

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 5, 2015
1:02 p.m.

[1:02:37 PM](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Neuman called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:02 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

Brian Holst, Director, Juneau Economic Development Council, Juneau; Representative Andy Josephson; Representative Matt Claman.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Stacey Lucason, Student Body President, University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), Anchorage; Christi Meyn, Self, Anchorage; A'Lena Sorenson, Self, Anchorage; Kyle Pace, Self, Anchorage; Esther Hooper, Parent/Teacher, Anchorage; Joseph J. Hooper, Parent of 2 in school, Anchorage; Pamela Kelley, Education Director, Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, Anchorage; Charles McKee, Self, Anchorage; Sam Snyder, Susitna River Coalition, Anchorage; Liz Snyder, Board Member, AK Food Policy Council, Anchorage; Sergio F. Acuna,

Self, Anchorage; Jane Shelby, Director, Alaska WWAMI Medical Program, UAA, Anchorage; Monica Wright, AK WWAMI Student, Anchorage; Vicki Otte, CEO, MTNT Village Corporation, Anchorage; Lloyd Morris, Self, Anchorage; Clare Dote, The Working Forest Group, Anchorage; Abbe Dunnin-Newbury, Secretary, Board of Directors, Bean's Café, Inc, Anchorage; Scott Slender, Program Manager, Bean's Café, Anchorage; Randi Binion-Olson, Program Manager, Children's Lunchbox, Bean's Café, Inc., Anchorage; Arlene Briscoe, AK Nurses Association, Anchorage; Star Lee, Manager, Parents as Teachers, Anchorage; Karla Jutzi, Director of Communications, Food Bank of Alaska (FBA), Anchorage; Nikole Nelson, Executive Director, Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC), Anchorage; Ric Nelson, Chair, Governor's Council on Disabilities/ Special Education, Anchorage; Mary Jo Torgeson, Director, Anchorage Public Library, Anchorage; Rob Dolan, Self, Anchorage; Cathy Brenner, Director, Serendipity Adult Day Program, Anchorage; Lauren Kelsey, Anchorage; Chris Ingmanson, President, Board of Directors, Chugiak Senior Citizens, Inc., Eagle River; Becca Bernard, Self, Anchorage; Alyse Galvin, Self, Anchorage; Jim Powell, Self, Anchorage; Paul H. Shadura II, Self, Kenai; Joshua Franks, Southcentral Foundation, Anchorage; Cindy Knall, Self, Anchorage; Alex Scivka, Self, Anchorage; Lisa Aquino, Executive Director, Catholic Social Services (CSS), Anchorage; Dirk Shumaker, Executive Director, Kids Corps Inc., Anchorage; Wayne Boedecker, Self, Anchorage; Abbe Hensley, Executive Director, Best Beginnings, Anchorage; Laura Bonner, Self, Anchorage; Deborah Williams, Executive Director, Anchorage Youth Development Coalition, Anchorage; Robert Miller, Student Member, Anchorage Youth Court, Anchorage; Pat Falon, Self, Anchorage; Hope Finkelstein, Self, Anchorage; Stephanie Berglund, Chief Executive Officer, Thread, Anchorage; Immanuel Lewis, Self, Anchorage; Michael Gallagher, Anchorage Youth Court, Anchorage; Annelise Burgess, Anchorage Youth Court, Anchorage; Brandon McGuire, UA Local 367 Plumbers and Pipe fitters, Anchorage; Leon Knudson, Self, Palmer; Peter Michalski, Self, Anchorage; Kari Jahnsen, Self, Anchorage; Carolyn Heyman-Layne, Attorney and Parent, Anchorage; Joanie Cleary, Self, Anchorage; Chris Turlletes, Facilities Director, University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage; Ryan Buchholdt, University of Alaska, Anchorage; Karel Hauser, Self, Anchorage; Bill Hauser, Self, Anchorage; Charles Morgan, Raven Radio, Sitka; Greg Mandel, Kettleson Memorial Library, Sitka; Lisa Sadleir-Hart, Sitka Local Foods Network, Sitka; Thomas

Conley, Sitka School Board, Sitka; Tim Fulton, Sitka School Board, Sitka; Megan Litster, Petersburg School District, Petersburg; Ginger Evens, Petersburg School District, Petersburg; Joni Johnson, Petersburg School District, Petersburg; David Kensinger, Self, Petersburg; Erica Kludt-Painter, Petersburg School District, Petersburg; Charles Wood, Self, Petersburg; Marina Whitacre, Self, Petersburg; Sarah Holmgrain, Self, Petersburg School District; Bob Martin, Self, Petersburg; David Berg, Viking Travel, Petersburg; Elizabeth Hart, Self, Petersburg; Ronn Buschmann, Self, Petersburg; Josef Ploetzner, Sitka School Board, Sitka; Gerry Hope, MTAB, Sitka; Lindsay Evans, Self, Sitka; Kari Sagel, Teacher, Sitka School District, Sitka; Courtney Howard, Self, Sitka; Ben White, Sitka School District, Sitka; Kerry McAdams, Self, Sitka; Mike Svenson, Self, Sitka; Sherman Stebbins, City of Delta, Delta; John Conwell, Unalaska City School District, Unalaska; Karen Kresh, City of Unalaska, Unalaska; Matt Lightner, KUCB, Unalaska; Robi Harris, KUCB, Unalaska; Jennifer Shockley, KUCB, Unalaska; Gary Mullen, Self, Glennallen; Joseph Miller, Back to Wood Logging, Glennallen; Kathy Morgan, Tok Library and Community, Tok; Jeff Gavazza, The Computer Cabin, Tok; Deb Sparks, Alaska Gateway School District, Tok; Todd Poage, Alaska Gateway School District, Tok; Scott MacManus, Alaska Gateway School District, Tok; John Harvey, Alaska Power and Telephone, Tok; Amy Crozier, Self, Tok; Anthony Lee, Top Grade Builders, Tok; Jeff Hermanns, Self, Tok; Wade Parrish, Self, Sitka; Tom Sunderland, Ocean Beauty Seafoods, Seattle; Callie Connerton, University of Alaska, Juneau; Jillian Lush, Sprout Family Services, Homer; Ann Dixon, Homer Library, Homer; Tina Holland, Former Educator, Fairbanks; Posie Boggs, Self, Anchorage; Melanie Lesh, Self, Gustavus; Rachel Parks, Gustavus Visitor's Association, Gustavus; Todd Pettit, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Mat-Su; Pamela Samash, Self, Nenana; Victoria Martin, Self, Anchorage; Sarah Redmon, Self, Anchorage; Margie Walker, University Representative, Grayling; Rachel Bedsworth, Self, Anchorage; Leslie Walls, University of Alaska, Fairbanks; Lee Martin, self, Homer; Amanda Metiever, Facing Foster Care, Anchorage; Paul Schewfelt, KZPA Radio and the City Manager, Fort Yukon; Bobbie James, Self, Fort Yukon; Cindy Hite, Self, Willow; Litzi Botello, Self, Port Protection; Lee Tenhoff, Self, Homer; Peter Andrews, Mayor, Mountain Village; Jeff Kowchee, City Manager, Mountain Village; Jennifer Anderson, Board Member, Delta Imagination Library, Delta Junction; Peter Hoepfner, Board Member and Parent, Cordova School

District, Cordova; Patty Olmstead, Manager, Norton Sound Health Corporation Infant Learning Program, Nome; David Brighton, President, Kenai Education Association and parent, Kenai; Wendy Burke, Self, Juneau; Hugh Brown, Self, Anchorage; Rachel Harrison, Self, Willow; John Dart, Farmer, Manly Hot Springs; Hall Shepard, President, Center for Water Advocacy, Homer; Jennifer Wooley, Self, Anchorage; Johanna Herron, Self, Palmer; Regina Manteusel, Self, Anchorage; Lisa Hollen, Self, Palmer; Theda Pittman, Self, Anchorage; Kelly Drew, Professor, University of Alaska, Fairbanks; Katheryn Crowley, Parent and Homer Early Childhood Coalition, Homer; Shirley Cleaver, Self, Galena; Annie Silverman, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks; Gary Brown, Vice President, Anchorage Snow Mobile Club, Palmer; Paula Hatfield-Bauer, Self, Seward; Della Cheney, Self, Juneau; Paul Huppert, Self, Palmer; Katrina Howe, Student, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks; Veronica Slajer, Alaska Native Arts Foundation, Anchorage; Andy Holleman, Anchorage Education Association, Anchorage; Sue Steinacher, Nome Emergency Shelter Team, Nome; Steve Parizek, Snomad Snowmachine Club, Homer; Fred Sturman, Self, Soldotna; Sophia Armstrong, Haines Education Association, Haines; Richard Webb, Self, Fox; Ellen Story, Special Education Teacher, Juneau; Paula Giauque, Alaska Farm Bureau, Palmer; Kylee Singh, Self, Anchorage; Joan Diamond, Self, Anchorage; Patricia Winners, Self, Fairbanks; James Dwyer, Self, Ketchikan; Marjorie Dwyer, Self, Ketchikan; Carolyn Walton, Teacher, Juneau; Joni Scharfenberg, Fairbanks Soil and Water, Two Rivers; Stephen SueWing, Parent, Juneau; Linda Towarak, Self, Unalakleet; Janet Jones, First Covenant Church, Anchorage; Georgia Blue, Director, Alaska Native Arts Foundation, Anchorage; Selena Everson, Juneau, Self; Gerald Hughes, Self, Ketchikan; Tom Langdon, Student, University System, Fairbanks; James Ferguson, Self, Nome; Dolly Lamont, Self, Bethel; Mike Milligan, Self, Kodiak; Andrew Keller, Self, Fairbanks; Lily Hope, Self, Juneau; Maureen Hall, Alaska School Nurse Association, Juneau.

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.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

ANCHORAGE, SITKA, PETERSBURG, DELTA JUNCTION,
UNALASKA, GLENALLEN, TOK, STATEWIDE OFF-NET

#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."

[1:02:47 PM](#)

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY: ANCHORAGE

[1:03:48 PM](#)

STACEY LUCASON, STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE (UAA), ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), remarked that she was a philosophy major and a pre-medical student. She spoke against the cuts to the University and noted that many of them would directly affect student services. She added that cuts to student services could result in greater challenges for students to complete their college education. She pointed out the importance to the state and made note of the graduation rate. She highlighted the importance of an educated population with individuals that can contribute to healthcare and other workforce development areas. She noted the importance of components

outside the classroom to create a fully functional university.

[1:06:08 PM](#)

CHRISTI MEYN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against increased cuts to UAA. She noted that she was a senior in the civil engineering program at UAA. She added she was a lifelong Alaskan. She pointed out that she planned to stay in Alaska after graduation. She related concerns about future generations having access to education.

