thanked committee members for their service.

[2:02:20 PM](#)

AURA LANDAU, PARENT, JUNEAU, testified in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers program. She was grateful for past funding of the program. She spoke to the program's success for children and her own children. She detailed that the program helped better prepare children for school. Additionally, healthy parental interaction helped reduce high-cost criminal, health, and other interventions later on. She provided a personal story about her experience as a mother. She stressed that her Parents as Teachers coordinator had helped her to learn healthier ways work with her son. She emphasized that the program had helped to make her parenting and home safe for her little boy.

[2:05:04 PM](#)

LISA AREHART, PARENT, JUNEAU, testified in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers program. She discussed her commitment to childhood education. She spoke to the importance of early education. The program valued early education through its promotion of skill sets for parents, child engagements in play and learning, early developmental awareness, and fostering hands on parenting practices. The approach helped parents to better understand their role in becoming engaging parents. Most importantly, the program emphasized building a learning relationship between parents and children in the early years. She provided further detail about the program.

[2:07:22 PM](#)

MARIAN CLOUGH, SELF, JUNEAU, asked the committee to restore the 60 percent cut to public broadcasting. She understood the revenue implications of a drop in oil prices. Her primary source of information had been public broadcasting, which had consistently offered Alaskans the most comprehensive coverage of the issue. She spoke to the importance public radio provided for the broadly diverse state. She spoke to the importance of KTOO's broadcasting of Juneau Assembly meetings and of the role that Gavel to Gavel played throughout the state. She shared a personal story about the birth of her grandson who she and her husband had signed up as a sustaining member of KTOO.

[2:09:57 PM](#)

LAUREN SMOKER, PARENT, JUNEAU, urged funding for education and Alaska School Districts. She asked the committee to restore the one-time education funds passed the prior session. She urged the committee to keep from cutting any further. She spoke to the high-quality teaching staff in Juneau. She had participated in budget conversations for Dzantik'l Heeni Middle School; the school had nothing left to cut but teachers. She stressed that the cuts would directly and adversely affect the state's children its future.

[2:11:41 PM](#)

JEANNIE MONK, ALASKA STATE HOSPITAL AND NURSING HOME, JUNEAU, testified in support of funding for Medicaid expansion. She communicated that Alaska had the opportunity

to close the coverage gap that would allow an additional 40,000 Alaskans access to healthcare. The agency believed there was a path forward for Medicaid expansion and urged the legislature to keep the conversation going. The agency believed Medicaid expansion could be used as a catalyst for reform. She spoke to the importance of working together to find something that would work for everyone.

[2:12:51 PM](#)

EVERYL VELIZ, PARENT, JUNEAU, testified in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers program. She shared her personal story as a mother. She communicated that the program had helped her and her husband to understand childhood development, to make sure their son was on track, and other. The program had helped to build her son's motor, fine-motor, speech, literacy, and social-emotional skills. She believed that most parent confusion was rooted in not understanding a child's communication tactics or developmental ability. She stressed that chronic misunderstanding and lack of support resulted in the abuse of a child from overly tired, isolated, and stressed adults. She spoke in support of the Imagination Library. She relayed that due to the constant emphasis in reading her child could spell many words and read much of his own library.

[2:15:15 PM](#)

EMILY COATE THOMPSON, PARENT, JUNEAU, implored the committee to restore funds for the Parents as Teachers and Best Beginnings programs. She spoke to the adverse effects of childhood trauma including heart disease, depression, and cancer. She asked for investment in children; children grew up and became parents. She discussed the difficulty of raising a child in Alaska. The two programs were the only options that served children aged zero to three years.

[2:16:20 PM](#)

JOSH CAMPBELL, ALASKA CONSTRUCTION ACADEMY, JUNEAU, urged the committee to restore funding for the Alaska Construction Academy. He discussed his personal experience with the academy. He was grateful to have a good job. He stressed that without skills it was not possible to get jobs that paid a living wage. He had been enrolled in the academy for one year and had learned many skills and had

doubled his income. He shared his intent to join the local plumbers' and pipefitters' union. The academy had opened many doors for him. He stressed that cuts to the program would be a great disservice to Alaska.

[2:19:06 PM](#)

BETH LEBAN, DIRECTOR, JUNEAU YOUTH COURT, JUNEAU, asked the committee to reinstate funding for statewide youth court programs. She shared that youth court programs resulted in reduced re-offense rates and saved the state money. She spoke to the role of the courts that worked as a diversion program for teens who break the law for the first time; there were 11 statewide. The courts handled minor offences including underage drinking, trespassing, vandalism, and shoplifting. She stressed that without the youth courts juvenile probation officers, law enforcement, district court judges, and magistrates would become involved in the minor cases. The costs would be higher as a result. The programs were evidence-based and saved the state money.

[2:20:51 PM](#)

MADELINE HANDLEY, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT AND VOLUNTEER, JUNEAU YOUTH COURT, JUNEAU, spoke in support of the Juneau Youth Court. She shared that her experience as a youth court volunteer had given her the opportunity to help her community and had taught her about the legal system in a hands on way. She wanted the new volunteers to have the same valuable experience she had received. She thanked the committee for its reconsideration.

[2:21:33 PM](#)

JARMYN KRAMLICH, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA STUDENT (UAS), JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for the university. He relayed that UAS was special and it acted as a positive force in the lives of many Alaskans. He believed the university had a strong commitment to his educational success. He opined that the university was doing an extraordinary job at educating citizens statewide. He spoke to the importance of e-learning and distance delivery options.

[2:23:00 PM](#)

JENNIFER WALKER, PARENT, JUNEAU, testified in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers and Best Beginnings programs. She spoke to the support she had received from the Parents as Teachers program. She relayed that the knowledge she had gained from the program had helped her with her small daycare business.

[2:24:14 PM](#)

JAELEEN ARAUJO, GENERAL COUNSEL, SEALASKA CORPORATION, JUNEAU, spoke in support of rural communities. She highlighted concerns about cuts to the Division of Forestry. She discussed the importance of the timber program. She feared that the cuts may mean the timber industry would collapse in the region. She stressed that the Division of Forestry was an important component of overseeing compliance with the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act, which ensured protection of the state's habitat and resources; cuts to the division would mean that the important public interest may not be served. The division was an important source of timber, local jobs, and positive revenue. She asked the committee to restore funding to the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS).

[2:26:46 PM](#)

SATNAM SEARS, PARENT, JUNEAU, testified in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers program. The program had helped her personally with her son. She was thankful for the program.

[2:27:46 PM](#)

TALEA KELLAR, PARENT, JUNEAU, spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings, Pre-K, and Parents as Teachers. She shared information about her personal experience as a parent. She believed Alaska was the best place to raise a child; however, she had been discouraged to hear about cuts to early learning. She pointed to the importance of the first five years of brain development; the programs were designed to foster the development and to support parents.

