

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
March 31, 2015  
9:08 a.m.

9:08:57 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Kelly called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Anna MacKinnon, Co-Chair  
Senator Pete Kelly, Co-Chair  
Senator Peter Micciche, Vice-Chair  
Senator Click Bishop  
Senator Mike Dunleavy  
Senator Lyman Hoffman  
Senator Donny Olson

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Vernon Carlson, Board Chair, Denali Borough School District, Denali Borough; Maureen Moore, Sprout Family Services, Homer; Jackie Eisenberg, Sprout Family Services, Homer.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Gideon Garcia, Chief Operating Officer, CIRI Alaska Tourism, Anchorage; Deborah Hansen, Pikes Waterfront Large, Anchorage; Douglas Staats, Commander, Alaska Civil Air Patrol, Anchorage; Catherine Coward, Self, Anchorage; Candice McDonald, Owner, Salmon Berry Tours, Anchorage; Alyse Galvin, Self, Anchorage; Deena Mitchell, Self, Anchorage; Juliana Wayman, Best Beginnings, Anchorage; Erin Harrington, Former Board Member, Kodiak Public Broadcasting Corporation, Anchorage/Kodiak; Bill Romberg, Alaska Mountain Rescue Group, Anchorage; Stacey Lucason, UAA Student Government, Anchorage; Abbe Hensley, Deputy Director, Best Beginnings, Anchorage; Abigail Dunning

Newbury, Board of Directors, Bean's Café, Eagle River; Randy Olson, Program Manager, Children's Lunchbox Program, Bean's Café, Anchorage; Scott Stender, Manager, Bean's Café, Anchorage; Warren Olson, Member, Citizens Advisory Commission on Federal Areas, Anchorage; Pamela Kelley, Education Director, Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, Anchorage; Melissa Emmel, Deputy Director, Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), Anchorage; Richard Irwin, Chair, Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Anchorage; Kaira Shaw, Self, Wasilla; Andy Holleman, President, Anchorage Education Association, Anchorage; Sam Snyder, Member, Susitna River Coalition, Anchorage; Ron Holstron, Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), Anchorage; Mary Jo Torgeson, Director, Anchorage Library; Anchorage; Emily Cross, Board Member, KNBA Radio; Anchorage; Robin Smith, Self, Anchorage; Jessica Cler, Alaska Public Affairs Manager, Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest, Anchorage; Laura Cisnero, Project Manager, Best Beginnings; Coordinator, Imagination Library, Eagle River; Alex Scivka, Self, Anchorage; Chelsie Morrson-Heath, Community Educator, Standing Together Against Rape, Anchorage; Ray Metcalfe, Former Alaska State Legislator, Anchorage; Brett Carlson, Self, Coldfoot; Kristin Ramstad, Director, Head Start, Rural Cap, Anchorage; Dirk Shumaker, Executive Director, Kids' Corp. Inc., Anchorage; Deborah Williams, Executive Director, Anchorage Youth Development Coalition, Anchorage; Kaylee Jenkins, Self, Anchorage; Alan LeMaster, Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), Gakona; Stephanie Littleton, Self, Glennallen; Milli Martin, Self, Homer; Rajil Christianson, Self, Homer; Mako Haggerty, Self, Homer; Dave Lewis, Self, Homer; Anna Meredith, Self, Homer; Sherry Stead, Self, Homer; Shenandoah Lush, High School Student, Homer; Lillian Johnson, High School Student, Homer; Boyd Ables, Self, Glennallen; Mary Odden, Self, Celchina; Karen Shemet, Self, Homer; Lisa "Red" Asselin, Early Childhood Coalition, Homer; Megan Murphy, Homer, Self; Alisa Mooy, Parent, Homer; Jim Stearns, Parent, Homer; Jill Lush, Sprout Family Services, Homer; Rachel Romberg, Prevention and Outreach Coordinator, South Peninsula Haven House, Homer; Tara Schmidt, South Peninsula Haven House, Homer; Ingrid Harrald, South Peninsula Haven House, Homer.

#### SUMMARY

CSHB 72(FIN)

APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUNDS

CSHB 72(FIN) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

CSHB 73(FIN)

APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

CSHB 73(FIN) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:

ANCHORAGE

GLENNALLEN, SEWARD, HOMER

#hb72

#hb73

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 72(FIN)

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

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 73(FIN)

"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."