[1:07:26 PM](#)

A'LENA SORENSON, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against the cuts proposed to the University system. She noted that she was a student at UAA and part of student government. She urged the committee to consider the role that higher education played in the function and future of Alaska. She discussed areas of study at UAA and related that the University is also a center for culture and civic engagement. She related her concerns regarding the future educational opportunities of our state.

[1:08:43 PM](#)

KYLE PACE, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against the cuts to the University. He mentioned that he student at UAA currently in his junior year. He spoke of past cuts that have affected the University, and urged the committee to realign the budget to more close align with what was proposed by Governor Walker. He spoke to the good reputation of UAA, and expressed concern about a changing public perception due to decreased services.

[1:10:31 PM](#)

ESTHER HOOPER, PARENT/TEACHER, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the Parents as Teachers program. She relayed a personal story about how the program had helped a family. She expressed support for all home programs.

[1:11:29 PM](#)

JOSEPH J. HOOPER, PARENT OF 2 IN SCHOOL, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers program. He echoed the comments of his wife, and mentioned his young daughter, and how these services affected their family. He spoke to the efficacy of the program.

[1:12:42 PM](#)

PAMELA KELLEY, EDUCATION DIRECTOR, ALZHEIMER'S RESOURCE OF ALASKA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of restoring the Governor's requested amount for the Mind Matters program. She related that there were many people in the state that dealt with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. She spoke of the isolation and lack of engagement that comes with the early and middle stages of the disease, and how the program helps the individuals and their caregivers. She stated that the program offered a support group for caregivers. She added that it helps people to stay in their homes.

[1:15:31 PM](#)

CHARLES MCKEE, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), relayed that he was at the recent Caucus meeting in Anchorage. He related that he owned a copyright and referred to individual rights on contract. He continued about various subjects, including the federal government.

[1:18:10 PM](#)

SAM SNYDER, SUSITNA RIVER COALITION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against the Susitna Dam project, and proposed reappropriations the associated \$33.5 million for more necessary needs of the state. He characterized the dam project as "ill fated" and mentioned proposed cuts to education, transportation, and other essential services.

[1:19:03 PM](#)

LIZ SNYDER, BOARD MEMBER, AK FOOD POLICY COUNCIL, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against the elimination of funding for the Farm to School program. She related that Alaska spends \$1.5 billion on imported food per year, and only 10 percent of food comes from within the state while large amounts of arable land are uncultivated. She spoke to

diet-related medical conditions in the state, as well as food security. She mentioned food education and highlighted the growth and success of the program. She elucidated the efficiency of the program.

1:21:02 PM

SERGIO F. ACUNA, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of restoring funding to vocational training programs in the state. He made note of the benefit to our economy, and the importance of having a well-trained Alaskan workforce. He spoke to a non-resident hire problem. He related that he received vocational training and relayed how it had benefited his family. He mentioned preparing for a future workforce.

1:22:59 PM

JANE SHELBY, DIRECTOR, ALASKA WWAMI MEDICAL PROGRAM, UAA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), , director of WWAMI at UAA, spoke in favor of retaining funding for the WWAMI program and spoke to its' merits. She commented that the program was a major contributor to Alaska's physician workforce. She noted the shortage of physicians, particularly primary care physicians. She discussed WWAMI graduates and the high percentage that chose primary care. She asserted the cost-effectiveness of the program and suggested it would grow in the future if funded. She noted the high cost of recruiting rather than hiring from within the state. She mentioned the intent language, which had referred to a gradual elimination of the program.

1:25:16 PM

MONICA WRIGHT, AK WWAMI STUDENT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), related that spoke in favor of maintaining funding for the WWAMI program. She related that she was an Alaska-track student, and had completed almost three years of her training in state. She expressed that as of the subsequent fall, WWAMI students would be able to complete all of their training in Alaska. She opined that the program was important to addressing the shortage of physicians in Alaska.

Co-Chair Neuman welcomed Representative Andy Josephson to the gallery.

1:27:11 PM

VICKI OTTE, CEO, MTNT VILLAGE CORPORATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to spoke against cuts to the Division of Forestry. She noted that MTNT represents the villages of McGrath, Takotna, Nikolai, and Telida. She mentioned the proposed closing of the McGrath Fire Suppression Area, which protected approximately 88 million acres in rural Alaska. She mentioned an interagency agreement that was put in place to protect the communities in rural Alaska, and wondered if the Division of Forestry had consulted with the other agencies with regard to the closure. She opined that rural Alaska was getting the brunt of the budget cuts, and alleged that the cuts created a life-threatening situation.

1:29:49 PM

LLOYD MORRIS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to public broadcasting. He related that he had served as Chairman on the Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission. He added that he had travelled to all of the public television and many of the public radio stations in Alaska, and has witnessed the service provided to communities. He listed benefits such as community involvement, national/state/local information flow, and at times response to public health and safety circumstances. He urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. He noted the frugality that had been practiced in Alaska public broadcasting, and recognized the financial challenges of the state. He used Gavel to Gavel as an example of a service provided to Alaskans. He characterized the proposed cuts as "devastating" to the system, and stated that an informed citizenry was the strength of a democratic government.

1:32:08 PM

CLARE DOTE, THE WORKING FOREST GROUP, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to the Division of Forestry timber sale program. He noted he was a lifelong Alaska, a forester, as well as Board President of The Working Forest Group (WFG). He explained that the mission of the WFG was to educate Alaskans by promoting and implementing active forest management. He described the Timber Sale program as the "backbone of our state's working forest." He made note of the state revenue, energy, fire

mitigation, access, subsistence lifestyles, and jobs created by the program. He spoke to a threat to the timber industry in the region, including the Viking Lumber Sawmill in Klawok, a major employer. He referred to 400 private sector jobs in the timber industry, and affordable wood energy.

[1:34:33 PM](#)

ABBE DUNNIN-NEWBURY, SECRETARY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, BEAN'S CAFÉ, INC, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of human services community matching grants that would support the Children's Lunchbox (CL) program through Bean's Café. She discussed financial implications of the proposed cuts. She related that many children that experience food insecurity at home benefit from foodstuffs they receive through the program. She related that the CL sends home food for the weekend, which provided essential nutrition. She explained that cuts to Bean's Café would mean they would no longer be able to provide bus passes for consumers to get to needed social services.

[1:37:24 PM](#)

SCOTT SLENDER, PROGRAM MANAGER, BEAN'S CAFÉ, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to reinstate funding for the human services community matching grant. He explained that the grant serves the neediest of the Anchorage community, and the benefit to the community is huge. He related that they served individuals with a variety of disabilities and special needs, as well as the elderly and veterans. He noted that the greater he is able to serve individuals in need, the less of a strain on emergency medical services and other related entities. He related that their services help individuals to build autonomy.

[1:39:40 PM](#)

RANDI BINION-OLSON, PROGRAM MANAGER, CHILDREN'S LUNCHBOX, BEAN'S CAFÉ, INC., ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to reinstate the human services community matching grant. She spoke to 416 children served by the program, and related that they would no longer be able to provide "weekend food" for these children. She pointed out the effect of poor nutrition on mental and physical health.

[1:40:55 PM](#)

ARLENE BRISCOE, AK NURSES ASSOCIATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), strongly urged the committee to support Medicaid expansion. She alleged that nearly 42,000 Alaskans would be eligible for health coverage under Medicaid expansion. She listed the benefits and increased access to healthcare that the expansion would provide. She mentioned she had worked in the psychiatric emergency department and observed individuals not getting the services they needed due to lack of insurance.

[1:43:36 PM](#)

STAR LEE, MANAGER, PARENTS AS TEACHERS, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in favor of restoring funds for Best Beginnings and the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program. She referred to research that showed the efficacy of Parents as Teachers through increased school readiness, academic achievement, and parenting skills. She noted that participation in the PAT program was voluntary, and participants were highly invested.

[1:43:49 PM](#)

KARLA JUTZI, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, FOOD BANK OF ALASKA (FBA), ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to support human services community matching grants. She explained that the grant allowed FBA to purchase more than 205,000 lbs. of fresh fruit and vegetables for the hungry, and it would help 27,000 families in the coming year. She noted that fresh fruit and vegetables were among the most expensive foods to purchase. She added that the proposed cut would mean that FBA would be unable to purchase one full trailer-load of produce for hungry families that they would otherwise distribute.

[1:45:45 PM](#)

NIKOLE NELSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION (ALSC), ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to ALSC. She explained that ALSC was a non-profit law firm that provided free legal aid to low income Alaskans statewide through 11 offices located in rural and urban communities. She added that ALSC is Alaska's only legal aid program. She noted that ALSC's current

appropriation was far less than is necessary to serve the people that are accessing their services. She added that due to limited resources, they were already turning away one person for every one they served. She relayed that the poverty population has more than doubled since 1984, when they had \$1.2 million; with the proposed cuts, they would receive one third of that amount. She added that ALSC had stretched their resources through donated office space, a network of pro bono volunteers, and paying staff below market value. She reiterated the ALSC mission of justice for all.

[1:47:47 PM](#)

RIC NELSON, CHAIR, GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES/SPECIAL EDUCATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding for Alaska Legal Services. He noted that the Governor's Council will be working to curb expenses and find savings, citing examples of utilizing teleconferences and travel savings. He also spoke in favor of Medicaid reform and expansion. He spoke to disability hire. He referred to the population of people who utilize emergency care due to lack of health care access. He spoke to Medicaid state Option I and K, which would allow the state to increase reimbursement for state plan options that will help to reform the system.

[1:50:19 PM](#)

MARY JO TORGESON, DIRECTOR, ANCHORAGE PUBLIC LIBRARY, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in favor of the Online with Libraries (OWL) program. She noted that the program had connected a lot of libraries, particularly village libraries, throughout the state. She related that the most important piece was adding broadband access to village libraries, to facilitate digital inclusion. She spoke in support of funding for the Homework Help program, an online tutoring program used around the state. She explained that there were around 33,000 around the state using the program. She mentioned the need for good broadband to utilize the program. She spoke about the importance of early literacy and gave her support for reinstating funds for Best Beginnings. She mentioned the success of the Imagination Library program.

[1:52:37 PM](#)

ROB DOLAN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Adult Day Services Grant Program. He mentioned that he was 40 year resident of Anchorage and he and his spouse were teachers in Anchorage. He related that a year or two prior, he and his wife became full time caregivers for his mother, who experienced Alzheimer's. He mentioned the Serendipity program in Anchorage, and how the program has helped with supportive services. He related the challenges associated with the disease, and the importance of supportive programs to assist families dealing with elder care.

1:56:02 PM

CATHY BRENNER, DIRECTOR, SERENDIPITY ADULT DAY PROGRAM, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Adult Day Services Grant Program. She related that the program has been providing services since 1985, mostly to seniors with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. She made note that the population of adult seniors in Alaska is growing. She stressed the importance of the services provided to sufferers of Alzheimer's and their caregivers. She stated that the program is fiscally sound. She cited a study that illustrated the cost savings and efficacy of adult day programs versus long-term care.