[2:28:41 PM](#)

LAURA POWERS, SELF, JUNEAU, testified in support of funding for Medicaid expansion. She stated that Medicaid made good

sense for the economy and health of Alaskans. She asked for the reinstatement of funds for chlamydia prevention. She stressed that Alaska was ranked in the top two for rates of chlamydia since 2000; the disease was preventable and easily treated. She believed that the state should fund evidence-based solutions to improve reproductive health outcomes such as access to free testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. She stated that teenagers and young adults were particularly prone to infection, which put them at risk for lifelong and costly health complications. She stated that it was important to empower youth to make smart decisions by providing them with fact-based, age-appropriate sex education statewide.

[2:31:21 PM](#)

JULIANNE CURRY, UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for the fishing industry. She asked the committee to reinstate funds to the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) program. She detailed that ASMI was proven to work; each \$1 million spent resulted in \$100 million back. She testified in support of full funding for the Seafood Certification Program in order to maintain control of the Alaska Seafood brand. She relayed that 72 percent of active permit holders were Alaska residents; the seafood industry was the state's top private sector employer. She shared statistics related to the commercial fisheries industry. She thanked the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development Finance Subcommittee for fully restoring the governor's cut for the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association. The organization supported the subcommittee recommendations for the Department of Fish and Game budget. She stated that under the proposed budget reductions the seafood industry would continue to create economic opportunity to benefit the state.

[2:33:15 PM](#)

RUSS MCDOUGAL, ALASKA STATE HOMEBUILDERS ASSOCIATION, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for the Juneau Construction Academy and other construction programs throughout the state. He spoke to learning about the problem in the state related to a lack of education for young people entering into the construction trades. He had been advocating for the education ever since learning about the problem. He shared a personal story about his

background. He stressed the importance of the construction academies. He thanked the committee for its time.

[2:35:38 PM](#)

MELINDA MESSNER, PARENTS AS TEACHERS, JUNEAU, shared testimony on behalf of a family. She testified in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers program. The mother of the family had Crohn's disease and the father was a stay-at-home dad; both parents had no high school education and were isolated with no family support. Through the Parents as Teachers program she had provided the family with support and had connected them with the Infant Learning Program, Kinder-music, and autism services. The programs had helped to provide the child with verbal language and other. She thanked the committee for its time.

[2:38:03 PM](#)

MARK MILLER, SUPERINTENDENT, JUNEAU SCHOOL DISTRICT, JUNEAU, urged the committee to reinstate the one-time \$1.1 million for the district. He relayed that a loss of funding would mean cutting new teachers and an increase in class size as a result. He communicated that a loss in funding equated to the elimination of 11 positions; another 4 staff would be cut in preschool. He elaborated that a cohort of kindergartners would show up woefully behind their peers with little or no chance to catch up. He recalled a television commercial and the importance of paying upfront versus paying more in the future.

[2:40:12 PM](#)

JOY LYON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASSOCIATION FOR THE SOUTHEAST EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN, JUNEAU, advocated for funding for Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, and Pre-K programs. She urged the reinstatement of funding that would allow 22,000 children to continue receiving their books in the mail. She spoke to early literacy efforts in communities. She stressed the importance of teaching children at a young age. She used a small plant as an example; a plant would not thrive if it did not get watered from the beginning. She stressed the importance of nurturing children. She relayed that parents appreciated the support.

[2:42:46 PM](#)

RYE SPERL, STUDENT GOVERNMENT, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA SOUTHEAST, JUNEAU, testified in support of the university. He shared a personal experience related to his education. He spoke to the quality and commitment of teachers at UAS, especially considering the low tuition costs paid by Alaska residents. He was grateful for his experience and planned on completing a degree in business administration in Juneau. He thanked the committee for its time.

[2:44:19 PM](#)

FELIX THILLET, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA SOUTHEAST, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for the university. He shared a personal experience related to his family and his education. He relayed that UAS offered a great education at a great price. He had integrated into the community and worked on campus. He stressed the helpfulness of the university's academic advisors. He valued the quality of the professors at the university. He discussed a fundraiser event that had raised money for the Glory Hole in Juneau. He was grateful to the university system for allowing him to complete his education. He hoped to make Alaska his new home.

[2:46:30 PM](#)

LISA SKILES PARADY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA COUNCIL OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, JUNEAU, spoke in support of the restoration of \$32 million in one-time funds passed the prior session for school districts statewide. She detailed that many districts were reliant on the funds and commitment that had been made by the legislature the prior year. She spoke to the importance of funding for broadband and digital equity; the proposed cuts would widen the digital divide in the state. She spoke to the federal e-rate match; a \$5 million investment was really \$35 million to \$40 million with the addition of federal funds. She spoke in support of AKLN and early childhood programs. She testified in support of statewide mentoring programs that improved retention. She noted that there was a 30 percent turnover rate for teachers in Alaska; mentoring was a proven retention tool. She understood that the state was in a budget crisis, but believed it was also in an education crisis.

[2:48:52 PM](#)

PAM WATTS, JUNEAU ALLIANCE FOR MENTAL HEALTH, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funds for behavioral health. She thanked to committee for recognizing the importance of behavioral health services in Alaska and the role they played in the reduction of more expensive services to people such as repeated psychiatric and medical hospitalizations and incarcerations of mentally ill persons. She shared information about the adults the program served. A number of the clients served were just under the Alaska Psychiatric Institute level of need for hospitalization; the clients were served in outpatient services, highly structured group homes, and supported living apartments. She discussed services provided by the program. She relayed that the prior year the agency had served 589 people on an outpatient basis. Additionally, the agency provided psychiatric emergency services. Approximately 30 percent of the program recipients were not Medicaid eligible; they were covered with behavioral health grants. She thanked the committee for its support.

[2:51:10 PM](#)

SABRINA NELSON, PARENT, JUNEAU, testified in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers and Best Beginnings programs. She spoke in support of the Imagination Library. She shared her personal experience with motherhood. She spoke to guidance and support she had received from the programs. The programs had provided information on childcare, first foods, developmental milestones, and communication. The program had provided networking with other families. She referred to a family library night that was offered through the program.

[2:53:32 PM](#)

LAINE RINEHART, DISCOVERY PRESCHOOL, JUNEAU, spoke in support of full funding for Pre-K programs. He recalled memories of his preschool teacher. He remembered the individual time his teacher had taken to read to him. He detailed that early life experiences effected people through the rest of their lives. He implored the community to continue funding for Parents as Teachers, Best Beginnings, and early Head Start Pre-K programs. He stated that the programs provided a safe place for parents and children to continue their education and to have an advantage. He elaborated that the programs provided

consistency for the young families and children needing support.