9:09:09 AM

Co-Chair Kelly discussed that the committee would hear public testimony on CSHB 72(FIN) and CSHB 73(FIN).

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY: ANCHORAGE

9:10:06 AM

GIDEON GARCIA, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, CIRI ALASKA TOURISM, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the restoration of \$3 million for the tourism marketing budget. He detailed that CIRI Alaska Tourism operated various tour companies and lodges in Alaska; the company employed close to 500 employees during its peak season. The company worked closely with other visitor

industry partners such as the Alaska Railroad Corporation. He discussed that the visitor industry had seen growth, but competition continued to be strong worldwide. He stressed the need to ensure that Alaska was a viable and welcoming destination. He touched on the return on investment provided to CIRI shareholders; the company contributed to communities through sales, property, bed taxes, and port fees. He stressed that tourism marketing provided a positive return on investment.

[9:12:23 AM](#)

DEBORAH HANSEN, PIKES WATERFRONT LARGE, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for tourism marketing. She shared a recent experience in Coldfoot, Alaska related to tourism; many of the visitors were from other countries. She explained that the experience was an example of how tourism funding brought people and money to the state. She stressed that the tourism industry provided employment. She asked the committee to adopt the House version of the proposed \$11.9 million increment for tourism; the amount represented a cut of 40 percent.

[9:14:23 AM](#)

DOUGLAS STAATS, COMMANDER, ALASKA CIVIL AIR PATROL, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against a reduction of \$100,000 for the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) in the Department of Public Safety budget. He relayed that CAP had saved seven lives in the past year on search and rescue missions. He detailed that CAP operated various aircrafts in multiple areas; it had 749 volunteer members statewide. The volunteers had contributed time with an estimated value of \$2.6 million in the past year. Funding had been static since 2008, which represented a reduction of 9 percent. He stressed that CAP could not absorb the cut and it would mean current functions could not be maintained. He relayed that the cut would likely mean the closure of one or more units, which would reduce search and rescue capabilities.

[9:16:27 AM](#)

CATHERINE COWARD, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of increased funding for public schools. She related that she was active in working for increased school funding the previous year. She was dismayed at the need to

fight to keep funding that was promised the prior year. She understood that the state was facing difficulty financially, but balancing the budget on the backs of children was immoral and unsustainable. She stressed that the state's communities and economy would not effectively grow if graduation rates decreased and incarceration rates increased. She noted that Alaska would lose young adults seeking better education opportunities for their children in other states. She emphasized that public education funding was a core need for Alaska. She believed it was time to find additional revenue elsewhere if the state could not find funds for education.

[9:18:19 AM](#)

CANDICE MCDONALD, OWNER, SALMON BERRY TOURS, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the restoration of \$3 million increment for tourism marketing. She provided information about her business that was growing at an average of 32 percent annually. She detailed that the company's growth was due largely to the state's tourism marketing efforts. She stated that the focus on marketing had enabled her company to provide year-round jobs with benefits.

[9:20:19 AM](#)

ALYSE GALVIN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of fully funding education. She reasoned that the current session was the beginning of an extended process where Alaskans were coming to grips with the fiscal crisis facing the state. She discussed that the problem could not be solved with budget cuts alone. She believed the state and society had an obligation to provide a quality education to all children. She opined that it was time for strength, courage, and vision. She stressed that it was extremely short-sighted to cut the voluntary Pre-K and Parents as Teachers funding. She spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings. She encouraged the committee to keep the promise made by the legislature the previous year by restoring the education funds.

[9:22:37 AM](#)

DEENA MITCHELL, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding education. She believed public schools were the foundation of the country's democracy. She

asked the committee to stand by the three-year schedule of funding it provided to school districts statewide in HB 278 the prior year. She recalled watching what past cuts had done to the state's education system. She was dismayed that the system was back where it had started prior to the passage of HB 278. She reminded the committee that legislators had acknowledged that a promise is a promise and that in spite of low oil prices, education was a top priority and would continue to be funded per HB 278.