1:58:12 PM

LAUREN KELSEY, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of reinstating funding for Obesity Prevention Grants. She noted that she was the School Grants Manager for the Obesity Prevention and Control Program, State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. She discussed the subject of obesity and the related costs to the state. She stated that yearly, the state of Alaska spends over \$459 million on direct medical costs attributed to obesity. She discussed the preventable healthcare costs associated with obesity. She spoke to obesity related illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease.

2:00:39 PM

CHRIS INGMANSON, PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, CHUGIAK SENIOR CITIZENS, INC., EAGLE RIVER (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Adult Day Services Program. She emphasized the importance of the program to not only the elders, but to their family members. She

attested that for some, the day services program was the only way to have their family members stay at home. She spoke to the isolation encountered by individuals with Alzheimer's and related dementias. She referred to the cost effectiveness of adult day services versus assisted living or skilled nursing scenarios.

2:02:50 PM

BECCA BERNARD, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore the one-time funds for public education that were allocated the previous year. She noted that the previous year was the first in several years that education funding had been increased. She spoke to the lost human potential as a side effect of cutting education. She mentioned the importance of graduation rates and improved dropout rates. She pointed out difficulties in retaining teachers, large class sizes, and few electives to keep students engaged as problems resultant from diminished education funding. She related fears that the middle school model would be lost.

2:05:00 PM

ALYSE GALVIN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of full funding for Pre-K programs and testified in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers program. She acknowledged that some committee members may have been unhappy with student results, and relayed she was working to improve that. She opined that reducing funds was not a way to make a positive difference. She related her personal experience with child development support and information, and related the personal successes of her family. She mentioned early learners who were in need of support. She spoke to the importance of health, safety, kindness, and education, and asked the committee to keep those values in mind.

2:07:37 PM

JIM POWELL, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Adult Day Services Grant Program. He related that his wife was diagnosed with dementia and perhaps Alzheimer's, and that he had participated in the Mind Matters program. He referred to the \$19,000 that was in question. He spoke to the statistics of Alzheimer's and dementia with aging. He noted

the increased chances of caregivers developing related illnesses due to stress.

[2:09:52 PM](#)

PAUL H. SHADURA II, SELF, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to the Chinook Initiative. He related that he was a third generation commercial fisherman. He spoke of the importance of our renewable resources. He alleged that cuts would create a threat to subsistence, personal use, sport, and commercial fisheries. He urged the committee to consider the benefits of the program in the long term.

[2:11:10 PM](#)

JOSHUA FRANKS, SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding of Medicaid expansion. He related the mission of the foundation. He discussed the fact that Alaska Native people from across the state access services in Anchorage. He stressed the importance of increased access to healthcare, and mentioned shifting costs from state to federal Medicaid payments. He spoke of expansion at the Alaska Native Medical Center, and higher utilization rates. He alluded to a correlation between utilizing healthcare services and decreased use of emergency medical services and hospitalization.

[2:13:18 PM](#)

CINDY KNALL, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), voiced support for University of Alaska funding for the WWAMI program. She related that she is an Associate Professor of Medical Education and UAA Scientific Representative for Alaska INBRE (Idea Network of Biomedical Research Excellence). She asked the committee to remove the intent language that would eliminate the WWAMI program. She opined that the budget cuts made in the University of Alaska and the Education and Early Development subcommittees had the potential to significantly impact Alaska's ability to compete for and win multi-million dollar grants such as INBRE. She furthered that the cuts would impact the ability to provide great educational and training opportunities to the students and citizens of the state. She added that the WWAMI program is a means of creating doctors for Alaska.

[2:15:19 PM](#)

ALEX SCIVKA, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. He noted that he listened to KNBA and KSKA public radio every day for clear unbiased news from across Alaska, as well as the world outside. He expressed understanding that some reductions were necessary in the current budget climate. He asked the committee to consider a more reasonable reduction to public broadcasting.

2:15:57 PM

LISA AQUINO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES (CSS), ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings. She also testified in support of funding for Medicaid expansion. She spoke to the human services community matching grant, and thanked the committee for including \$1.4 million that was put forward in the Governor's budget. She pointed out that the allocation was a 20 percent reduction from the previous year. She noted that CSS used the funds to pay for shift supervisors at two emergency homeless shelters in Anchorage. She added that the 20 percent reduction would translate into a reduction of 1.5 FTE, which would significantly affect the shelters. She explained that the service provided the only shelter for the homeless population of men, women, and children in Anchorage. She noted the cost effectiveness of the human services matching grant in addressing the critical problems of homelessness and food shortage.

2:18:14 PM

DIRK SHUMAKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KIDS CORPS INC., ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against proposed cuts for Best Beginnings. He also spoke in support of full funding for Pre-K programs and testified in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers program. He related a story about a child who experienced significant family trauma. He discussed how the programs could have served the child and his family and made a difference. He urged the committee to reinstate funding.

2:20:40 PM

WAYNE BOEDECKER, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Adult Day Services.

He noted that his mother had accessed services through the Daybreak program, where she could receive day habilitation. He related the experience of providing full time care of an adult, and how the program assisted with the significant burden. He mentioned his participation as a volunteer on the Daybreak Advisory Board, and noted the board's concern with the welfare of their consumers. He asked the committee to look closely at the program and ensure they were properly funded.

[2:24:08 PM](#)

ABBE HENSLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BEST BEGINNINGS, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings. She stated that the supported 33 Imagination Libraries, as well as 6 early childhood partnerships that provided services in 113 diverse Alaskan communities. She commented that enrollment in Imagination Library has grown from 3600 children in 2009 to 23,603 currently. She noted that the Library was funded through a combination of state and private sources. She described the services provided by the early childhood partnership, and related that they could offset challenges faced by parents and children. She noted that Best Beginnings did state-wide outreach including a website, social media, and television. She spoke to a letter from the Dollywood Foundation (copy on file). She reiterated her support of full funding for early childhood, Pre-K, Parents as Teachers, and Best Beginnings.

[2:26:39 PM](#)

LAURA BONNER, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of education funding and Pre-K programs. She also spoke for restored funding in Department of Labor and Workforce Development. She stressed the importance of a well-trained workforce and worker safety. She testified in support of funding for Medicaid expansion, and added that it was a moral responsibility. She voiced opposition to funding cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System. She stated that the proposed cuts would affect tourism.

[2:28:42 PM](#)

DEBORAH WILLIAMS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ANCHORAGE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COALITION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for behavioral health services.

She opined that the legislature's past funding of the Behavior Health Prevention and Early Intervention Grants Program saved the state money. She cited studies that indicated a statistically significant decline in youth risk behaviors. She spoke to a finding that correlated organized activities to less likelihood of using marijuana regularly.

[2:30:48 PM](#)

ROBERT MILLER, STUDENT MEMBER, ANCHORAGE YOUTH COURT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified against cuts to the Alaska Youth Courts. He mentioned he was a representative on the Anchorage Youth Court Board of Directors. He continued to explain how Anchorage Youth Court has been an important part of his life. He stated that the Alaska Youth Court has a greater level of involvement and had been used as a model in other states and other parts of the world.

[2:32:59 PM](#)

PAT FALON, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to the Department of Labor, particularly positions that were partially federally funded. He referred to the 12 percent cuts proposed by the governor. He spoke about the importance of vocational training programs and hiring from within the state.

[2:34:44 PM](#)

AT EASE

[3:00:54 PM](#)

RECONVENED

HOPE FINKELSTEIN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for Medicaid expansion and public education. She discussed the effects of turning down a \$28 million budget savings over the following four years by turning down Medicaid. Medicaid expansion would bring the state over \$130 million per year in federal funds and would create over 4,000 jobs. She concluded that as a cost-saving measure the state needed to cut the large mega projects from the budget including the Susitna-Watana Dam, Ambler Road, and Knik Arm Bridge projects. She also asked the committee to support Public Radio. She thanked the committee.

[3:03:44 PM](#)

STEPHANIE BERGLUND, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THREAD, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, and Pre-K programs. She reviewed the benefits of each program. She indicated that Pre-K was critical to the long-term success of children. She reported that Alaska already ranked in the bottom 10 states across the country for investments in young children. The proposed cuts would set the state further behind. She encouraged the committee to invest in young Alaskans.

[3:05:56 PM](#)

IMMANUEL LEWIS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for Medicaid expansion. He stressed that the longer the state waited to use the benefits, the more money the state would lose out on. He wondered why the legislature would not want to expand Medicaid. He urged the committee to do what was best for Alaskans in need and for Alaska's budget.

[3:06:32 PM](#)

MICHAEL GALLAGHER, ANCHORAGE YOUTH COURT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified against cuts to the Alaska Youth Courts. He outlined the functions of the program and identified some of the advantages of the program. He shared some of his personal experience. He asked committee members to reconsider their decision and to reinstate the funding for Alaska Youth Courts.

[3:07:27 PM](#)

ANNELISE BURGESS, ANCHORAGE YOUTH COURT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified against cuts to the Alaska Youth Courts. She relayed some of the benefits of the program. She shared some of her experience and stressed the importance of bettering youth. She reiterated her stance in support of Alaska Youth Court and thanked the committee for hearing her testimony.

[3:09:31 PM](#)

BRANDON MCGUIRE, UA LOCAL 367 PLUMBERS AND PIPE FITTERS, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified against cuts to

the Alaska Youth Courts. He urged the committee to keep the program funded as much as possible.

[3:10:24 PM](#)

LEON KNUDSON, SELF, PALMER (via teleconference), spoke about the cuts to the Commissioner of Labor's office. He expressed concern with removing key positions. He also discussed the importance of training and workplace safety programs. He suggested it did not make sense to cut labor positions that were 75 percent federally funded. He reported that the 31 percent cuts proposed by Governor Walker would be cut deeper than any other department. He continued citing some statistics regarding the budget reductions. He encouraged the committee to reinstate the funding for the Department of Labor.

[3:12:14 PM](#)

PETER MICHALSKI, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding for Alaska Legal Services. He relayed his experience as an attorney and the importance of care. He felt that many people do important work in making the system work better. He encouraged members to take another look at increased funding for the Alaska Legal Services.

[3:15:00 PM](#)

AT EASE

[3:42:19 PM](#)

RECONVEYENED

Co-Chair Neuman returned to the Anchorage

[3:43:05 PM](#)

KARI JAHNSEN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified against cuts to the Anchorage Youth Court. She explained that she was a student volunteer with the youth court. She relayed the positive effects of the program she's witnessed being involved. She continued to explain the benefits of the program and the cost-benefits to do with recidivism. She understood the challenges of the budget but felt that the program should remain funded. She thanked the committee.

[3:45:22 PM](#)

CAROLYN HEYMAN-LAYNE, ATTORNEY AND PARENT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding for Alaska Legal Services. She stated that the population that received the services would not have access otherwise. She claimed that for every dollars spent Alaska Legal Services saved \$5 dollars for the state. As a mother she appreciated the services the program provided to women and mothers who were looking to protect their children. She also spoke in support of full funding for Pre-K programs including Best Beginnings. She currently had a child in a Pre-K program and could see the benefits from a personal standpoint. She believed that supporting Pre-K education was worth the investment.