[2:54:52 PM](#)

RAY WILSON, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke to the importance of Alaska Legal Services for seniors. He stated that many older Native Alaskans neglected to create a will. He referred to a friend who had gone through much legal work because their mother had no will. He had trouble with creating a will and kept postponing it. He believed Alaska Legal Services was important for senior citizens. He asked the committee to continue funding for the agency.

[2:56:51 PM](#)

KIRK PERISICH, PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS LOCAL, JUNEAU, against cuts to education and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. He communicated that the Juneau Construction Academy and the Alaska Construction Academy provided services for several fields including residential and commercial. The academies provided training and education towards specific fields (e.g. carpentry, plumbing, electrical, and other). He relayed that the provided the Department of Labor and Workforce Development was helping unions and contractors with misclassifications on pay rates and some of the people who may try to abuse the system. He believed a strong Department of Labor and Workforce Development and strong education would provide a good infrastructure for building a better budget, which would help to keep money and worker resources in Alaska.

[2:58:20 PM](#)

RYAN M. HERBERT, OUTSIDE EDUCATION, JUNEAU, spoke in support of outside education. He provided information about his professional career. He emphasized the evolution of education and Darwin's theory that beings that evolved the quickest were the most likely to survive. He stressed that there was money outsourced that could be sourced in Alaska, such as information technology services. He believed the outsourced jobs meant there were jobs missing for children. He provided an example related to teaching youths. He relayed that his education had been inexpensive, but had provided him with positive career options. He noted that he

taught children on a daily basis in his auto shop. He urged teaching children how to be responsible.

3:00:53 PM

ALBERT JUDSON, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in opposition of the 10 percent cut to the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). He wondered about a justification for the proposed cut to the AMHS. He believed that both cuts and increases to the budget should be justified. He opined that justification for cuts related to the AMHS was more important because of way the cuts affect people's lives. He commented that it was important not to alienate one region over another possibly leading to polarization between people. He suggested forming regional subcommittees within the finance committee to ensure that each region has input on the budget for their area. He stated that he was just speculating in order to address polarization. He opposed any cuts to the AMHS budget. He justified his position indicating that the AMHS was already in a poor financial position and that any cuts to it would be devastating. He also conveyed that the AMHS generated revenue for the state. He indicated that with a little research a person would find that there had been times in which the AMHS was self-supporting. He referenced an editorial article from the Juneau Empire from March 1, 2015 concerning the AMHS and suggested that it provided a major answer to the issue.

Co-Chair Thompson thanked Mr. Judson for his testimony and confirmed that the committee also had his written version.

3:04:27 PM

DIXIE HOOD, COUNSELOR, JUNEAU, She opposed any budget cuts to existing programs and supported increased financing for pre-kindergarten education. She shared her experience with her own children in a co-op nursery school program which greatly influenced her career path. In her experience she found that the home environment, nurturance, and sense of security from birth through preschool years established the thinking, emotions, and self-value of a child. She attributed the proposed budget cuts to a lack of focus on specific social and economic needs on the part of the state administration and the legislature. She spoke in opposition to the cuts to the AMHS and advocated for Medicaid expansion. She referenced an article from the previous

Sunday in the Juneau Empire that proposed an increase to the fuel excise tax.

[3:08:07 PM](#)

DOUG BLONC, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOL AND PARENT, JUNEAU, He spoke in support of AKLN. He asserted that distance learning offered flexibility and depth of curriculum, making small schools big and big schools bigger. He claimed that it could turn a home, a workplace, or a coffee shop into a classroom. He commented that distance learning made the state much more nibble and empowered students. He informed the committee that AKLN offered quality courses and support from Alaskan teachers for students enrolled in schools that were not able to offer a wide variety of classes. He believed that AKLN would play an increasingly important role as enrollment and state financing declined. He advocated that AKLN met many of the distant learning needs of the state. He urged to committee to continue to fund AKLN.

[3:10:24 PM](#)

LARRY WEST, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in favor of supporting the AMHS. He mentioned his tourism background. He reported that the community of the City of Haines depended heavily on the AMHS as well as other communities in the Northern Lynn Canal. He expressed his concern with the current budget cut to the ferry system and remarked that the effects on families, kids, and groups would be unconscionable and devastating. He opined that those currently traveling the AMHS would otherwise have to be transported by air, an option he did not feel would work well. He claimed that cutting \$9.5 million from the AMHS budget would also result in reduced revenues to the state. He favored funding AMHS's existing service rather than funding a new capital project.

[3:12:39 PM](#)

BEN GOLDRICH, MARINE ENGINEERS BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE AND THE MASTERS, MATES, AND PILOTS, AND THE INLANDBOATSMEN'S UNION, JUNEAU, spoke in opposition to the proposed budget cuts to AMHS. He was concerned with the effects the budget cuts would have to the bottom line for businesses throughout coastal Alaska. He opined that cutting a published schedule would result in a loss of revenue for the AMHS. He furthered that without much

advance notice the cuts would affect the lives of 750 AMHS residents and employees as well as independent travelers. He urged the committee to consider the impacts of the cuts to the AMHS.

[3:15:07 PM](#)

NANCY SEAMOUNT, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in favor of a state income tax and urged the legislature to consider other sources of revenue.

Co-Chair Thompson indicated that after a short break the committee would be hearing testimony from Homer, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mat-Su, and Seward.

[3:17:16 PM](#)

AT EASE

[3:33:30 PM](#)

RECONVEYED

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY: HOMER, KENAI, KETCHIKAN, KODIAK, MAT-SU, SEWARD

Co-Chair Neuman called the meeting back to order. He announced the order in which the committee would be hearing testimonies from individuals at the community legislative information offices.

[3:34:13 PM](#)

RICHARD MALLEY, INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the 13.5 percent cut to the independent living line item in the budget. He relayed that the cut would have a huge impact. He explained that centers for independent living were non-residential Alaskan non-profits that provided independent living services to older Alaskans and people with disabilities. He cited a list of center locations in the state. He reported that the governor's budget removed \$164 thousand from the statewide independent living budget. He relayed that in the previous year 3700 Alaskans with disabilities were assessed to obtain independence or remain independent. He furthered that the centers only employed 65 individuals with disabilities. He relayed that 175 people would be impacted by the budget cut. He stated that if only one of the 175 people impacted by the budget cut ended up in a higher

level of care such as assisted living or in a nursing home the savings would be erased. In FY 14 transitions of persons from assisted living homes to their home communities made by independent living centers saved the state over \$400 thousand in Medicare costs. He asked that most, if not all, of the funds be restored to the statewide independent living budget.

Co-Chair Neuman acknowledged Representatives Dan Ortiz and Mike Chenault in the audience.