[9:24:43 AM](#)

JULIANA WAYMAN, BEST BEGINNINGS, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings. She testified in favor of restoring funds for Imagination Library. The programs currently served close to 24,000 children statewide including 10,000 in Anchorage of which 50 percent were in low income neighborhoods. She stated that with local chapters the program had the ability to reach 85 percent of the state's children. She stated that investment in early learning had been shown to be a good investment.

[9:25:57 AM](#)

ERIN HARRINGTON, FORMER BOARD MEMBER, KODIAK PUBLIC BROADCASTING CORPORATION, ANCHORAGE/KODIAK (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. She recognized the difficult budget situation. She asked the legislature to let public media be partners in a rational move towards smaller state government. She believed the public media system needed time to adapt to budgetary changes. She stressed that 100 percent cuts overnight would have cascading impacts on rural and urban locations that would be difficult to absorb well. She opined that publicly supported media was an invaluable service to the state's citizenry and to informed decision making in the state.

[9:28:12 AM](#)

BILL ROMBERG, ALASKA MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the Alaska State Trooper request for search and rescue within the Department of Public Safety. He asked for full funding for the department's aircraft section including a \$500,000 request for maintaining the helicopter assets. Members

recognized that the state was facing revenue shortfalls; however, they were concerned that risks to search and rescue volunteers and troopers would increase if support was not provided. He discussed pilot training and provided an example of a recent rescue mission that highlighted the need for helicopter assets and a robust training program.

[9:31:22 AM](#)

STACEY LUCASON, UAA STUDENT GOVERNMENT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of restoring funding for the University of Alaska. She appreciated that a Senate Finance Budget subcommittee had reduced the cut to \$20 million. She read from a variety of student comments regarding budget cuts. She shared that a cut in funding encouraged students to finish their education out of state. She relayed information from a student who could not complete their prerequisites because funding cuts had limited courses. She stressed that Alaska could not support losing its talent in order to sustain its economic future. She communicated that in the absence of oil cutting education was not the way forward.

[9:33:36 AM](#)

ABBE HENSLEY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, BEST BEGINNINGS, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings and the Imagination Library. She shared that 23,603 children under five years of age had received a high-quality, age appropriate book through the program in the past month. She emphasized that many Alaskans had worked hard to achieve the remarkable milestone; currently 43 percent of Alaska children under the age of five were receiving books at home. She stated that a cost of \$30 per year per child was a bargain. She discussed the critical importance of early literacy in a child's education. She detailed that children who are read to at home develop a stronger vocabulary, better language ability, and other. Additionally, kindergarten assessment scores for language and literacy had increased by 11 percent from 2009 to 2013. She shared additional statistics about the benefits of the program.

[9:36:40 AM](#)

ABIGAIL DUNNING NEWBURY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, BEAN'S CAFÉ, EAGLE RIVER (via teleconference), spoke in favor of

reinstating funds for the human services community matching grant to the House version of the bill. Bean's Café and the Children's Lunchbox program provided basic human services to the poorest people in Anchorage. She stated that the more the economy suffered from falling oil prices and from the deficit facing the state, the more people would need the services. She related that the program provided hot meals and warm shelter year-round for hungry and homeless people. Children's Lunchbox provided weekend meals for children in Title 1 schools. She detailed that it was estimated that every human services community matching grant \$1.00 ultimately leveraged to provide approximately \$9.00 to the community.

[9:38:54 AM](#)

RANDY OLSON, PROGRAM MANAGER, CHILDREN'S LUNCHBOX PROGRAM, BEAN'S CAFÉ, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of reinstating full funding for the human services community matching grant to the level passed by the House. She shared that the Children's Lunchbox program was currently offered in seven Title 1 schools in Anchorage; the budget reduction would mean the loss of one school (416 children). She stressed that if children were worried about where their next meal was coming from they could not focus on anything else including education. She implored the committee to reconsider the cuts to the human services matching grant.

[9:40:20 AM](#)

SCOTT STENDER, MANAGER, BEAN'S CAFÉ, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the human services community matching grant for Bean's Café. He stated that a \$64,000 gap did not sound like a substantial amount of money, but it was significant to the Bean's Café clients. He stated that the community value was over \$500,000. He did not know where the people would go. The program provided clients with mail, transportation, and family stabilizing services. He asserted that every dollar provided to the program meant less money was spent on emergency response and other. He stressed that the money was critical to hundreds of people.