[3:47:34 PM](#)

JOANIE CLEARY, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for Medicaid expansion. She outlined the potential services to over 41 thousand Alaskans that did not currently have access. She mentioned several programs that were important particularly mental health and substance abuse treatment programs. She added that she worked as a guardian ad litem assistant in the child protection system. She reported that parents that sought treatment often could not receive help. Medicaid would provide access to the services helping families to stay together. She also discussed the financial savings to the state and the potential job opportunities with Medicaid expansion.

[3:49:11 PM](#)

CHRIS TURLETES, FACILITIES DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), voiced support for restoring the funding for the new facilities at the University of Alaska, approximately \$2.7 million. He also encouraged support for the facilities operating budget at least at the governor's budget number. He talked about the engineering building that was already in planning and design and asked for additional monies to bring the facility to completion. He continued to provide additional information for the project. He mentioned some of the ramifications of a reduced budget for the University of Alaska and encouraged support.

[3:52:12 PM](#)

RYAN BUCHHOLDT, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), voiced support for University of Alaska funding. He asked that the university funding be restored to the level proposed in the governor's budget. He mentioned the challenge of getting the new buildings on line and wanted them funded to completion levels. He added that he was part of a task force that assessed program priorities. He indicated that during the review many areas were actively measuring effectiveness and coming up with ways to improve effectiveness. He urged the committee to reduce the budget in a more gradual manner and restated that the university budget be restored to the governor's level of funding.

[3:54:49 PM](#)

KAREL HAUSER, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to funding the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project. She mentioned the negative environmental effects of the project speaking from the perspective of a nutritionist. She restated her objection to funding for the Susitna Dam project.

[3:55:33 PM](#)

BILL HAUSER, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to funding the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project. He opined that the dam would be a "fish killer." He opined that it would be trading one resource for another. He reported that he was a retired fish biologist and spoke about the negative effects of the potential dam and the related infrastructure that would be built. He suggested that there were alternative turbines that would have less of an impact. He also spoke against the Chuitna Coal project. He thanked the committee for its time.

Co-Chair Neuman said the committee would take a brief at ease and return at 4:15 pm.

[3:57:43 PM](#)

AT EASE

[4:19:38 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Neuman stated that there was no one in Anchorage on the testifier list. The committee would reconvene at 4:30 pm.

4:19:49 PM

AT EASE

4:35:28 PM

RECONVENED

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY: SITKA, PETERSBURG, DELTA JUNCTION, UNALASKA, GLENNALLEN, AND TOK

4:35:37 PM

CHARLES MORGAN, RAVEN RADIO, SITKA (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. He appreciated the financial circumstances, but he believed the cuts were too severe and could cripple public radio in the state. He asserted that public radio made Alaska into a community, providing opportunities for those who wished to make a contribution. He felt that public radio provided diversity to communities through the national, statewide and local news stories it broadcasted, while offering the opportunity for citizens to share different perspectives on a variety of issues.

4:38:10 PM

GREG MANDEL, KETTLESON MEMORIAL LIBRARY, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in favor of the Online with Libraries Program (OWL). He shared that many citizens could not afford home computers and depended on the library to connect with the outside world via the internet. He explained that the program would provide the bandwidth support that would cost the library an additional \$300-\$400 per month. He shared that the program connected citizens of Sitka to the rest of the state through a host of video conferencing programs. He related that the conferencing network offered programs on topics ranging from health and safety to panel discussions on important social issues and pending legislation. He stressed that the network provided citizens from his community a voice to express concerns on important issues, while engaging with other Alaskans in discussion on life-changing matters. He believed that the program provided a connection to educational programs that improved the daily lives of citizens that would be lacking

should OWL be discontinued. He related a personal story of a local woman learning online through the program how to treat, feed and care for her diabetic child.

[4:40:33 PM](#)

LISA SADLEIR-HART, SITKA LOCAL FOODS NETWORK, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke in support for funding the Farm to School Program. She stressed the importance of locally grown food, highlighting that Alaska spent \$1.5 billion, each year, to import food. She opined that only 5-10 percent of the food consumed in the state was produced or harvested in Alaska, while acres of land remained uncultivated. She hypothesized the benefits of using state dollars for Alaska grown products and producing healthy foods in large enough quantities to meet the need in statewide school cafeterias. She shared that the program prioritized putting locally produced goods in school cafeterias, raising a generation of food leaders and consumers and creating a large and reliable market for increased in-state food production. She offered that in three years school districts involved in the program had grown from zero to 68 percent and there had been an 11 percent increase in school gardens statewide. She furthered that 100 percent of school districts were now serving at least one local food item in their meal programs. She relayed that in 5 years the program had leveraged over \$1 million from partner agencies. She noted that the program had garnered these successes with a budget of \$190,000, which she believed was a significant return on investment. She believed that eliminating funding for the program would result in cutting healthful, locally grown food items from the lunches of young children.

[4:42:49 PM](#)

THOMAS CONLEY, SITKA SCHOOL BOARD, SITKA (via teleconference), testified in support of education funding. He expressed his distress at the proposal to eliminate the \$32.4 million in one-time education funds from the prior year and the \$13 million in specific programmatic cuts. He was particularly disturbed by cuts to early childhood learning, with the bulk of pre-kindergarten programs being eliminated. He asserted that children that were read to, spoken to, and included in conversation, developed and matured more rapidly than their peers who were lacking in similar stimulation. He spoke to medical, sociological and

educational studies that bore out the validity of the argument that early exposure to learning was beneficial to children. He noted that the economic realities of the present were that most families needed two incomes to survive, which limited the parents ability to be the sole provider of early educational stimuli. He concluded that when well-structured, early education was provided to pre-kindergarten children the educational and subsequent economic dividends were significant.

[4:45:55 PM](#)

TIM FULTON, SITKA SCHOOL BOARD, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke in support of education funding. He stated that on a personal level, he struggled daily with the lack of a basic foundation in reading, writing and mathematics. He opined that this was a struggle for him. He believed that education should be funded at the highest possible level in order to assure that children would be spared the academic struggles that he had faced in life.

[4:46:54 PM](#)

MEGAN LITSTER, PETERSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), spoke in support of education funding. She requested continued support for funds promised to schools in HB 278, as well as the Obesity Prevention Grants under the Department of Health and Social Services, Public Health. She stated that the cuts equated to \$300,000 in funds from her district, which meant a possible loss of four teaching positions and multiple programs districtwide.

[4:48:34 PM](#)

GINGER EVENS, PETERSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), requested that the funds for the Obesity Prevention Grants be reinstated to the Department of Health and Social Services budget. She asserted that the Healthy Living Grants were a vital link in education students and community members on the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. She echoed that cutting the grants would result in a \$300,000 cut, over two years, and would compound the cuts already brought on by HB 278. She offered that curbing obesity at an early age would save the state money in healthcare related costs in the future. She contended that obesity related costs in the state were projected to be upward of \$600 million annually by 2013, if obesity rates

did not decrease. She stated that the district had created a four-year action plan to fight obesity; with the funds being cut, components of the grant that were just beginning in the second year would not be finished.

[4:50:39 PM](#)

JONI JOHNSON, PETERSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), spoke in support of education funds. She testified in opposition to the elimination of the one-time education funds passed the prior year. She shared that the school district had worked to come up with a fiscally conservative plan and that removing the one-time funding from the previous year that was already a part of their budget plan, seemed irresponsible. She stressed that businesses did not run wisely on a lack of planning. She relayed that the borough was looking at a loss of over \$825,000 in funding. She did not want to lose programs and activity funding for healthy living and other programs that served the community.

[4:52:32 PM](#)

DAVID KENSINGER, SELF, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), voiced opposition to funding cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System. He expressed compassion for the hard budgetary decisions that legislators had to make. He stated that his business would be negatively impacted by the cancelation of ferry routes. He detailed that direct costs to his business would be \$20,000 and the loss of an employee. He noted that the Marine Transportation Board had two functions: to vet the new deputy commissioner and to work in planning, he asserted that both of those tasks, designated by statute, had not happened. He encouraged the committee to empower the board so that customers and communities could have a voice in reshaping the transportation system for the island dependent communities in the state.

[4:54:31 PM](#)

ERICA KLUDT-PAINTER, PETERSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to proposed cuts to education. She spoke to funding that had been provided in the budget the prior year. She stated that the cuts would equal \$245,000 over the next two years. She stressed that it equated to real money, real people and real

programs. She discussed the further proposed cuts to early childhood education and the Obesity Prevention Grant program. She believed that the legislature should keep its promise to fund the programs. The community would continue to responsibly tighten its belt; the change needed to occur gradually. She opined that the district would see larger class sizes, cuts to technology and support programs for at risk youth as a result of the cuts.

[4:56:48 PM](#)

CHARLES WOOD, SELF, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. He stated that the proposed cut of 59 percent was unacceptable. He asserted that public radio provided news, public events, emergency information, weather, and other valuable information. He related several ways in which public radio had been a valuable asset in his life. He shared that his family made local financial contributions to his local public radio station. He testified in support of funding for Medicaid expansion.

[4:58:52 PM](#)

MARINA WHITACRE, SELF, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to education cuts. She was against cuts to the Obesity Prevention Grant Program.

[4:59:33 PM](#)

SARAH HOLMGRAIN, SELF, PETERSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to education. She echoed the points and concerns of the previous testifiers for education. She offered several suggestions as to how the legislature might navigate their fiscal problems. She believe that the proposed cuts would create many problems for the state.

[5:01:51 PM](#)

BOB MARTIN, SELF, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. He believed that the 59 percent cut was extreme and highlighted the many benefits that public broadcasting brought to the state.

[5:02:36 PM](#)

DAVID BERG, VIKING TRAVEL, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), voiced opposition to funding cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System. He discussed the impact of a change in ferry schedule would have on various businesses and activity in the state. He said that a proposed road from Kake to Petersburg could be cut from the budget in order to free up some funds; the road would not be used often and would require a ferry connection on the Petersburg and additional terminal costs.

[5:04:22 PM](#)

ELIZABETH HART, SELF, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. She stressed that a 59 percent cut was disproportionate and could end public radio in the state. She stressed that the local station currently operated on a bare-bones budget and was the only source for local news and information. She added that the station provided much needed emergency communication and served multi-generation community members. She shared that the station had gone from 9 staff to 5. She relayed that the station provided an outlet for children, teens and adults in the form of volunteer programming.

[5:05:42 PM](#)

RONN BUSCHMANN, SELF, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. He shared that the station provided information about news, emergencies and was the "life blood" of rural Alaska. He shared that the local community offered significant financial support to the station, but the proposed 59 percent cut would impact the station's ability to function.