[3:37:16 PM](#)

SAVELY KALUGIN, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA, KACHEMAK BAY CAMPUS STUDENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the budget cuts to the University of Alaska. He expressed his concerns about the effect of the budget cuts on rural campuses. He suggested that budget cuts be implemented slowly over time.

[3:38:51 PM](#)

CLAUDIA HAINES, HOMER PUBLIC LIBRARY YOUTH SERVICES LIBRARIAN AND PARENT, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the budget cut that eliminates the Online With Libraries (OWL) program. She reported that for four years the state library had used state, federal, and foundation funding to supply nearly 100 libraries in the state with the equipment and broadband to provide Alaskans with a digital connection. She furthered that in some communities the connection is the only one available. The cut will also mean a loss to the state of \$2 million in federal e-Rate monies that helped to provide access to many other communities. She cited additional statistics concerning internet connectivity. She also spoke in support of other programs including Homework Help, Best Beginnings, and Parents as Teachers. She pleaded with the committee to reinstate funding for the programs.

[3:41:02 PM](#)

CRISTY FRY, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to proposed cuts to public broadcasting. She recalled the efforts of the people to get public radio on the air in 1979. She referred to KBBI radio station in Kenai. She applauded the legislature for its attempts to cut the budget. However, she opposed the 59 percent cut to

public broadcasting. She reported that public radio stations across the state provided critical information in emergencies and disasters such as volcanic eruptions, wildfires, severe weather, and tsunami warnings. She opined that a 59 percent budget reduction was out of proportion to other services and department cuts and would result in a loss of local, state, and international news and programming. She also pointed out that am radio broadcasting reached remote areas, many of which existed in the state. She asked the committee to reconsider the devastating cut to public broadcasting.

[3:42:53 PM](#)

MARK ROBL, CHIEF OF POLICE, HOMER POLICE DEPARTMENT, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in favor of restoring full funding for the community jails program and the Alaska Land Mobile Radio System (ALMR). He pointed out that community jails are state jails run by local communities. He continued that state statute required the Department of Public Safety to pay for all prisoner care costs including incarceration and transportation. The proposed budget cuts would reduce the level of services currently provided and could result in decreased prison safety for inmates and staff. He felt that the largest impact would fall on state troopers in a number of ways. He requested reconsideration of full funding for the community jail program and for ALMR.

[3:45:16 PM](#)

BETH CARROLL, SELF, FRITZ CREEK (via teleconference), spoke in opposition of the 59 percent funding cut to public broadcasting. She stressed the vital importance of public broadcasting. She indicated that public radio already operated with a bare bones staff. KBBI played an important role in communications including Tsunami warnings and fire alerts. The reduction to KBBI would amount to \$77 thousand which would decimate the station. Stations around the state share resources and were interdependent. She reemphasized the devastating impact of the state's proposed budget cut to public broadcasting.

Co-Chair Neuman recognized Representative Louise Stutes in the audience. He asked if there were additional testifiers at the Homer LIO. Hearing none, he switched to the Kenai LIO to hear public testimony.

[3:47:19 PM](#)

VIRGINIA ESPENSHADE, KENAI PENINSULA YOUTH COURT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in favor of restoring funding for Alaska youth courts. She reported that she filed a written copy of a fact sheet about the program for the committee's review. The report stated that in FY 14 over 400 cases were handled in Alaskan youth courts. She offered that every one of the cases saved money for the state in a number of ways. Youth court has impacted recidivism rates and saved thousands of future dollars otherwise spent on the traditional criminal justice system. She asked the committee to fully restore the youth court funding that was cut in the budget.

[3:49:24 PM](#)

TERRY BOOKEY, KDLL, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the proposed cuts to public broadcasting. He noted that public radio provided crucial services otherwise not provided in many communities within the State of Alaska. He elaborated that the 59 percent cut that was proposed by the finance subcommittee would be devastating to stations around the state. He further informed the committee that stations relied upon other stations within the state. He understood that cuts had to be made. However, he urged reconsideration of the extreme level of proposed cuts.

[3:51:14 PM](#)

JACKSON BLACKWELL, YOUTH COURTS OF ALASKA BOARD, SOLDOTNA (via teleconference), spoke in support of restoring full funding for youth court. He explained the services and benefits of the program. He indicated that statistics showed that the youth court's reoffending rates were half of those that did not go through the program. In the long run the program saved the state money. He felt that youth court was where he could make the most difference. He asked the committee to restore the program's funding.

[3:53:02 PM](#)

LAURIE OLSON, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT (KPBSD), KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in support of the one-time funding in the amount of \$2.26

million in the FY 15 projection. She relayed that in Governor Walker's address he stated that the one-time funding would be removed. She observed additional comments being made that support the governor's position. She pointed out that the reduction in the funding caused a larger loss to the district's revenue budget because reduction in state funding meant a reduction in funding from the Kenai Peninsula Borough amounting to more than \$520 thousand. The total amount of revenue lost to the school district was more than \$2.8 million. She conveyed that the board was looking at reductions in staff and outlined specific cuts under consideration. She relayed that the board would be adopting a balanced budget at its April 6th board meeting without knowing what the borough or the state would be providing for revenue. She wished the committee all the best in determining the course of the state budget.

[3:55:15 PM](#)

JIM WHITE, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES FOR KPBSD, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in favor of supporting the school broadband assistance grant, referred to as "School Bag." He reported that Kenai requested funding in the amount of \$27 thousand for the program and received \$21 thousand. The award was supposed to be a three-year award. He read directly from the February 2, 2015 award letter. He noted the instructions for the 2015 e-Rate year. It encouraged the school district to apply for 10 megabit on the e-Rate application which was due March 26, 2015 for the following school year. It stated that the grant program would require an e-Rate match for increased bandwidth going forward. He commented that he had included the information in the school district's request. He mentioned that there would be changes to the e-Rate program in the following year and there would be reduced funding in the amount of \$100 thousand in e-Rate subsidies for the following school year. He elaborated about other funding reductions. He concluded that there could be unintended consequences of the proposed cuts.

[3:57:36 PM](#)

ELIZABETH HARDIE, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA STATEWIDE MINING AND PETROLEUM TRAINING SERVICE (MAPTS), KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the 20 percent statewide budget cut to the University of Alaska. She

detailed the services of the MAPTS program and the program's efficiencies. She reported that the program generated revenue and would provide the funding to purchase the Delta Mine Training facility that would generate additional revenue. She requested that University leadership be allowed to examine revenues, to decide about educational values, and to decide what programs will be allowed to continue and grow. She encouraged the committee to allow the incoming leadership to examine incoming revenue and programs and to accomplish the restructuring that was needed to make the university run more efficiently.

[4:00:07 PM](#)

GLENN TURNER, INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in favor of supporting the Independent Living Center. He listed various agencies that had provided him services including hospitals, Heritage House, and Independent Living. He relayed that Independent Living was beneficial and inexpensive. He thanked the committee and hoped to see the program continue.