[9:42:28 AM](#)

WARREN OLSON, MEMBER, CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION ON FEDERAL AREAS, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), believed the current federal administration would have an influence on Alaska in the upcoming two years. He discussed the interpretation and implementation of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). He shared that the organization was an advantage to Alaska. He asked for future funding.

[9:44:43 AM](#)

PAMELA KELLEY, EDUCATION DIRECTOR, ALZHEIMER'S RESOURCE OF ALASKA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to support the human services community matching grant and to hold the reduction at the 20 percent mark passed by the House. She shared that the agency was a recipient of grant funding; the matching grants partially funded two programs serving individuals Fairbanks. She detailed that the agency's programs resulted in measurable improvement in the ability for a family caregiver to continue providing care to a family member. She stressed that family caregivers carried more than 75 percent of the care burden that Alzheimer's and related dementias represented in Alaska. The program represented savings to the state through Medicaid.

[9:46:55 AM](#)

MELISSA EMMEL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, ABUSED WOMEN'S AID IN CRISIS (AWAIC), ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to reinstate funds for domestic violence and sexual assault prevention programs. She detailed that primary prevention stopped violence before it occurred. She shared that many women in her life had personally experienced violence. She was sick and tired of watching people she loved get hurt. She was proud to be an Alaskan, but she was not proud that half the women in Anchorage would experience domestic or sexual violence in their lifetime. She referred to the staggering costs associated with violence. She stressed the importance of investing in evidence-based strategies. She highlighted the Green Dot intervention model. She reiterated her request for reinstatement of the funding for prevention programs.

[9:51:14 AM](#)

RICHARD IRWIN, CHAIR, COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to reinstate \$1.5 million in the Department of Public Safety, Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) budget. He spoke to the devastating statistics related to domestic violence and sexual assault in Alaska. He spoke to the necessity of cultural change. He stressed the importance of a primary focus on prevention. He believed that without prevention the same issues would need to be managed repeatedly. He stated that a change in cultural norms would not occur without a focus on prevention. He opined that the state should stop building more prisons and work on preventing people from being incarcerated. He stated that "it is much easier to build a boy, than repair a man."

[9:55:17 AM](#)

KAIRA SHAW, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), urged the committee to reinstate funds for domestic violence and sexual assault prevention programs. She related her personal experience with domestic violence and a lack of safety for her family. She stressed that if the assaults could have been prevented that the past two years of her life would not be in shambles. She discussed the heartbreaking impact of the violence on herself and her teenage son. She passionately implored the committee to fund violence prevention programs. She stressed that her life would never be the same as a result of the assault.

[9:58:09 AM](#)

ANDY HOLLEMAN, PRESIDENT, ANCHORAGE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of education funding. He spoke to the problems caused by uncertainty in funding. He observed that education funding was always the last thing to be voted on during legislative sessions even as local school budgets were being formed. He was not asking for an increase in the current budget, but that the committee keep the legislature's promise from the previous year that would provide stability and help districts plan for the future.

[10:00:05 AM](#)

SAM SNYDER, MEMBER, SUSITNA RIVER COALITION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke against funding for the Susitna

River Dam. He stressed that the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) was sitting on \$33.5 million to build a project that was bad for the state's fish and communities and failed to solve energy needs. He asserted that the project should be shut down and the funds should be reappropriated. He stated that the funds could be used to address domestic violence for 30 years, the education budget could be backfilled to keep teachers in the classroom, multiple years of oil spill response, the Chinook salmon recovery program, etc. He referred to polling showing that over 65 percent of Alaskans opposed the project. He spoke to the projected cost of the project of \$5.65 billion; however, by the time it was completed it could cost over \$10 billion. He urged the committee to take the money from AEA for reappropriation to more essential state priorities.

10:02:22 AM

RON HOLSTRON, SCREEN ACTORS GUILD-AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TELEVISION AND RADIO ARTISTS (SAG-AFTRA), ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in opposition to SB 39, which would eliminate the film credit program. He stated that the bill would eliminate the motion picture industry in Alaska. He relayed that other states and countries had begun developing film incentive programs at approximately the same time as Alaska. He shared that other states had immediately begun building infrastructure associated with the industry, but Alaska had not. He spoke about the lack of major motion pictures being filmed in Alaska in the previous three years. He believed alternatives were needed to stimulate Alaska's economy. He opined that the film industry was important and could help bring money to the state.