[5:07:06 PM](#)

JOSEF PLOETZNER, SITKA SCHOOL BOARD, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to cuts for education. He related that he had seen firsthand the challenges of working in schools that could on offer elective classes while working in rural Alaska. He shared that the curriculum in Sitka currently offered classes that engaged students; however, in the previous year he witnessed the loss of the Spanish Language and Home Economics programs.

[5:08:15 PM](#)

GERRY HOPE, MTAB, SITKA (via teleconference), voiced opposition to funding cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System. The proposed cuts would negatively impact businesses, community events, the education system, and other coastal ways of life. He proposed that the legislature allow the Marine Transportation Advisory Board to work with the advisory system to work with the system to develop strategic planning for further cuts.

[5:09:34 PM](#)

LINDSAY EVANS, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to education. She stressed that a decent education was incredibly important. She urged the legislature fund schools at the maximum capacity. She emphasized that Alaska's children were the state's largest asset.

[5:11:02 PM](#)

KARI SAGEL, TEACHER, SITKA SCHOOL DISTRICT, SITKA (via teleconference), asked for the reinstatement of one-time funds passed the prior year for education. She related that the cuts were harmful as school districts had already built their budget with the promised funds included. She said that the cuts came at a time when schools were being pressured to address low test scores and achievement gaps. She asserted that now was the time to be providing programs that kept students in school.

[5:11:57 PM](#)

COURTNEY HOWARD, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke in support of restoring education funding. He believed activities were important to the overall educational experience of students. He asserted that sports activities taught goal setting and demonstrated through experience that students could define a goal and meet the goal. He pointed out that students in Alaska faced great challenges in the areas of drug addiction, alcoholism and domestic violence and that extracurricular activities help teach student the life skill necessary to handle these challenges. He believed that he would not have pursued a

higher education had it not been for sports programs in his schools.

[5:13:59 PM](#)

BEN WHITE, SITKA SCHOOL DISTRICT, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke in support of funds for education. He asked the committee to fulfill the promises passed the prior session related to one-time education funds. He stressed that current students would be future leaders of the state and they deserved the best education possible.

KERRY MCADAMS, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to education. She opined that the district had consistently made cuts over many years, which she felt was unacceptable given what an oil-rich state the state had been up until this year.

[5:15:43 PM](#)

MIKE SVENSON, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to the Division of Forestry timber program. He spoke of the challenges that the industry faced from the federal government, environmental groups and the entire Democratic Party. He lamented the lack of support offered by his community when jobs were lost by the closure of the timber mill.

[5:16:21 PM](#)

SHERMAN STEBBINS, CITY OF DELTA, DELTA (via teleconference), spoke in support of community revenue sharing. He stated that community revenue sharing was the third largest source of revenue for Delta Junction; 10 percent of the city's annual budget. The community would like to see continued full funding for revenue sharing.

[5:17:21 PM](#)

JOHN CONWELL, UNALASKA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, UNALASKA (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore the one-time education funds passed the prior year. He testified in favor of the Online with Libraries program. He spoke in favor of full funding for broadband in schools, particularly for rural area schools. He reiterated his request for the restoration of education funds.

5:19:07 PM

KAREN KRESH, CITY OF UNALASKA, UNALASKA (via teleconference), testified in support of the Online with Libraries program. She shared that internet access on the island was expensive and tightly capped; home internet was so expensive and unreliable that most residents did not have it in their homes and used the library internet as their main connection to the outside world. She stressed the importance of the internet for commercial fisherpersons. She stated that funding for the program had allowed the library to provide high-speed internet service and video conferencing equipment to the community. She provided further benefits offered by the internet for educational purposes. She stressed that the program was essential to the community and kept it connected to the larger world.

5:21:17 PM

MATT LIGHTNER, KUCB, UNALASKA (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. He spoke to the importance of the service provided by the radio station including news, sporting events, and other programming. He stressed that a 59 percent cut would amount to approximately \$80,000 for the community; it would mean less local news and the inability to disseminate health and safety information. He explained that the 26 stations that were funded by Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission worked together as a unit to provide content to all corners of the state. He urged the committee to consider a less extreme cut.

5:23:37 PM

ROBI HARRIS, KUCB, UNALASKA (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. He stated that the station provided a sense of community identity, offered a source of news and entertainment, and was the only source of radio received in the area. He believed a 59 percent cut was too extreme and stressed that the station could not bear the cut. He shared that community events were publicized on the radio. Additionally, community businesses provided information on the radio, community events were publicized over the radio; local domestic violence shelters, health clinics, suicide prevention, child abuse prevention, smoking cessation and

other community non-profits advertised on the station. He concluded that Alaska communities depended on public radio as an important source for news and information.

5:25:36 PM

JENNIFER SHOCKLEY, KUCB, UNALASKA (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. She stated that having an adequately staffed newsroom was crucial. The community depended on the radio for health and safety information. The local staff ensured that the public had information about tsunami warnings and other weather events. She stated that the station provided the only news source for many communities. She echoed previous testimony.

5:28:07 PM

GARY MULLEN, SELF, GLENNALLEN (via teleconference), testified in opposition to the defunding of the Resources Program in the Division of Forestry. He said that removal of the funding would affect sales and forest practices oversight. He stressed that wood was a requirement for local residents and that state land was the only option for local residents to find wood to heat their homes.

5:29:19 PM

JOSEPH MILLER, BACK TO WOOD LOGGING, GLENNALLEN (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to cutting of funds for the Division of Forestry. He said that without the funding he would be unable to get permits to harvest lumber from state lands, which was his only source of lumber for his business.

5:30:01 PM

KATHY MORGAN, TOK LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY, TOK (via teleconference), testified in favor of the Online with Libraries program. She stated that the program had paid approximately \$3,000 for the internet service in the current year. She relayed that the internet speed was still only one-quarter of the average Alaskan library speed and 40 times slower than the national average. She stressed support for the community revenue sharing program, which had few other resources. She spoke against cuts to the Division of Forestry timber program. She understood that

the division would be forced to save money by combining money dispatch for the Copper River and Tok areas. She warned that the combination would increase risk to the community because wildfires would be out of control by the time responders arrived. She stated that Tok forestry had previously been a leader in wildlife safety. She declared that she would be willing to pay more taxes or an annual state income tax to offset budgetary shortfalls.

[5:32:38 PM](#)

JEFF GAVAZZA, THE COMPUTER CABIN, TOK (via teleconference), spoke in favor of full funding for expanded broadband capability in schools. He opined the lack of technical knowledge in the Upper Tanana Valley. He stressed that people living in rural areas lacked access to important information, such as legislative information on the legislative information system, BASIS, due to weak connectivity and lack of computer knowledge. He said that reliable internet in the bush had become a serious problem, which would be exasperated by the funding cuts. He asserted that Legislative Information Offices provided rural communities with access to the legislative process.

[5:35:37 PM](#)

DEB SPARKS, ALASKA GATEWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT, TOK (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to the cut of one-time education funding of \$32 million passed the prior year. She relayed that the district did its best to guarantee that its funds were used as efficiently as possible and went towards meeting the educational needs of students. She relayed that many districts were facing further staff elimination. She stressed that the elimination of the funds meant a loss of \$178,000 for the district (the equivalent of one full-time teacher and five class aides). She stated that the cut would limit the district's ability to address unfunded mandates. She spoke in favor of full funding for broadband in schools.

[5:38:50 PM](#)

Co-Chair Thompson recognized Representative Dave Talerico in the committee room.

TODD POAGE, ALASKA GATEWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT, TOK (via teleconference), spoke in support of education funds. He

stated that one of the most significant challenges for rural schools in Alaska was providing for adequate internet activity for things like distance learning, online testing, and collaboration with students in other locations. He detailed that the district currently had three sites at 1.5 megabytes and three sites at 3 megabytes. He spoke in favor of full funding for broadband in schools. He stressed that digital connectivity exposed children to a much larger world. He provided an example related to painfully slow internet service. He highlighted that every \$100,000 the community received through the grant represented an influx of \$1 million through the leveraging of e-Rate funds.

[5:41:19 PM](#)

SCOTT MACMANUS, ALASKA GATEWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT, TOK (via teleconference), asked for a reinstatement of funding for the Alaska Learning Network. He was additionally in support of funding for Pre-K programs and the Tok forestry office. He stressed that nothing was more important to the state's future than educating its children. He spoke to research demonstrating the importance of early childhood development. He stressed that children who were behind in kindergarten tended to stay behind. He testified in support of Head Start, which had improved outcomes for Tok students. He stated that the AKLN program was the first program able to provide viable options to children without honors courses. He spoke against the closure of the Tok forestry office. He communicated that the state had made significant investments in the biomass infrastructure in the region; the decision to cut the office would result in a waste of investment.

[5:43:51 PM](#)

JOHN HARVEY, ALASKA POWER AND TELEPHONE, TOK (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to the Tok forestry office. He provided numerous examples of wildfires that had occurred in recent years that could have threatened Tok without fire suppression service. He stressed that fire mitigation had saved the school and other buildings. He wanted to see the mitigation continued. He stressed that without fire suppression services it was only a matter of time before the town burned.

[5:45:06 PM](#)

AMY CROZIER, SELF, TOK (via teleconference), spoke in support of local businesses. She spoke on behalf of other business owners in Tok. She vocalized concerns about cuts that would impact local areas. She spoke against the closure of the Tok Legislative Information Office and/or consolidation of the Tok Division of Forestry office. She emphasized that the actions would create a loss of employment in the strained Tok economy; the loss of resources and services would have negative impacts. She believed any discussion about the Tok area budget should include consideration of an increase.

[5:46:49 PM](#)

ANTHONY LEE, TOP GRADE BUILDERS, TOK (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to the Tok Division of Forestry office. He stated that without fire suppression spot fires could get out of control and cost the state millions of dollars. He stated that during the fire season it would be too late if the community had to wait for responders from Glennallen or Fairbanks. He stated that the forestry program supported biomass, fire remediation, and salvage logging jobs. He shared that biomass was heating the district's school and was saving a tremendous amount of money.

[5:48:13 PM](#)

JEFF HERMANNNS, SELF, TOK (via teleconference), testified against cuts to the Tok Division of Forestry office. He noted that Alaska had nearly one-third of the forest resources of the entire U.S.; however, it was at the "bottom of the heap" when it came to utilization of forest resources. He believed it was the definition of insanity in light of Alaska's efforts to diversify its economy. He remarked that the state currently had no plan to develop its forest resources. He believed business investment in the harvesting and processing of wood into value-added products would create wealth. He stressed the importance of having "boots on the ground." He observed that many of the proposed cuts would eliminate those positions. He discussed investment in the local timber industry in recent years. He asserted that the way the state fought wildfires needed to change; currently the state imported firefighters from out-of-state. He affirmed that Alaska dollars needed to be kept in Alaska.

[5:50:24 PM](#)

WADE PARRISH, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to one-time education funds passed the prior year. He asked the committee to reconsider restoration of the funds.