4:00:52

WILLIAM BIEBER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA MINING AND PETROLEUM TRAINING SERVICE, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the university and the Alaska Mining and Petroleum Training Service. He provided information on the training programs offered to producers and industry support companies. He detailed that the program generated some independent revenues, which helped to fund its own facilities. He spoke in support of a statewide Mine Safety Compliance training program. He spoke in support of the new Mine Training Hard-Skills Program that partnered with companies to provide hands on training; the service had been provided for under one year and had produced 19 students. He spoke to wage revenues brought in by the program. He relayed that the three programs cost less than \$900,000 per year in general funds.

[4:03:10 PM](#)

CHERYL TUTTLE, KENAI PENINSULA COLLEGE (KPC), KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in support of the campus and ensuring its funding for the future.

[4:04:03 PM](#)

MARSEA HANSEN, KPC, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in favor of distance learning. She provided information about her class schedule; e-learning made classes at other campuses available when subjects were not taught at KPC. She thanked the committee for its time.

[4:05:04 PM](#)

JAYCE ROBERTSON, KPC, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for KPC. He stressed that the college represented a vital aspect of the community and provided many educational opportunities. He asked the committee to reconsider cuts to the University of Alaska budget. He provided information about his degree program. He relayed that his education received at KPC enabled him to better provide for his family and to act as a more robust member of his community. He asked the committee to consider how the cuts would impact communities throughout the state. The cut equated to a loss of over \$660,000 for KPC. He thanked the committee for its work.

[4:06:58 PM](#)

MEGAN LACROSS, SELF, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in support of the Adult Day Services program and senior benefits. She relayed a personal experience about her husband's fight with Alzheimer's. She detailed that grant services had enabled her husband to use the Adult Day Services program. She stressed the importance of the services to caregivers and the break it provided them. She stated that caregivers were saving the state a significant amount of money by caring for their loved ones at home. She relayed her appreciation for the program. She also spoke in support of the Independent Living Center. She urged the committee to think about the state's most vulnerable population and to reinstate full funds to the programs.

[4:08:39 PM](#)

JUSTIN DAHLGREN, KENAI PENINSULA YOUTH COURT, SOLDOTNA (via teleconference), spoke in favor of supporting funding for the Alaska Youth Court. He had worked with the program for six years and had seen the positive impact the program had on youth on a daily basis. He detailed that the program provided youths with a second chance and an opportunity to

reevaluate their lives. He stated that removing a program that educated youth on the judicial system and gave juvenile offenders a second chance would be a mistake. He asked the committee to reconsider the cuts.

[4:09:29 PM](#)

DAVE BRIGHTON, SELF, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in favor of supporting education. He stated that after several years of flat funding the Kenai School District had to make an increase to the teacher/student ratio, which had led to teacher cuts. He encouraged the legislature to keep its promise from the prior year to fund at the existing level.

[4:10:23 PM](#)

PEPPER POND, GREATER KENAI-SOLDOTNA IMAGINATION LIBRARY AND BEST BEGINNINGS, SOLDOTNA (via teleconference), spoke in favor funding the Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers programs. Best Beginnings provided the Imagination Library with over 50 percent of its funding. She explained that children received a free book every month from age zero to five. The program targeted foster children and any children who did not have the opportunity to visit a library. She spoke to a significant increase in Pre-K literacy as a result of the program. She stated that the program would be eliminated if funding was not received. The local community worked hard to match approximately 50 percent of the funds provided by Best Beginnings.

[4:12:20 PM](#)

ELENA MILETTE, SELF, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in support of the Independent Learning Center. The program had helped to find her a job and education. She was very appreciative of the help.

[4:13:00 PM](#)

MICHAEL NELSON, SELF, SOLDOTNA (via teleconference), spoke against education cuts. He relayed the challenge he had as a parent with a child with a learning disability. He stressed that there was insufficient support in schools for children with disabilities. He spent time four days per week helping with his son's disabilities. He noted that other children with disabilities were not getting the

services they needed. He believed teachers were doing the best they could with their resources.

[4:14:30 PM](#)

FRED STURMAN, SELF, SOLDOTNA (via teleconference), testified that legislature needed to make greater cuts. He suggested cutting the salaries of a minimum of 2,000 employees; he believed the cut would save approximately \$2.8 million. He thought departments should either be eliminated completely or fully funded. He advocated eliminating the Division of Motor Vehicles. He wanted to see \$4 billion cut from the current budget.

[4:16:19 PM](#)

MARY JO METTLER, NORTHERN LIGHTHOUSE DAY CENTER, SOLDOTNA (via teleconference), spoke in support of the restoration of \$500,000 for the Adult Day Service grant program. She communicated that the program provided family care givers with the ability to continue working and to keep loved ones at home. She noted that in-home care saved the state money.

[4:17:53 PM](#)

STEPHANIE QUEEN, KENAI PENINSULA COLLEGE COUNCIL, SOLDOTNA (via teleconference), encouraged the committee to support the university funding proposed in the governor's version of the budget. She stated that KPC and the university served an important role in the regional and statewide economies. She opined that developing a skilled workforce that could meet the opportunities in the state would be a challenge. She elaborated that KPC was strategic in its partnership with the private sector to tailor programs to meet the state and local need. She discussed the average earnings of graduates of various degree programs. She reiterated her support of funding at the governor's proposed levels.

[4:20:07 PM](#)

KRIS HOLDRIED, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), asked the committee to maintain the university budget at the governor's proposed level. She shared a couple of stories related to how the university was helping to build the workforce the state needed in order to be economically sound in the future. She relayed that she was involved in

energy task group in the inlet; the group had worked with students from the University of Alaska Anchorage. She spoke to the great training provided to university students. She discussed marine programs offered by the university. She believed the university was building a great workforce in science and technology.

[4:22:13 PM](#)

PAUL SLENKAMP, AK MENTAL HEALTH TRUST/UAA LAND TRUST OFFICE, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), expressed his support of the University of Alaska Lands and Alaska Mental Health Trust Lands Offices. He spoke against the proposed elimination of the Division of Forestry timber program in Southeast Alaska. He elaborated that the university and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA) derived significant revenues from timber. He discussed efforts to provide a sufficient timber base to stabilize the timber industry in Southeast and to maintain the required infrastructure. He shared that AMHTA and the university had joined together to work with the Division of Forestry to preserve the Southeast Alaska forest products industry. He stated that without a competitive market the assets would lose value. He discussed providing maximum return to landowners by combining infrastructure and utilize mutual developed road systems and other. He provided additional information about the program. He asked the committee to allow funding for one position in Southeast Alaska.

