

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 4, 2022
1:37 p.m.

[1:37:23 PM](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Foster called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:37 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative Kelly Merrick, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Ortiz, Vice-Chair
Representative Ben Carpenter via teleconference
Representative DeLena Johnson
Representative Andy Josephson
Representative Bart LeBon
Representative Adam Wool

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Sara Rasmussen
Representative Steve Thompson

ALSO PRESENT

Brodie Anderson, Staff, Representative Neal Foster.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

James Low, Civil Air Patrol, Fairbanks; David Guttenberg, self, Fairbanks; Jeanette Grast, NAMI Fairbanks, Fairbanks; Sherry Mettler, Alaska Assisted Living, Anchorage; Lucy Bauer, Alaska Assisted Living, Anchorage; Erin Terry, AK Assisted Living, Anchorage; Mary Nicholson, Nicholson's Assisted Living, Kenai; Greg Manskie, ACCESS Alaska, Wasilla; Gordon Glaser, Self, Anchorage; Kevin McCoy, Self, Anchorage; Jean Holt, Self, Palmer; Trevor Storrs, President and CEO Alaska Children's Trust, Anchorage; Helen Howarth, City Manager, City of Cordova, Cordova; Daniel Stanton, Administrator and Owner, Anchorage Abode Assisted Living, Anchorage; Selena Hopkins-Kendall, Chair, Best

Beginnings, Anchorage; Denice Gilroy, Arctic Access and Independent Living Network, Nome; Ellen Ganley, Self, Fairbanks; William Edwards, Arctic Access, Nome; Jon Erickson, City Manager, Yakutat; Ronda Burnett, Arctic Access, Nome; Nicky Eiseman, Self, Ester; Lance Johnson, Norton Sound Health, Nome; Kara Moriarty, Alaska Oil and Gas Association, Anchorage; Amber Vaska, Tanana Chiefs Conference and Alaska Regional Coalition, Fairbanks; Tom Chard, Alaska Behavioral Health Association, Fairbanks; Katie Bender, President of Board, University of Alaska Anchorage Alumni Association, Anchorage; Randi Sweet, Self, Seldovia; Crystal Nygard, City of Wasilla, Wasilla; Keisha Simmons, Self, Fairbanks; Bert Houghtaling, Self, Big Lake; Brandy Harty, Self, Fairbanks; Garrison Collette, Self, Fairbanks; Mary David, Kawerik Corporation, Nome; Theresa Reed, self, Fairbanks; Randy Griffin, self, Fairbanks; Dennis Boyer, Self, Wasilla; Timothy Ledna, Fairbanks Reentry Coalition, Fairbanks; Carrie Harris, Self, Anchor Point; Darlene Supplee, Executive Director, Fairbanks Senior Center, Fairbanks; Nicole Zegiestowsky, Self, Anchorage; Benjamin Johnson, President and CEO, Blue Crest Energy, Dallas; Marge Stoneking, AARP Alaska, Anchorage; Eric Gurley, ACCESS Alaska Inc., Anchorage; SK Son, Anchor House, Anchorage; Carl Weisner, Northwest Arctic Borough, Kotzebue; Suzi Pearson, Abused Women's Aid in Crisis, Anchorage; Kaleene Lamb, Self, Fairbanks.

SUMMARY

HB 281 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUNDS

HB 281 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 282 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

HB 282 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: FAIRBANKS, KENAI, MAT-SU, ANCHORAGE, BETHEL, CORDOVA, KOTZEBUE, NOME, UTQIAGVIK

Co-Chair Foster reviewed the agenda for the day.

#hb281

#hb282

HOUSE BILL NO. 281

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government and for certain programs; capitalizing funds; amending appropriations; making reappropriations; making supplemental appropriations; 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. 282

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and capital expenses of the state's integrated comprehensive mental health program; making capital appropriations and supplemental appropriations; and providing for an effective date."

[1:39:31 PM](#)

Co-Chair Merrick MOVED to ADOPT the proposed committee substitute for HB 281(FIN), Work Draft 32-GH2686\N (Marx, 03/03/22).

Co-Chair Foster OBJECTED for discussion. He invited his staff to present the changes reflected in the committee substitute.

[1:39:58 PM](#)

BRODIE ANDERSON, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE NEAL FOSTER, reviewed the handouts in members packets. He looked at the document titled, "All Funds Agency Summaries" (copy on file). He read from a prepared statement:

Before the committee today is a Committee Substitute for House Bill 281 that reflects all of the actions of Subcommittees, and changes made to the Language section compared to the Committee Substitute introduced on January 27th, often referred to as CS 0.5, this committee substitute also includes ARPA Revenue Replacement, and some CSLFRF spending.

For FY23: the House Finance Committee Substitute Reflects a total of \$9,418,028.5 for Agency Operations, which is the more of the "day to day state government" a total budget of \$1,568,014.4 for

Statewide Items, which includes Debt Service, Retirement payments, Special Appropriations, and Fund Capitalizations.

These totals include the following funds

\$3,073,107.4 is federal -

\$871,369.2 in Designated General Funds or DGF

\$1,662,115.7 in other funds- these funds include the authorization of corporate receipts like AIDEA, AHFC, and Aerospace, Interagency receipts known as I/A and airport receipts and more.

And \$6,294,392.4 in Unrestricted General Funds

Compared to Adjusted Base, the unrestricted general funds spend reflects an increase of \$1,270,663.6 from the original FY23 adjusted base or an 25.3 percent increase from Adjusted Base. The largest increase from adjusted base is the addition of the permanent fund and the energy relief check.

[1:48:21 PM](#)

Representative Wool queried how much the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) total was the additional energy money attached to the PFD.