[5:51:16 PM](#)

AT EASE

[6:06:08 PM](#)

RECONVENED

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[6:06:15 PM](#)

TOM SUNDERLAND, OCEAN BEAUTY SEAFOODS, SEATTLE (via teleconference), asked the committee to keep cuts to Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) as minimal as possible. He stated that the cuts would disproportionately hit the domestic program due to the structure of ASMI's budget. He discussed that fisheries export markets had never been in worse shape. He spoke to the reasons for a decline. He relayed that Norway and Russia were both putting extra marketing efforts into the U.S.; the strong dollar made their products cheaper to import into the U.S. He emphasized growing business and protecting what the state had.

[6:08:43 PM](#)

CALLIE CONNERTON, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA, JUNEAU (via teleconference), voiced support for University of Alaska funding. She spoke to her decision to pursue a career in education and to make Alaska her home. She appreciated the small classrooms, tight knit group of students, and direct access to Juneau. She spoke about the benefits at the University of Alaska Southeast. She stated that anyone could take a course at the university to continue their education. She asked the committee to support the budget proposed by the governor. She stressed that education was the state's future.

[6:10:32 PM](#)

JILLIAN LUSH, SPROUT FAMILY SERVICES, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in support of early education

services. She spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings, Pre-K, and Parents as Teachers. She spoke to evidence showing the effectiveness of early childhood programs. She referred to evidence showing that it was more effective to invest in high-quality early childhood programs than it was to remediate later in life. She stressed that every dollar invested produced a 7 to 10 percent annual return on investment. She urged the committee to put the items back in the budget.

[6:12:34 PM](#)

ANN DIXON, HOMER LIBRARY, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in favor of the Online with Libraries program. She discussed that OWL provided much benefit to Alaskans. She stated that the State of Alaska was ranked 49th for internet service. She shared that a small investment in OWL leveraged millions of dollars in federal e-Rate funds. She stressed that access to internet was essential to functioning in the 21st century. She stated that eliminating the funding would be short-sighted. She shared that video conference equipment had been used for training and other. She spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings. She highlighted the importance of early literacy skills. She provided examples of pooling resources.

[6:15:05 PM](#)

TINA HOLLAND, FORMER EDUCATOR, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), voiced support for University of Alaska funding. She understood the job the legislature had in addressing the state's budget; however, she strongly recommended a reconsideration of proposed cuts. She stated that the university contributed to the economy on a large scale. She stressed that the cuts would have a devastating impact on the state's economy. She spoke to problems of retention and recruitment that would result and would further complicate the issue. She advised that the legislature partner with the university on items such as alternate energy sources and other.

[6:17:47 PM](#)

POSIE BOGGS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged support for interpreter services for deaf people, Medicaid expansion, and literacy support. She recommended cutting

capital projects like the legislature had done in 1984 through 1986. She asked the legislature to reallocate from areas that did not negatively impact people. She believed the motto should be "do no harm to the flesh of Alaskans." She expressed dismay at the process of the education cuts. She stated that there had been a lack of open, honest, and honorable discussion in the process that produced the proposed education cuts. She elaborated that the legislature could provide cuts to education. She stressed the importance of fully funding Alaska's education per the constitution.

[6:20:37 PM](#)

MELANIE LESH, SELF, GUSTAVUS (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. She asked the committee to retain the 16.5 percent cut proposed by the governor. She relayed that additional cuts would threaten the ability to provide Gustavus with radio service. She stressed the importance of public broadcasting to rural communities. She communicated that public broadcasting connected Alaska communities and provided news, weather, and other vital communications. She implored the committee to prevent cutting radio further. She asked the committee to consider a state income tax or to institute a sales tax. She voiced opposition to funding cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System.

[6:23:11 PM](#)

RACHEL PARKS, GUSTAVUS VISITOR'S ASSOCIATION, GUSTAVUS (via teleconference), voiced opposition to funding cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System. She stressed the importance of the service for residents and businesses. She relayed that the community relied on the ferry for transportation of visitors and freight. She discussed that the community's primary source of income came from tourism. She encouraged the committee to carefully consider how cuts to the ferry system would impact small, water-bound communities.

[6:25:32 PM](#)

TODD PETTIT, SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, MAT-SU (via teleconference), spoke in favor of restoring funding for the Department of Natural Resources Conservation Board. He indicated that the board was appointed by the governor and was responsible for putting forth regulations. The

funding had been eliminated, which took away from operating funds of all Soil and Water Conservation Districts. He stated that for every \$1.00 received from the state the districts received \$10 in federal money.

[6:28:27 PM](#)

PAMELA SAMASH, SELF, NENANA (via teleconference), relayed that she had provided written testimony to the committee. She noted that her testimony included thoughts on how the legislature could save the state money.

[6:29:24 PM](#)

VICTORIA MARTIN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of restoring funding for senior benefits programs. She shared that her income was below the federal poverty level. The senior benefits program provided her with food and housing. She emphasized that the proposal to cut the program left people devastated. She communicated that medications that had previously been \$2.00 had increased to \$3.50, which was significant for low-income seniors. She implored the committee to maintain the benefits at the current level.

[6:30:56 PM](#)

SARAH REDMON, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to add 23 positions to the Office of Children's Services within the Department of Health and Social Services. Additionally, she requested \$210,000 in education and training voucher funds. She shared that she had spent 8 years in foster care and had moved through 16 different foster homes in the state. She had 12 siblings who had all been raised in foster care in Alaska. She had recently "aged-out" of foster care on her 21st birthday. She was struggling to gain her independence. She shared that her brothers and sisters were still in foster care; every day she worried about whether their needs were being met.

[6:32:05 PM](#)

MARGIE WALKER, UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE, GRAYLING (via teleconference), voiced support for University of Alaska funding. She pointed out the university has helped many rural students over the years. She did not want to see cuts

in the university's budget. She thanked the committee for its time.

[6:32:50 PM](#)

RACHEL BEDSWORTH, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke on behalf of funding for the Office of Child Services (OCS). She reported that she had been in foster care for eleven years and lived in forty-five different foster homes. She continued to share her personal experience as a foster youth. She asked that the legislature add twenty-three positions to the OCS and \$210 thousand to the education and training voucher. She thanked the committee for hearing her testimony.

[6:33:30 PM](#)

LESLIE WALLS, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), voiced support for University of Alaska funding and for funding for Best Beginnings. She indicated her disapproval of the cuts to the university's budget proposed by the House Finance subcommittee by Representative Wilson. She suggested that the university generate revenues. She urged support for all levels of education and asked that the budget decrements be returned to the levels set forth in Governor Walker's amended version of budget.

[6:35:01 PM](#)

LEE MARTIN, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for Medicaid for the elderly of Alaska. He relayed some of his family history. He urged funding support for the elderly. He felt that the elderly in Alaska needed full funding.

[6:36:34 PM](#)

AMANDA METIEVER, FACING FOSTER CARE, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), relayed her experience as a previous foster child, and as a current foster parent. She cited some foster care statistics. She urged support in increasing the number staff positions at the OCS.

[6:37:27 PM](#)

PAUL SCHEWFELT, KZPA RADIO AND THE CITY MANAGER, FORT YUKON (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. He discussed the benefits of the radio station including using the radio station as a tool for search and rescue missions. He continued to provide examples of the use of the radio station as a tool. He expected cuts but asked to restore the funding for public broad casting.

[6:40:07 PM](#)

BOBBIE JAMES, SELF, FORT YUKON (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. She reviewed the multiple contributions of public radio. She requested restored funding and suggested additional funding. She explained that the radio was used as a safety measure to provide information concerning ice conditions, weather updates, and flood warnings. She concluded by asking members to consider the importance of public broadcasting.

[6:42:36 PM](#)

CINDY HITE, SELF, WILLOW (via teleconference), spoke on behalf of snow track funding for trails in the State of Alaska. She believed the funds were not in the budget. She suggested it was an oversight. She relayed that the trails were widely used not only for recreational use but to travel to and from work. She would like to see finding restored in the budget.

[6:44:38 PM](#)

LITZI BOTELLO, SELF, PORT PROTECTION (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. She opined that public radio was a vital link to the communities near Petersburg. She stated that the radio was the only means of getting news. She was appreciative of the emergency information provided. She relayed the challenges the community has and felt that public radio was essential. She urged the legislature to keep public radio.

[6:47:43 PM](#)

LEE TENHOFF, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding senior care. He mentioned reevaluating the system of Medicaid. He talked about a cultural denial

of the plight of seniors and other items. He stated that when people asked for help there needed to be an answer. He referenced the constitution and a section that stated that the legislature should provide for the promotion and protection of public health and public welfare. He wanted funding increased for medical care.

6:50:00 PM

PETER ANDREWS, MAYOR, MOUNTAIN VILLAGE (via teleconference), urged support for revenue sharing. He voiced the needs of the village for additional funding including monies for education as well as for village safe water. He encouraged the committee to keep funding of revenue sharing at its current level.

6:51:59 PM

JEFF KOWCHEE, CITY MANAGER, MOUNTAIN VILLAGE (via teleconference), urged support for continued revenue sharing at its current level or at an increased level.

6:52:18 PM

JENNIFER ANDERSON, BOARD MEMBER, DELTA IMAGINATION LIBRARY, DELTA JUNCTION (via teleconference), spoke in support of full funding for Pre-K programs and best beginnings. She outlined the function and benefits of the Imagination Library Program which was funded in part with Best Beginnings monies. She opined that the early investment in children would save the state money in the future. She thanked the committee for its time.

6:53:38 PM

PETER HOEPFNER, BOARD MEMBER AND PARENT, CORDOVA SCHOOL DISTRICT, CORDOVA (via teleconference), supported reinstating the one-time funding for education. He also advocated for full funding for early learning programs. He spoke in favor of the Teacher Mentoring Program and broadband funding. He mentioned the unintentional consequences of the proposed cuts. Also, he claimed that cutting the AMHS would cause more costs to the school districts and hurt the economies of the small towns in Alaska that the ferry system served.

6:55:01 PM

PATTY OLMSTEAD, MANAGER, NORTON SOUND HEALTH CORPORATION INFANT LEARNING PROGRAM, NOME (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers. She stressed the importance of early learning and literacy. She stressed that eliminating these programs would be devastating to Nome and some of the surrounding communities. She relayed a recent event in which children were able to select and take a book home. She also discussed the benefit of the Parent as Teachers program that allowed parents to help their children with learning at home. She thanked the committee for hearing her testimony and for providing a time to testify after normal work hours.

[6:57:06 PM](#)

DAVID BRIGHTON, PRESIDENT, KENAI EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AND PARENT, KENAI (via teleconference), urged the committee to keep its funding for education. He relayed that he was aware of the budget challenges in the current year but had heard that experts did not believe the fiscal crisis was temporary. He encouraged the legislature to keep the promise it made the previous year to fund education.