Co-Chair MacKinnon noted that the public testimony for SB 39 had been opened and closed previously. She relayed that any additional comments could be sent in written form to the Senate Finance Committee.

10:05:36 AM

VERNON CARLSON, BOARD CHAIR, DENALI BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, DENALI BOROUGH, spoke in favor of education funding and funding for Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP). He thanked the committee for hearing public testimony. He relayed that funds from the education bill that passed the prior year meant \$156,000 in

2016 and \$96,000 in 2017; the district had hired its guidance counselor and curriculum director back after receiving the funds. He detailed that the district would have to eliminate the positions if the funds were lost. He stressed that the Denali Borough did not have any "fluff" in its school budget; it did not have food programs, swimming pools, tracks, etc. He provided a story about a student and ANSEP. He relayed that ANSEP was using a significant amount of private funding. He spoke to the program's success.

[10:08:44 AM](#)

MARY JO TORGESON, DIRECTOR, ANCHORAGE LIBRARY; ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in favor of the Online with Libraries (OWL) program. She also spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings. She shared that Live Homework Help was a tutoring program that had started approximately five years earlier; there were currently 34,000 users. She requested funding for OWL at the House level. She discussed the need for broadband service to access the program. She related that without the OWL program, village libraries would not have good access to computers. She urged the committee to fund OWL at \$772,000 and Live Homework Help at \$138,000. She spoke in support of full funding for Pre-K programs.

[10:11:30 AM](#)

EMILY CROSS, BOARD MEMBER, KNBA RADIO; ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. She stressed that a 100 percent cut to public broadcasting was too excessive; the loss of \$135,000 in grants received by KNBA would significantly impact the services provided by the station. She detailed that the cuts would likely mean workforce reduction and the loss of news, public affairs, and music programming. The station was the producer of Native America Calling and National Native News. She emphasized that a loss of public radio would cause a serious disconnect for rural communities. She encouraged committee members to visit rural Alaska.

[10:13:18 AM](#)

ROBIN SMITH, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for education. She understood that the state was facing a deficit and that cuts needed to be made;

however, the reduction in oil prices was already negatively impacting the state's economy. She implored the committee to take care when making cuts to prevent the state from going into a recession. She urged the committee to adopt Governor Walker's more moderate plan to reduce the budget over several years to help the economy to adapt. She shared that she was not a parent, but felt strongly that education and children's success at school was critical to Alaska's success. She elaborated that children who succeeded did not end up on Medicaid, in prison, or taxing governmental services. She spoke in support of Best Beginnings and other Pre-K programs.

[10:15:34 AM](#)

JESSICA CLER, ALASKA PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGER, PLANNED PARENTHOOD VOTES NORTHWEST, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in favor of restoring \$360,000 that had been removed from the budget the previous year for the Chlamydia Campaign. She detailed that in 2013 Alaska had ranked number 1 in rates of chlamydia infection; the rate was nearly double the national average. She stressed that when left untreated the disease could lead to infertility, ectopic pregnancy, and chronic pelvic pain. She encouraged adding funding for accessible sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment; it would only require \$50,000 to keep a portion of the program running. Additionally she requested a restoration of \$1.5 million for statewide domestic violence and sexual assault prevention programs. She emphasized that the state's public health goals would never be reached until the prevalence of relationship abuse was greatly reduced.

[10:17:50 AM](#)

LAURA CISNERO, PROJECT MANAGER, BEST BEGINNINGS; COORDINATOR, IMAGINATION LIBRARY, EAGLE RIVER (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings and the Imagination Library. She related that the previous day, her office had to send an email out to thousands of parents notifying them that online enrollment had to be shutdown given fiscal difficulties. She relayed that the response from the public had been immediate. She encouraged the committee to reinstate some of the funding to help the program become more self-sustaining in the following year.

10:19:19 AM

ALEX SCIVKA, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to restore funding for public broadcasting. He understood that reductions should be expected, but believed that the proposed elimination of funding was steep. He recalled public media programming from his childhood including Sesame Street. He asked the committee to consider restoring funding to the level proposed by the House.