[4:25:20 PM](#)

ED ZASTROW, KETCHIKAN SENIOR SERVICES AND AARP, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), testified in support of the proposed budget for the state's senior population. He spoke in favor of the Senior Care Program; the basic money went to the basic needs of seniors. He relayed a story about a senior trying to decide what food to purchase at the store on a limited budget. He spoke in support of programs that provided seniors with assistance getting to doctor appointments and other. He stressed that heating programs and home care provided a base need for seniors. He asked the committee to carefully look at funding the needs-based programs. He recommended looking for areas of duplicate services when considering where to make cuts.

[4:27:45 PM](#)

JUANITA DIAZ CAMILON, RENDEZVOUS SENIOR CENTER, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the Rendezvous Day Care Center. She relayed that the center was a blessing for seniors in Ketchikan. She stressed that the staff of four did everything to make people feel at home. She provided the names of the staff at the center. She thanked the committee for its time.

[4:29:22 PM](#)

LICHA KELLY KING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RENDEZVOUS SENIOR DAY SERVICE CENTER, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for Adult Day Services. She shared that the day service centers were for older adults who could no longer manage independently, or who were isolated and lonely. The day centers enabled seniors to socialize while still receive needed care services. The centers allowed caregivers some respite from the caregiving duties in other areas. Most of the seniors did not have family members to care for them. During the day they were able to receive nutritious food, participate in healthy activities, and make use of their valuable skills and talents. She shared that many of the seniors had severe problems, and the centers provided much needed help. She stressed that the participants were valuable members of the community, and it was Alaska's duty to provide care for them.

[4:31:51 PM](#)

STEWART WHYTE, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, KRBD, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), testified in support of funds for public broadcasting. He shared that radio stations were mandated by the federal government to serve their communities of license as public trustees. Which meant that the stations were a part of the community, and had a duty to engage the citizens to ensure their safety and wellbeing. The emergency alert system and other systems were a part of that federal mandate. Public broadcasting was sometimes the only means to send and receive vital information for some rural communities. There were many places in Alaska that were considered under-served rural areas, so they relied on public broadcasters, and many were only served by the translator signals. He stated that there were numerous nonprofit organizations that recorded Public Service Announcements, Native Language Modules, and other programs; honor interviews; and provide cultural enrichment to the

audience. The volunteers represented a wide cross-section of community members.

[4:34:08 PM](#)

ANITA MAXWELL, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funds for public radio. She shared that public radio was an essential service in Ketchikan and throughout Alaska. The community relied on public radio for accurate, timely, and unbiased information. The public radio shared school reports and other local issues to provide her family with information that helped them make decisions throughout the day. The radio brought the community together through meaningful dialogue and outreach to all different types of people. She shared that she had helped to produce educational programming for public radio, and used it as a resource to share information and education. Public radio had an immense impact on individuals and organizations.

[4:35:44 PM](#)

LISA PEARSON, ADULT SERVICES LIBRARIAN, KETCHIKAN PUBLIC LIBRARY, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for Online With Libraries (OWL). She stated that OWL provided the infrastructure for statewide communication and collaboration for state, municipal, tribal, and nonprofit agencies in 96 communities. The OWL network allowed Alaskan agencies a savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars in travel costs, and hundreds of hours in lost productivity time. She stated that there were many small communities that would be burdened by time and money to attend meetings in person. She remarked that OWL allowed remote communities to be active members of statewide and regional partnerships.

[4:37:50 PM](#)

MARGARET CLABBY, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for public broadcasting. She stated that Ketchikan's public radio station, KRBD, was an important reason for her choice to reside in Ketchikan. She was a teacher, and took groups of students to tour the radio station. The children then grew up to volunteer at the radio station. She shared that the public radio broadcasted candidate forums for public elections; information from the Department of Fish and Game; emergency

alerts; jobs reports; and local news reports. The radio provided reports from communities across the state, which helped her familiarize with the other residents of the state. She shared that there was information ranging from gardening, to public safety, to the arts. The local public radio station educated, informed, and broad generations of residents together. She felt that the public radio stations produced better and happier Alaskans.

[4:39:41 PM](#)

CAITLIN JACOBSON, LIBRARIAN, KETCHIKAN HIGH SCHOOL, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for technical services. She stressed that access to information is critical for students and communities. She felt that the current proposed cuts would be devastating, and would limit the residents from needed services. The essential services included programs such as public broadcasting and broadband services. Public radio provided unbiased reporting and programing that kept the residents informed. Communities also relied on broadband services, which had only recently risen above substandard levels across the state. She shared that the OWL program provided broadband services to an area of Alaska that was the size of Ohio.

[4:41:34 PM](#)

MIKE JAUSORO, ALASKA ESCROW AND TITLE AGENCY, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for recording centers. The closing of the offices would have a very serious effect on how real property transactions were handling. Recording documents could be done with a different format, many recordings would be presenting to a recording office, especially those handled by individuals or small offices. Only two businesses had a simple-file in the three recording districts served by the Ketchikan Recording Office. Local attorneys, surveyors, real estate offices, banks, and credit unions relied on the recorder's office. In 1984, he was affiliated with the only title insurance agency ever to open an office in Bethel. That office served both the Bethel and Kuskokwim recording district. That office was then closed for an extended period of time, and it was long enough to force the title insurance agency to move to Anchorage. The closing of that office occurred during a downturn in the economy related to the oil industry.

[4:44:25 PM](#)

CHRIS FRENCH, KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Ketchikan District Recorders Office. Several departments within the Ketchikan Gateway Borough utilized the recorder's office on a regular basis. The borough would be required to file most documents electronically or by mail, which would cost an additional \$1400 per year, if the office closed. Many recorded documents affecting property owners were not available in the state recorder's website. Residents would most likely seek property information at the borough, which would necessitate the allocation of additional borough resources to provide resources eliminated by the state. The Ketchikan office served 70 outlying communities, and if it closed the nearest office would be in Juneau.

[4:45:41 PM](#)

LES CRONK, EMPLOYEE, SOUTHEAST STEVEDORING CORPORATION, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for maintaining the State Timber Office in Ketchikan. He stressed that timber generated revenue for the state, and was critical to Southeast Alaska. He understood that there may be cuts to the office, but stressed that people must be employed to bring the state timber to market. The timber industry was very dependent on that office, due to the failure of the federal government to supply the timber that was needed to keep the industry and infrastructure available.

[4:47:17 PM](#)

ERIC NICHOLS, OWNER, ALCAN FOREST PRODUCTS, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), testified in support of funding the Department of Forestry timber sale program. He stated that his company depended on the program, and would fail if eliminated. There was not enough volume to sustain the weakened timber industry. The other private land owners would continue to generate less revenues for the public trusts. The program could generate a positive income to the state, and his company recently had a 150 acre timber sale that would generate \$1 million for the state. There would be \$1 million to \$2 million in state revenue with a substantial harvest yield, and would generate an

additional \$6 million to \$7 million in expenditures to all the local communities in the harvesting of timber.