[6:58:15 PM](#)

WENDY BURKE, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating funds for early learning programs including, Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, and Pre-K programs. She relayed her experience with her children and spoke to the benefits she and her children have received. She indicated that the program was very special to her. She asked for continued funding for the early learning programs. She thanked the committee for listening.

[6:59:47 PM](#)

HUGH BROWN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. He also asked legislators to look at the benefits made possible through SB 8 [a bill related to the regulation and production of industrial hemp]. He also encouraged keeping the film tax credits. He was aware of the tough decisions legislators would have to make. He encouraged testifiers to work with their legislators. He also asked the committee to consider people with disabilities. He expressed his

appreciation to committee members for taking the time to listen to his testimony.

7:01:49 PM

RACHEL HARRISON, SELF, WILLOW (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to funding the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project. She stated that she had recently heard a report from the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) that it intended to move forward on the dam project. She felt that the money intended for the project would be much better spent on programs that would help Alaskans save money on their energy bills and reduce energy use like the Home Energy Rebate Program or Weatherization Program. She believed that the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project was a complete waste of money. She thanked the committee.

7:03:15 PM

JOHN DART, FARMER, MANLY HOT SPRINGS (via teleconference), spoke in support of the Farm-To-school program administered within the Division of Agriculture. He expressed his reasoning for continued funding. He claimed that it provided equitable division of resources. He wanted to be sure to continue to provide fresh food to kids in school. He believed farming was not only a way to feed children, but that it was a way of teaching children how to fish and grow their own food. He believed it was important to become less reliant on oil. He asked the legislature to reinvest the \$500 thousand that was removed from the budget back into the Farm-to-School Program.

7:05:31 PM

HALL SHEPARD, PRESIDENT, CENTER FOR WATER ADVOCACY, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the ferry system, public broadcasting, and early education. He opposed funding for the Susitna Dam Project and the Grant Lake Hydro Project. He thanked the committee for its time.

7:07:44 PM

JENNIFER WOOLEY, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for Medicaid expansion. She indicated that she was a young health care professional. She felt that citizens should have access to high quality

health care. She believed that Medicaid expansion would provide the needed access of folks in Alaska. As she considered her career and community she felt like Alaska with Medicaid and Alaska without Medicaid were two drastically different landscapes. She hoped that lawmakers would ensure access to health care for all of their constituents. She thanked the committee for the opportunity to testify.

[7:09:09 PM](#)

JOHANNA HERRON, SELF, PALMER (via teleconference), urged that all agriculture related program funding be reinstated. She furthered that all agriculture related funding should be doubled, not just restored. She provided a list of reasons for her recommendation and thanked the committee for its time.

[7:10:13 PM](#)

REGINA MANTEUSEL, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of HB 20 [a bill that would limit the application of neonicotinoid pesticides]. She also liked the Farm-to-School Program. She believed the state should opt out of the \$35 million spending for the University of Alaska Anchorage. She urged the state to be proactive regarding cancer. She spoke in favor of statewide films about obesity and cancer. She indicated she was in support of funding for Medicaid expansion. She thought that medical insurance should cover CBD [cannabinoid] made from marijuana. She relayed a story about medical marijuana. She also believed in fully funding Safe Harbor and Best Beginnings with the stipulation that the books used would be made by Alaskan artists. She opined that the state needed to fully fund locally made films which she qualified. She also wanted the court system cleaned up and agreed with the changes in the court system. She asserted that there were corrupt judges in Alaska. She thanked the committee.

[7:12:30 PM](#)

LISA HOLLEN, SELF, PALMER (via teleconference), Supported funding for Traumatic Brain Injury. She was representing herself and other Burnett Brain Injury people. She advocated for continued funding for Access Alaska. She shared her own experience with Traumatic brain injury. She

cited statistics regarding incarceration of traumatic brain injury individuals. She believed that Access Alaska provided a resource to share with others who have suffered from traumatic brain injuries. She asked that the legislature keep Access Alaska funded as well as committing to Medicaid expansion. She thanked the committee for allowing her to testify.

[7:15:02 PM](#)

Kevin Hite, President, Alaska State Snowmobile Association, Anchorage{ spoke in favor of the continued allocation of the Department of Motor Vehicle collected fees to the snow track, snow mobile programs administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). He provided some history about the snow track point of sale registration program. The funds that were generated by the program had been reallocated to DNR and the snow track board to support the infrastructure for over 20 years. The fees were self-imposed and were therefore a neutral revenue source of funding. He recommended turning the self-imposed fees back into the snowmobile community. He continued to discuss the self-imposed fees and reemphasized the importance of making sure the funds get reallocated to overseeing the programs.

Co-Chair Neuman commented that he would look into it.

[7:17:00 PM](#)

THEDA PITTMAN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), commented that she had hoped that the first cuts would take place in programs and divisions lacking efficiency. She disagreed with the proposed changes to the judiciary. She suggested that legislators think about changes in procedures and process going forward. She was disturbed in watching Gavel-To-Gavel that things appeared to be business as usual. She proposed exercising restraint. In regards to the operating budget she advocated looking for simplicity. She wondered why there was a need for so many license plates and why cuts were being made to so many senior support services. She opined that it was time to discuss increases in revenue. She thanked the committee for its time.

[7:19:51 PM](#)

KELLY DREW, PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), voiced support for University of Alaska funding. She recognized the daunting task of decreasing the budget. She talked about moving away from a non-diverse economy. She suggested looking towards new industries. The idea of losing students was devastating. She encouraged support of the university and strategic investments to avoid further oil dependence.

[7:22:20 PM](#)

KATHERYN CROWLEY, PARENT AND HOMER EARLY CHILDHOOD COALITION, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings and Parents as Teacher. She spoke of the value of both programs. She talked about the community of Homer and the programs positively affecting Homer. She thought the community would really suffer without the support of the programs. She urged reducing the proposed cuts to the early learning programs and thanked the committee for the opportunity to testify.

[7:25:38 PM](#)

SHIRLEY CLEAVER, SELF, GALENA (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. She pointed out how the community used the radio as a lifeline. She provided an example of a recent flooding incident in which public radio was used as a warning system to residents. She truly believed in the value of public radio. She also spoke in support of the Parents as Teachers program. She appreciated having the opportunity to testify.

[7:27:10 PM](#)

ANNIE SILVERMAN, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of the Farms to School Program. She felt that a focus on educating children about agriculture and local foods. She asked that the legislature fund the program.

[7:28:39 PM](#)

GARY BROWN, VICE PRESIDENT, ANCHORAGE SNOW MOBILE CLUB, PALMER (via teleconference), discussed the line item in the budget regarding the snow track registration funds going back to the trails as has been the case in the past. He

indicated that it was a fully funded, self-supporting revenue stream. He appreciated the opportunity to testify.

Co-Chair Neuman noted that the funds were normally included in the capital budget, but for whatever reason they were not in Governor Walker's proposed budget for capital. He would look into the matter.

[7:29:55 PM](#)

PAULA HATFIELD-BAUER, SELF, SEWARD (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating the governor's budget for early childhood education. She relayed that for every dollar spent on early childhood issue, \$20 was saved for other costs across the lifespan. She discussed the importance of language development for children. She mentioned a study that showed that children from more affluent backgrounds had 30 thousand more words in their vocabulary at an early age. She suggested that Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers were programs that had the same effect. She talked about her son's experience with infant learning. She appreciated the chance to testify.

[7:31:26 PM](#)

DELLA CHENEY, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), voiced opposition to funding cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System. She shared that she had a home in Kake and used the ferry often as an affordable way to travel in Southeast. She mentioned the expensive cost of air travel. She elaborated that the ferry brought in food and other supplies to the community of Kake.

[7:33:43 PM](#)

PAUL HUPPERT, SELF, PALMER (via teleconference), spoke against budget cuts to the Division of Agriculture. He shared that he had grown vegetables for fifty years. He provided information about the brand he sold in grocery stores. He was concerned that budget cuts could inhibit the growers' ability to go through inspections needed for selling produce in markets. His biggest concern was about maintaining certification. He stressed that the state should be doing more to help growers in Alaska to obtain the latest technology to control problems. Currently the university research was almost at zero. The sector did not

have the information necessary for marketing. He stated that the Alaskan Grown program had been successful.

[7:36:39 PM](#)

KATRINA HOWE, STUDENT, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), voiced support for University of Alaska funding. She stated that the university was a great resource with many great programs. She believed it was essential for people to receive a good quality education. She stressed that the university had been cut to the marrow in its budget. She had witnessed a drastic reduction in the quality of teaching due to the need for fewer teachers to cover more classes. She discussed that UAF was a research campus; research grants brought in overhead to pay for university upkeep and things. She shared that one of her professors had paid for three-quarters of his 15-year salary through grants. She asked the committee to consider an increase in funding.

[7:38:42 PM](#)

VERONICA SLAJER, ALASKA NATIVE ARTS FOUNDATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), relayed that the company was an economic development organization that focused on markets for Native art. She shared that the prior year the organization had purchased almost 800 pieces of art statewide. The company provided marketing and business training for artists in rural communities. She elaborated that in the past the company had a grant within the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development; the grant had once been about \$500,000, but it had been reduced over time. She communicated that cuts would completely eliminate the program. She asked the committee to reconsider reinstating some of the funding.

[7:42:26 PM](#)

ANDY HOLLEMAN, ANCHORAGE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of education funding. He relayed that the district had been cutting positions for multiple years. He voiced that any additional cuts would come from core areas or programs with a proven track record. He requested that the legislature keep the promise it made to education the prior year. He asked the committee to reconsider funding the one-time funds passed the previous year.

7:44:11 PM

SUE STEINACHER, NOME EMERGENCY SHELTER TEAM, NOME (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding for Alaska Legal Services. She stressed that low-income people in rural Alaska would have no access to legal guidance representation without the longstanding services of Alaska Legal Services. She questioned where small nonprofits would send people who came to them with legal problems they were not equipped or certified to help with. She stressed that increased funding was needed to help individuals at the low end of the economic ladder. She stated that everyone was not born to a level playing field. She stated that services like Alaska Legal Services extended both state and federal constitutional legal rights to those most in need, with the least access. She urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting.

7:46:50 PM

STEVE PARIZEK, SNOMAD SNOWMACHINE CLUB, HOMER (via teleconference), asked for funds to be released from the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT) to the Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation to fund the snow track program. He was not asking for money; the program was self-funded through snow machine registration. The money went to DOT and it was supposed to transfer it to the Department of Parks and Recreation, which groomed trails, posted signs, and provided safety programs. He relayed that there had previously been two to four search and rescue operations per year; however, once trails were groomed search and rescue cases had decreased to one every three to four years. He emphasized that there were many businesses relying on the systems statewide. He reiterated his request for a restoration of funds.