10:20:06 AM

CHELSIE MORRISON-HEATH, COMMUNITY EDUCATOR, STANDING TOGETHER AGAINST RAPE, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to reinstate funds for domestic violence and sexual assault prevention programs. She had witnessed Alaska's rates of violence firsthand. She supported evidence-based prevention programming including Green Dot. She implored the committee to advocate and act as voices against violence in the state. She reasoned that "if we're only focused on reaction, we'll always be reacting." She stressed the importance of thinking about individuals impacted by violence every day. She emphasized that the high rates of violence were not inevitable.

10:22:18 AM

RAY METCALFE, FORMER ALASKA STATE LEGISLATOR, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), recalled his former role as chair of the state affairs committee. He shared that the legislature had set up a management system for the Alaska Permanent Fund; the system had been created with the expectation that the state would someday need to rely on the fund to take over when oil ran dry. He believed it was time to consider converting the Permanent Fund to an endowment fund by contributing all future revenues produced by the fund and by the sale of resources. He believed there should be a fixed percent per year and that a dividend should be included in the process. He had historically pushed back against spending the fund earnings. He was willing to change his position if the proper proposal was put forth. He stated that an 8 percent return could easily be achieved on dedicated funds, which would provide the state with a \$5.5 billion budget in the current year.

10:24:44 AM

BRETT CARLSON, SELF, COLDFOOT (via teleconference), spoke in favor of funding for tourism marketing. He discussed the goal for Alaska's travel resource was developed to the maximum benefit of Alaskans and that the development occurred in a way where Alaskan-owned businesses (particularly in rural areas) could share in the benefits. He stated that from a small business perspective, nothing was more important to development of the industry than the tourism marketing program. He stated that the tourism marketing program was to the development of Alaska's travel resource what a gasline was to the monetization of gas on the North Slope. He understood the need to develop sustainable state budgets and to stabilize the private sector economy as government funding began to be withdrawn. He relayed that the travel industry brought \$2 billion into the state and created over 40,000 jobs.

[10:27:21 AM](#)

KRISTIN RAMSTAD, DIRECTOR, HEAD START, RURAL CAP, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of reinstating funds for Best Beginnings. She thanked a Senate Finance subcommittee for adding an unallocated increment of \$320,000 for Pre-K grants, Parents as Teachers, or Best Beginnings. She was fully aware of the need to balance the state budget. She urged the committee to make smart choices as the state entered the fiscal situation. She stated that high quality early childhood education was an extremely wise investment. She detailed that early childhood education helped prepare young children to succeed in school and to become better citizens. She spoke to the favorable outcomes of access.

[10:29:50 AM](#)

DIRK SHUMAKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KIDS' CORP. INC., ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in favor of restoring funds for the Parents as Teachers and Best Beginnings programs. He discussed how the programs helped parents to be more confident parents and to better understand and meet their child's developmental needs. He shared additional benefits of the programs. He stated that eliminating the programs that provided the Imagination Library and early learning coalitions throughout the state would greatly weaken Alaska's fragile early learning

systems. He asked the Senate to keep young children as the state's highest priority.

[10:31:24 AM](#)

DEBORAH WILLIAMS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ANCHORAGE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COALITION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), urged the committee to reinstate funds for domestic violence and sexual assault prevention programs. She emphasized the effectiveness of prevention. She stated that full funding saved the state money. She stressed the importance of funding for early learning and childhood development. She urged the committee to review her written testimony. She implored the committee to fund K-12 education.

[10:34:05 AM](#)

KAYLEE JENKINS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the Imagination Library. She relayed that the program had been a blessing. She recalled that her mother had focused on reading to her at an early age. She stressed the importance of early education. She encouraged the committee to reinstate funding.

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY: GLENNALLEN, SEWARD, HOMER

[10:35:46 AM](#)

MAUREEN MOORE, SPROUT FAMILY SERVICES, HOMER, spoke in support of early childhood education. She asked the committee members to consider their life experiences when thinking about the budget. She asked committee members to think about Alaska their family and to consider what they would do for their children. She emphasized that children were the most important resource in the state. She stressed that it was not possible to get the first five years of a child's life back. She stressed the importance of providing education to children.