[4:48:53 PM](#)

DENISE JAUSORO, DISTRICT RECORDER, KETCHIKAN RECORDERS OFFICE, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Ketchikan Recorders Office. The mission statement for the offices stated, in part, that the state recorder's office administers the statewide recording system and the uniform commercial code. The mission was to provide a secure, accessible, and impartial place to record and preserve the permanent public record of Alaska as directed by statute under 19 separate titles and by regulation. The offices were the singular point of access to all of the recorded public records. The offices served approximately 50,000 residents in the remote areas of Alaska, which was approximately 7 percent of the state's population. The Ketchikan office services were available to approximately 20,000 residents in the area, including Petersburg and Wrangell. The other offices served major ports such as Valdez, Homer, Bethel, and the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta.

[4:51:47 PM](#)

SAM HERNANDEZ, PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER, KETCHIKAN SCHOOLS, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), urged support of funding for wellness programs in schools. He stated that the wellness grants helped students to learn proper skills to fight obesity. He announced that 42 percent of the students in Ketchikan were categorized as obese. Wellness funds provided new equipment and after school programs to help the students stay active. The current wellness staff was continually planning new programs and activities to help the students.

[4:52:41 PM](#)

DAVID ANDERSON, GENERAL MANAGER, KBBI PUBLIC RADIO, HOMER, spoke in support of funding for public broadcasting. He stated that the proposed budget reduction would have a devastating effect on the radio stations statewide, and specifically the scholar stations that did not have the commercial base to generate additional revenue. He stated that the radio stations provided important services including broadcasting borough assembly meetings, city

council meetings; and state and local news. He stressed the importance of the access to emergency response, and KBBI had invested considerable money in generators and propane tanks to maintain the transmitter building functional in the case of an emergency. Emergency service information was provided to many listeners in life-threatening situations where their homes and lives were at risk. The radio worked closely with the Kenai Peninsula Borough Office of Emergency Management, and the Homer Fire Department in coordinating the accurate and timely information to the impacted individuals.

[4:55:07 PM](#)

ALAN SCHMITT, SELF, KODIAK (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for public broadcasting. The Kodiak Public Broadcasting Corporation, which owned and operated KMXT, was the only broadcast source for local news. He stated that KMXT broadcasted local public meetings and provided many other services including emergency broadcast services to the island communities, which included six remote villages. He felt that public broadcasting should not be singled out for such a substantial budget decrease. The public radio united the community and depended on continued state funding.

[4:56:30 PM](#)

ARTHUR SHULTZ, SELF, KODIAK (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding Alaska Marine Safety Education Association (AMSEA). There was no other safety and survival training program to Alaskan fisherman, and the AMSEA program reached the entire coast of Alaska. It was a forum for survivors for every type of marine tragedy met to pass on their often hard-earned wisdom. The AMSEA program had measurable results as seen in the dramatic decrease in the death rate in commercial fishing in recent years. In the previous year, fourteen fishermen directly credit their AMSEA training for their survival. The training had extremely limited budget. He stressed that AMSEA was the most effective way to support the lives and safety of commercial fishermen.

[4:58:16 PM](#)

MIKE KORSMO, SELF, SKAGWAY (via teleconference), testified in favor of funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System

(AMHS). He shared that he had worked extensively with past administrations and marine highway staff to ensure that the coastal communities received optimal service to support the residents and economies. He felt that AMHS had recently stabilized its scheduling and routes to provide the minimal service to the coastal communities. Destabilizing the system would have a drastic effect on the coastal communities. Recent efforts to build efficient vessels must come to fruition. He felt that reducing service to Kodiak, Prince William Sound, Southeast Alaska, and the Aleutian Chain, would create a substantial transportation halt that would require many years to remedy. He believed that funds were available to adequately fund the system, while management creates a plan to deal with the fiscal problems. He shared that there was at least \$14 million of unobligated funds for Juneau Access that could be used to keep the coastal transportation system functional.

Co-Chair Neuman remarked that written testimony could be submitted to the committee.

[5:00:11 PM](#)

JEFF STEPHANS, MANAGER, UNITED FISHERMAN'S MARKETING ASSOCIATION, KODIAK (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the Alaska Fish and Marketing Institute (ASMI). He felt that the state should invest in enterprises that provided jobs, tax revenues, and economic development. He stressed that the fishing industry met those requirements. The ASMI investment had substantial return. It served many coastal communities, and the fishing industry was a basic foundation to many of those communities. He stated that ASMI helped with the seafood pricing and distribution across the world. The industry was facing increased competition in species and price, and ASMI helped the industry flourish on a global level.

[5:02:32 PM](#)

MARITA KAPLAN, DIRECTOR, ADULT SERVICE PROGRAM, KODIAK (via teleconference), testified in favor of Centers for Independent Living. She remarked that she had first-hand experience with the benefits of senior independent living. She felt that the programs provided a great benefit to the communities.

[5:04:48 PM](#)

JONATHAN STRONG, SELF, KODIAK (via teleconference), testified in favor of Centers for Independent Living. He shared a story about his mother's unfortunate accident at her home. He had to move his mother to Alaska, and stressed that there were various issues that were very stressful. The adult aide programs were extremely beneficial to the health and wellbeing of his mother.

[5:06:34 PM](#)

TERRY HAINES, SELF, KODIAK (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding public broadcasting and the Alaska Marine Highway System. He shared that the public radio services were extremely beneficial to the community. There were many volunteers who worked to keep the public station functioning. He shared that the funding requirements were minimal.

[5:08:42 PM](#)

NANCY JONES, SELF, KODIAK (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for Adult Day Services Grant Program. The program made a positive difference in her life.

[5:09:31 PM](#)

SONJAH SCHUMACHER, SELF, MAT-SU (via teleconference), testified in favor of Centers for Independent Living. She felt that the funding would be specifically used for human beings. She remarked that the legislature should also reduce its own budget. She felt that the people should not be criticized, and should be respected.

[5:11:10 PM](#)

CARL BAKER, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Adult Day Services Grant Program. He felt that the program was very benefit, and shared that the governor's father had used the program. He encouraged the members to visit the program, so they could see the positive care that the seniors were receiving. The program allowed family members the ability to support themselves and their families. The program helped reduce abuse and other travesties for the senior population.

[5:13:08 PM](#)

BRITTNIE DELAGRANGE, EMPLOYEE, ALASKA CONSTRUCTION ACADEMY, PALMER (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the Alaska Construction Academy. The academy provided free, entry-level construction training for adults who want to work in construction in Alaska. The program depended entirely on grant funding from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to train Alaskans, and teach necessary skills for construction careers. It was the only program in the state that gave adults access to high quality construction training at a reasonable cost. Training was offered in a variety of fields to meet the current and future demands of Alaska's construction industry.