7:48:40 PM

FRED STURMAN, SELF, SOLDOTNA (via teleconference), believed government employees should take a cut in salary. He discussed that 2,000 employees had been added. He suggested making cuts to the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) given many contract stations around the state. He recommended contracting out for road maintenance. He discussed large salary increases each year that were outrageous. He

discussed increases for school employees due to an increase in insurance costs.

[7:50:47 PM](#)

SOPHIA ARMSTRONG, HAINES EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, HAINES (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding for education. She highlighted that her school was one of the top 300 schools in the nation; however, with budget cuts the school would not be able to maintain its success. She had put in extra unpaid time at work in the current week. She stressed that if cuts continued eventually all people would be able to do was the bear minimum to keep their jobs. She asked the committee to consider the funding plan that had been adopted the previous year.

[7:52:09 PM](#)

RICHARD WEBB, SELF, FOX (via teleconference), testified in support of Centers for Independent Living grants. The centers served the most vulnerable populations including elderly and people with disabilities. He wanted to see the governor's budget showing a 13.2 percent cut fully funded. He advised that a cut to the program may result in additional residents in assisted living, which would be more costly for the state.

[7:53:42 PM](#)

ELLEN STORY, SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER, JUNEAU (via teleconference), testified in support of the reinstatement of one-time grant funds for Juneau schools. She detailed that the district had been faced with making continual cuts to the budget on an annual basis. As a result, her caseloads had increased, which made it harder to provide each student with the individual attention they needed. She stated that it was difficult to imagine providing services with additional cuts.

[7:54:33 PM](#)

PAULA GIAUQUE, ALASKA FARM BUREAU, PALMER (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to the Division of Agriculture. She emphasized the importance of the inspection service. Additionally, in order to sell to grocery stores, Alaskan farms were required to have good handling and inspection practices. The Farm to School Program had been instrumental in promoting the use of

Alaskan produce to schools (food that was healthier and fresher). She believed it was important to maintain the state's ability to produce crops. She relayed that the state's potato crop could be easily wiped out if it was not protected from diseases that could be transported from the Lower 48. She stated that marketing was equally important.

[7:56:27 PM](#)

KYLEE SINGH, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against funding for the proposed Susitna-Watana dam. She wanted to see the \$33 million removed from the project and distributed to education, transportation, and other areas where funding was sorely needed.

[7:57:22 PM](#)

JOAN DIAMOND, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), asked the committee to restore funding to public education and Medicaid expansion. She felt both items were morally imperative.

[7:57:54 PM](#)

PATRICIA WINNERS, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), voiced support for University of Alaska funding. She reasoned that if the university was weakened too much, it may flounder at a time when education was the only thing that would help the state's youth prepare for future jobs in technology and other. She stated that if the goal was to have students choose to attend the university it could not be behind. She asked the committee to ensure that the university was funded at the needed level.

[8:00:10 PM](#)

JAMES DWYER, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), voiced opposition to funding cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System. He shared that ferry runs to Bellingham and Prince Rupert were the only way for his family to get out of the community. He compared the cuts to ferry service to shutting the Richardson or Seward Highways; there was no other way for him to get out of Ketchikan.

[8:00:45 PM](#)

MARJORIE DWYER, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), voiced opposition to funding cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System. She stressed that there was no way to leave Ketchikan with a vehicle without the ferry. She suggested closing the Richardson or Seward Highways down to one day per week. She suggested not paying for repaving or snow removal. She stressed that her family paid to get out of Ketchikan on the ferry. She stated that the ferry was vital; it was used by tourists, but was not a tourist attraction. She suggested a bridge or highway into Canada if there was no ferry service.

8:02:14 PM

AT EASE

8:18:05 PM

RECONVENED

BRIAN HOLST, DIRECTOR, JUNEAU ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, JUNEAU, advocated for funding for education. He spoke in support of K-12 and early childhood education funding. He stressed that the returns in early childhood development provided the most benefit for families. He detailed that returns to investments accrued primarily to the most disadvantaged families. He provided statistics related to the investment in early childhood programs and Pre-K. He shared that for every \$1.00 invested in early education, \$7.00 in costs were avoided later on in life.

8:20:14 PM

CAROLYN WALTON, TEACHER, JUNEAU (via teleconference), spoke in support of education funds. She asked for the restoration of one-time grant funds for the Juneau School District. She stated that each year the district had gone through budget cuts that had impacted all students. She relayed that it was difficult to fathom more cuts without the one-time grant funds that had passed the previous year. She elaborated that over the years the district's resources had been depleted; the pupil to teacher ratio in some of the kindergarten classes was 28 to 1. She shared that less teachers meant less time spent individually with children.

8:22:13 PM

JONI SCHARFENBERG, FAIRBANKS SOIL AND WATER, TWO RIVERS (via teleconference), testified against cuts to the Division of Agriculture and the elimination of the budget

for NRCDB. She detailed that the programs supported Alaska's private landowners and brought in private and federal match dollars. She elaborated that the programs reached out to private landowners who supported locally grown food, food security, and other. She shared that the Fairbanks Soil and Water District had brought in over \$400,000 the prior year to from non-state sources to work on natural resource projects. She did not believe the cuts would be profitable. She believed soil and water districts should be recognized as an answer to budget shortfalls.

[8:24:07 PM](#)

STEPHEN SUEWING, PARENT, JUNEAU (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers. He testified on behalf of his young sons who could not speak up for themselves on education funding. He relayed that the programs had been very meaningful to his family. He advocated for a restoration of one-time education funds for K-12 education. An absence of the funds would mean a significant budget shortfall.

[8:26:11 PM](#)

LINDA TOWARAK, SELF, UNALAKLEET (via teleconference), spoke against a 40 percent cut to Alaska Legal Services. She relayed that the agency provided legal services for elders and youth in all regions of the state. She detailed that the agency provided will preparation for elders ranging from the age of 65 to 90 or so.

[8:27:22 PM](#)

JANET JONES, FIRST COVENANT CHURCH, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of substance abuse prevention programs. She shared that five individuals had testified in a recent community meeting at her church that they had to go out of state for treatment. The Municipality of Anchorage had promised to commit funds and effort to change the picture. She asserted that the legislature must do its part as well. She stated that the legislature was required by law to provide substance abuse funding and yet Alaska had the reputation of one of the drunkest states in the nation. She pointed out that it was in the state's best interest to provide substance abuse treatment. She stressed that the cost to the state's economy in 2010 totaled \$1.2 billion lost productivity, traffic accidents, criminal

justice, protective services, health, public assistance, and social services. She stressed that the money generated from alcohol tax should be returned to the Municipality of Anchorage to deal with the problem.

[8:29:21 PM](#)

GEORGIA BLUE, DIRECTOR, ALASKA NATIVE ARTS FOUNDATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), asked for a reinstatement of \$300,000 for the foundation. The direct support to Alaskan Native artists generated a viability within rural villages as well as statewide. She underscored that the grant received from the state had been beneficial and was extremely important. She appreciated the committee's time.

[8:30:56 PM](#)

SELENA EVERSON, JUNEAU, SELF (via teleconference), voiced opposition to funding cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System. She discussed the negative impacts the cuts would have. She testified in support of funding for Medicaid expansion. She stated that communities that did not have lobbyists speaking for them needed a funding mechanism. She reiterated her concern about cuts to AMHS. She thanked the committee for its time.

[8:32:44 PM](#)

GERALD HUGHES, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), voiced opposition to funding cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway System. He asked for continued funding at the present levels for the AMHS from Southeast Alaska to Prince Rupert and Bellingham. He believed it was vital to the Southeast economy and to provide residents with the ability to travel with vehicles. He supported any efforts to maintain current service.

[8:33:50 PM](#)

TOM LANGDON, STUDENT, UNIVERSITY SYSTEM, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), voiced support for University of Alaska funding. He understood that funding during the economic reality was a challenge. Due to decreased funding he had assumed the duties of his former supervisor and another colleague. He stressed that the university invested in the future of the state. He highlighted world-class research programs offered by the university. He stressed that

information technology was becoming more instrumental to the delivery of education. The university was a significant resource to Alaska. He encouraged the committee to reconsider funding the university at the governor's proposed level.

[8:36:19 PM](#)

JAMES FERGUSON, SELF, NOME (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to a 40 percent cut to Alaska Legal Services. He spoke to the importance of the work done by the agency for individuals in need. He detailed that the agency provided an incredible amount of work on a very tight budget (that included lower salaries for attorneys). He spoke to the agency's goals of reducing domestic violence and protecting the health, safety, and family stability of vulnerable members of the community.

[8:37:43 PM](#)

DOLLY LAMONT, SELF, BETHEL (via teleconference), voiced support for schools statewide. She stated that behind a successful person was a great education. She stated that children deserved a chance at an education.

[8:38:21 PM](#)

MIKE MILLIGAN, SELF, KODIAK (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the Legislative Information Offices (LIO). He stated that Kodiak was a politically astute community with a diverse tax base. He discussed that years earlier the legislature had deemed that ballot initiatives had to garner signatures from across the state. He believed the LIOs helped with the process. He wanted to ensure that outlying areas were not disenfranchised. He spoke to the importance of keeping outlying areas engaged. He shared that in his experience if someone was unable to get what they wanted from the state they turned to the federal government for help.

[8:40:20 PM](#)

ANDREW KELLER, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for Medicaid expansion. He spoke against cuts to state parks that were already funded at a low level compared to other states. He urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting and

energy efficiency. He believed the state could hold off on large projects such as the Juneau Access and Ambler Road projects, which would help the state to save in other ways. He stressed the importance of funding for education. He understood the difficult position of the legislature, but he believed it was necessary to take a look at what the state was doing when the university system was cut. He thanked the committee for its time.

[8:42:28 PM](#)

LILY HOPE, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), testified in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers, Best Beginnings, and the Imagination Library. She shared that she was the parent of three small children and a foster parent of a 13-month old daughter. She urged the legislature to think hard about how the cuts would impact the state's children. She shared that she had been a foster mother for six months and had been dealing with all sorts of trauma. She elaborated that when the baby came into their household she did not want to be held or put down and she did not want to look at books. They had been unsure where to turn. She stressed that her family had been referred to the Parents as Teachers program and after two visits it had been life changing. She urged the committee to think hard about how the programs impacted the state's children who did not necessarily have support elsewhere. She asked the committee to do whatever it could. She implored the committee to restore funding to education.

[8:44:27 PM](#)

MAUREEN HALL, ALASKA SCHOOL NURSE ASSOCIATION, JUNEAU (via teleconference), asked the committee to prioritize education funding and to restore the one-time increment for K-12 students. She noted that Alaska had high rates of children who had experienced trauma. She worked directly with children and stressed that cuts to K-12 education further stressed the very institutions that were serving the students. She reasoned that it was easier to build up a child than it was to repair an adult. She testified that school nurses across the state supported Medicaid expansion to improve access to healthcare for the state's working poor.

Co-Chair Neuman shared that 176 members of the public had testified during the day.

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

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ADJOURNMENT

8:46:32 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.