[10:38:38 AM](#)

JACKIE EISENBERG, SPROUT FAMILY SERVICES, HOMER, testified in favor of funding for early childhood programs. She worked with families that were at risk of having their children removed from the home. She shared that she had been a victim of domestic violence and had been a mother

with high risk factors. She stressed that various providers had offered her extra help and support. She relayed that families she was working with were strong and resilient, but had many things they were facing inter-generationally. She stated that the little help that could be provided by home visiting was very important. She stated that the state could invest in changing the trajectory early on instead of paying for it later.

10:41:07 AM

ALAN LEMASTER, ALASKA TRAVEL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (ATIA), GAKONA (via teleconference), testified in support of increased funding to the ATIA marketing budget. He owned one of the small businesses in rural Alaska. He relayed that the businesses in rural Alaska were made up of 40,000 employees and accounted for the state's second largest industry. He spoke against a proposed reduction of 40 percent to the tourism budget. He believed 40 percent dramatically exceeded ATIA's fair share. He stressed that the cut could be catastrophic. He relayed that the industry was willing to do its part to make cuts. He stated that the industry contributed directly to the marketing plans with a contribution of \$2.7 million. He stated that Alaska had one of the most effective marketing programs worldwide. The industry continued to be committed to making its contribution in the future. The reduction by the legislature from \$16 million down to \$6.2 million with a caveat of increasing funds from businesses was not realistic. He asked the committee to add \$1.7 million to the \$6.2 million increment. He stated that the businesses depended on the legislature and its decision. He urged the committee to do all it could to support the 40,000 individuals and businesses.

10:43:48 AM

STEPHANIE LITTLETON, SELF, GLENNALLEN (via teleconference), spoke against cuts to the public broadcasting system. The local station provided the community with news, weather, emergency broadcasting, and other. She communicated that the community had been about to upgrade its signal in order to carry 360 North and Gavel to Gavel, but the cut would prevent the upgrade. She believed other areas had more options for connectivity. She stated that many people could not afford to get a satellite service or internet. She hoped the committee would help her community.

10:44:50 AM

MILLI MARTIN, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in opposition to cuts to public broadcasting. She relayed that in 35 years she had witnessed five volcanic eruptions and several devastating fires; she appreciated the warnings by public radio. She stressed that public radio provided notification about emergencies, news, public safety, and other. She did not believe commercial radio stations could afford to devote the time that public radio could provide. She believed the legislature had a responsibility to provide public safety. She urged the committee to reconsider the cut.

10:46:39 AM

RAJIL CHRISTIANSON, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke against the 100 percent cut to public broadcasting. She acknowledged the financial difficulties currently facing the state; however, the Kenai Peninsula relied on public radio for emergency service notification, information, local government meetings, and other. She stressed that public radio empowered her to be an informed voter. She stressed that public radio should not be cut.

10:48:21 AM

MAKO HAGGERTY, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of public broadcasting and the Homer Legislative Information Office. He relied on the public radio station and the LIO for remaining connected to the rest of the state. He was aware of the financial difficulties facing Alaska. He emphasized that rural communities were just as integral to the state as the larger communities. He spoke to the safety alerts, weather, news, and other provided by public radio. He stressed that the radio was a key component for rural communities in the state.

10:50:24 AM

DAVE LEWIS, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in support of public radio. He asserted that it was not necessary to clear cut the state's budget. He stressed that destroying programs was not beneficial for the average Alaskan. He stated that other sources of income needed to be considered including a statewide income tax. He believed

oil and tax credits needed to be looked at and that corporate and mining taxes should be increased. He stated that cuts needed to be equal across the board.

10:51:36 AM

ANNA MEREDITH, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of prevention programming. She worked to reduce violence in the community by educating youth. She mentioned various prevention programs. She shared that the programming models were effective and provided positive youth and adult and peer-to-peer interactions. She stated that the programs helped teens in making choices that supported their resilience. She wanted to live in a community where children knew they were supported by adults in making healthy and safe choices. The programs had provided a place for community members to connect after a sexual assault case had occurred several years earlier. She communicated that prevention work was good for business.

10:53:49 AM

SHERRY STEAD, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of prevention programs. She stressed that Alaska had the highest rate of violence in the nation. She stressed that a \$1.5 million cut to prevention programs would be spent on hospital costs, police costs, court cases, and domestic shelters. She stressed that the state's current rate of violence was hindering its communities and families. She communicated that the psychological cost of violence lasted a lifetime. She stated that education was the only way violence had ever been reduced. The local Girls on the Run and Coaching Boys into Men programs were successful.