[5:15:15 PM](#)

CHUCK KAUCIC, DISTRICT MANAGER, WASILLA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, WASILLA (via teleconference), testified in support funding for conservation programs. He specifically addressed the Alaska Association for Conservation Districts, the Natural Resources Conservation Development Board, and the Student Intern Program through the Division of Forestry. The Alaska Association for Conservation Districts represented twelve state soil and water conservation districts, and was formed in 1965. It provided conservation best management practices in agriculture; soil and water quality; salmon restoration; forestry; invasive weeds; non-motorized trail use degradation; and other areas. He felt that the return in the conservation district was ten to one. Operating funds were necessary to keep the offices open in order to receive capital grants and produce outcomes. The Natural Resources Conservation Development Board was reduced from the operating budget, and would be required to seek funds through the capital budget. Student Intern Program through the Division of Forestry provided a summer crew of high school and college students to perform natural resource field projects. It produced many productive citizens and professionals.

[5:17:20 PM](#)

JONATHAN WYCKOFF, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the Alaska Construction Academy. He stated that that program had allowed him the opportunity to apprentice, and he knew several people that had moved

directly into electrical construction jobs. The classes were free, and he shared that he would not have been able to attend classes, had he been required to purchase them.

Co-Chair Neuman stated that a signed-in testifier, Barbara McDaniel, would have testified for Alaska Now.

[5:18:56 PM](#)

INGRID LING, WASILLA AREA SENIORS, WASILLA (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for Older Adults Fall Prevention Program. According to a January 23, 2015 press release from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Alaska's senior population was 71,080. It was reported that one in three adults, age 65 and older, fall each year. This meant that 23,456 older Alaskans fell each year. It was further reported that of those who fall, 20 to 30 percent were seriously injured. Therefore, between 4500 and 7000 older Alaskans were seriously injured due to a fall. The falls cost \$36 billion nationwide in 2012, and were the number one reason for hospitalization for older Alaskans.

[5:21:22 PM](#)

CHUCK FOSTER, WASILLA AREA SENIORS, WASILLA (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for Older Adults Fall Prevention Program. He felt that the program would save the state money. He shared that 60 percent of adult fractures were the result of falls. He felt that the program was fully peer-reviewed, and therefore proven extremely beneficial.

[5:23:35 PM](#)

KENNI LINDEN, SELF, PALMER (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for Medicaid expansion; sexually transmitted infection (STI) treatment and prevention; and early childhood education. Medicaid expansion would include 41,000 Alaskans, and the federal government would cover 100 percent of the cost through 2016. At most, after 2017, the state would be responsible for 10 percent of the cost. Between 2014 and 2017, the state Medicaid costs would be higher without expansion. It was estimated that Medicaid expansion would result in 4000 new jobs, and \$2 billion in economic activity. She furthered that Alaska let the nation

in STI rates. She encouraged reconsideration of reductions to early childhood education programs.

[5:25:27 PM](#)

MARK LACKEY, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, and other Pre-K programs. He had first-hand experience with the importance of early childhood education for the child and the parent. It was a critical window of time to make a substantial impact. He currently volunteered as the chairperson for the Early Childhood Partnership of Mat-Su, which was primarily funded by Best Beginnings. All but one person in the partnership was a volunteer. The partnership accomplished a great amount of work, by bringing together the Head Start program, school district, infant learning program, public health, Imagination Library, child care providers, parents, and concerned citizens. He stressed that the partnership worked to ensure that all the programs worked together to make an impact on early childhood development in the Mat-Su community.

[5:28:33 PM](#)

RACHEL GREENBERG, SELF, PALMER (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Adult Day Services Grant Program. She felt that it was important to invest in the lowest cost option for seniors. She remarked that there was misunderstanding about the Adult Day Services budget. Families relied on the Adult Day Services for everyday activities, which included other important programs.

[5:31:39 PM](#)

CAROL CHRISTIANSEN, SELF, PALMER (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for broadband services. He felt that the broadband services were necessary to maintain functioning community. He remarked that the legislative affairs agency budget may eventually be reduced. He furthered that the senior support programs should remain fully-funded. It was important for the seniors to stay in their homes.

[5:34:05 PM](#)

TIM WALTERS, PRESIDENT, MAT-SU EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, MAT-SU (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for

public schools. He remarked that the legislature had promised continued funding for public schools in the previous session. The Mat-Su School District had the largest class sizes in the state, as it continued to provide a quality public education. The school district dealt with the recent flat funding, and stressed that there was no room to decrease its budget. Reductions to public education funding would ultimately affect the children by amplifying the problems of large class sizing; implementing new, innovative programs; and servicing the most at-risk students.

[5:35:27 PM](#)

HELEN MATHIAS, SELF, SEWARD (via teleconference), testified in favor of Centers for Independent Living. She shared that she used the program, and allowed her to purchase vouchers. She stated that that program allowed for entertainment and travel. She was helped with her documents, and provided needed social outlets. She stressed that the disabled members were in need of the program. The program helped many people, and was one of the ways that she could have at least one bit of entertainment per month. She felt that the program could not be reduced in any fashion, and it provided a much needed service to the senior community in Seward.

[5:37:44 PM](#)

VALARIE KINGSLAND, DIRECTOR, ALASKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, SEWARD (via teleconference), testified in support of the OWL program. She shared that she successfully completed a master's degree program that enabled her to become a library museum director through broadband services. She stated that the OWL program provided broadband support, equipment training, and internet technology assistance to over 96 libraries in Alaska. The program included public access to 351 work stations; 183 early literacy stations; 385 laptops; 125 tablets; and internet and Wi-Fi access for the Alaska community members. She announced that over 1,800 video conferences had been scheduled, which included training sessions, classes, meetings, virtual tours, and unique cultural events. The loss of the program would also result in a loss of federal money that supported broadband access in the rural and remote village. The reduction to dial-up internet access would drastically limit the ability for the citizens to access health, employment, safety,

financial, educational, language, and historical information.

[5:40:04 PM](#)

KAREN SHEMET, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for early childhood education programs. She shared that evidence-based programs, like Parents as Teachers, made a substantial difference for some of the most vulnerable families in the state. It improved school readiness, academic achievement, and parenting skills. It was a proactive program that must be financially prioritized to gain high returns. She had been a program family visitor for fourteen years, and she worked with struggling and at-risk families as they focus on goals for themselves and their children achieving optimal outcomes. She shared that she also received program home visits when her children were young, so she knew the value that the program provided as her children grew.

HB 72 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 73 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Co-Chair Thompson announced the following day's agenda.

#

ADJOURNMENT

[5:43:18 PM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 5:43 p.m.