10:55:35 AM

SHENANDOAH LUSH, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in support of prevention funding. She discussed domestic violence, teen homelessness, substance abuse, and other that existed in the community. She mentioned various prevention programs including Green Dot, Girls on the Run, Stand up Speak up, and Lead on that had been successful. She stated that cutting the funding would be harmful and would reduce progress. She stressed that lacerating funding would not benefit the community.

10:57:27 AM

LILLIAN JOHNSON, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support of prevention funding. She shared that she had seen the entire community be deeply affected by violence, suicide, and sexual assault; however, she had also been a part of helping Homer to bounce back from times of adversity. She discussed community projects that had changed her life for the better. She discussed that Green Dot had been proven to reduce sexual violence by 50 percent in high schools. She stated that the response to the program was overwhelmingly positive. She emphasized that without Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) funds Green Dot would not be provided.

11:00:24 AM

BOYD ABLES, SELF, GLENNALLEN (via teleconference), spoke in support of public broadcasting. He appreciated the legislature's work. He stressed that the service had made a significant difference in his life and in the lives of others. He was willing to pay his share of taxes if they were needed. He recognized that the legislature had an impossible job, but he hoped public broadcasting would be funded.

11:02:38 AM

MARY ODDEN, SELF, CELCHINA (via teleconference), spoke in support of public broadcasting and the Glennallen Legislative Information Office. She stated that public broadcasting was the only access to state news, weather, local jobs, connectivity to the world, and other. She shared that topics on Alaska science, education, and social concerns were addressed daily in programming. She stressed that her family would not have the ability to live in the area while maintaining their responsibility as citizens to the state without public radio. She stated that the Alaska Public Radio Network was a statewide organization that brought issues from rural and urban areas together in a professional and objective venue. She stated that cutting funding to public broadcasting cut the head and hands off the body politic; the message was that rural areas did not need to know what was going on in the rest of the state. She strongly believed the cuts were unwise.

11:05:13 AM

Co-Chair MacKinnon noted that the meeting would adjourn shortly due to Senate Floor Session. Vice-Chair Micciche wondered if there was another time to fit the testifiers in. Co-Chair MacKinnon replied that testifiers could call in at 3:00 p.m. if they did not have time to speak during the current meeting.

KAREN SHEMET, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference), testified in support early childhood education, youth programs, prevention, and public radio.

11:06:38 AM

LISA "RED" ASSELIN, EARLY CHILDHOOD COALITION, HOMER (via teleconference), requested the restoration of partial funding to Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers.

11:06:53 AM

MEGAN MURPHY, HOMER, SELF (via teleconference), testified in favor of early childhood funding, public radio, and primary prevention.

11:07:15 AM

ALISA MOOY, PARENT, HOMER (via teleconference), requested the reinstatement of \$1.5 million in CDVSA prevention funds. Additionally, she asked for the restoration of public radio funding.

11:07:26 AM

JIM STEARNS, PARENT, HOMER (via teleconference), spoke in support of the reinstatement of CDVSA prevention funding. He stated that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

11:07:40 AM

JILL LUSH, SPROUT FAMILY SERVICES, HOMER (via teleconference), asked for full funding for Parents as Teachers and Best Beginnings. She stated that "an investment in early childhood is an investment for life."

11:07:55 AM

RACHEL ROMBERG, PREVENTION AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR, SOUTH PENINSULA HAVEN HOUSE, HOMER (via teleconference), requested the restoration of \$1.5 million in CDVSA prevention funds. She asked for full funding for the early childhood education programs Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers.

[11:08:16 AM](#)

TARA SCHMIDT, SOUTH PENINSULA HAVEN HOUSE, HOMER (via teleconference), requested the restoration of \$1.5 million in CDVSA prevention funds. She urged the reinstatement of funds for public radio and early childhood programs.

[11:08:32 AM](#)

INGRID HARRALD, SOUTH PENINSULA HAVEN HOUSE, HOMER (via teleconference), strongly urged the committee to restore funding to early learning programs including Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers in addition to funds for CDVSA prevention.

CSHB 72(FIN) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

CSHB 73(FIN) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

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ADJOURNMENT

[11:10:14 AM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.