Mr. Anderson agreed to provide that information in revised reports, and noted that it was included in Document 1.

Mr. Anderson reviewed the changes from the CS. He continued to read from a prepared statement:

First off, this committee substitute includes all changes from subcommittee close-outs. However, since close-outs some things have changed in the numbers section so I'll address them here.

Department of Corrections (DOC)

Page 8 Lines 8-10

This carryforward language was moved from language to numbers as it is more appropriately placed in the Numbers section. This carryforward language is intended to fully utilize federal funds in the Anchorage Correctional Complex and even out costs across fiscal years. The Department has expressed no concern with this change.

1:50:23 PM

AT EASE

1:50:50 PM

RECONVENED

Mr. Anderson addressed the Department of Family and Community Services:

Page 14 Lines 23-28

In the Office of Children's Services, funding and intent language associated with the Tribal Child Welfare Compact was transferred from the Front Line Social Workers' allocation to its own allocation to ensure better tracking and reporting for the \$5 million appropriated for the Compact. This was a subcommittee recommendation.

Mr. Anderson referred to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL):

Page 23 Line 31

This change moves open-ended federal authority for unemployment insurance benefits and associated administrative costs from the language section to the numbers section as a \$10 million dollar one-time increment. The Department did not express concern with the \$10 million cap which should be sufficient.

Mr. Anderson referred the University of Alaska:

Page 38 Line 33

The subcommittee added \$3.75 million UGF to the Anchorage Campus allocation for the purpose of expanding the Healthcare worker training program.

The CS swapped the UGF funds to CLSFRF. This was an original request and intention by both the Board of Regents and the Governor.

These are the only differences to the subcommittee actions, excluding Revenue Replacement which I will address later.

Mr. Anderson discussed Supplemental Sections added to the CS:

Section 7 Page 59 Lines 1-5

Is the \$48.5 million for last year's remaining portion of school bond debt. This amount makes the State payment 100 percent of the obligation required for last year. This has a July 1st, 2021 retroactivity date reflected in Section 41 of the CS.

Section 8 Supplemental Commerce Community and Economic Development

Subsection (b) Page 59 lines 11-14

Is the \$7.1 million for last's year remaining payment to eligible recipients for the community assistance program. This has a July 1st, 2021 retroactivity date reflected in Section 41 of the CS.

Section 9 Supplemental Fund Capitalization

Page 59 lines 15 and 16

Is the \$31.8 million to repopulate the community assistance fund up to the full \$90 million, this is a supplemental item in FY22 so the full payments can be made in FY23.

Page 59 lines 17 and 20 Subsection(b)

\$17.1 million is appropriated to the regional educational attendance area or REAA fund, this is the amount to make the fund whole in FY22,

Page 59 lines 21 - 22 Subsection(c)

\$60.0 million is appropriated to pay for oil and gas tax credits, this is the amount to make the full payments for tax credits in FY22, last year the payments were short.

All of this Section has a July 1st, 2021 retroactivity date reflected in Section 41 of the CS.

Representative LeBon asked for the funding source.

Mr. Anderson responded that it was UGF.

Mr. Anderson continued to read from a prepared statement:

Supplemental Fund Transfers

Page 59 lines 23-31 and Page 60 lines 1-8
Subsection(a and b)

This authorization to refill all of the accounts that were swept when the CBR Reserve Sweep vote failed last year including the higher education fund.

Representative Josephson wondered whether Section 10, page 59 was referring to "swept items."

Mr. Anderson replied in the affirmative.

Representative Josephson asked if a CBR vote would be required in the current year.

Mr. Anderson responded in the negative.

Representative Wool asked whether the numbers were included with the expectation that the Spring Forecast would be reconciled with the numbers.

Mr. Anderson replied that the budget used FY 33 surplus, so the funds would be provided for the requests.

Co-Chair Foster redirected the line of questioning.

Representative Josephson pointed to the Worker's Compensation Benefit Fund and wondered whether it would be considered "swept funds."

Mr. Anderson agreed to provide that information.

Representative LeBon asked if the dollars were currently in the CBR.

Mr. Anderson responded that the funds would be repopulated in the CBR.

Representative LeBon asked if they were going to //.

[2:00:26 PM](#)

Mr. Anderson continued to read from a prepared statement:

Supplemental Statutory Budget Reserve Fund
Page 60 lines 9-11

This section takes all remaining surplus general funds not spent in FY22 and deposits them into the SBR. This amount is estimated to be approximately \$340 million. This section has a June 30th 2022 retroactivity date reflected in Section 41 of the CS.

Page 60 Lines 20-31 thru page 62 line 26

Section 14 Alaska Housing Capital Corporation

On the advice of Legislative Legal, the CS reflects the reappropriations made by the Governor in his bill for standing up the two new departments of Family and Community Services and Health with funds from the old Department of Health and Social Services are placed into the Alaska Housing Capital Corporation account as a holding account for the funds since all three department do not exist at the same time. The appropriation made from this account to the new departments is reflected later in the CS.

The other change to this section is the removal of the words "including encumbered amounts", once again on the advisement of Legislative Legal those references were removed because of a constitutional issue and that Legislature Legal feels is resolved through the language of Executive Order.

This section has a June 30th 2022 retroactivity date reflected in Section 41 of the CS.

Alaska Permanent Fund Section 17

Page 64 Lines 22-23 Subsection (c)

This is the deposit of the POMV \$3.3 billion from the Earnings Reserve to the general fund, which the standard practice of the Legislature.

Lines 24-27 subsection (d)

Is the POMV split of 25 percent for the PFD to Alaskans, taking \$840 million dollars for a \$1250 PFD payment per person

[2:03:27 PM](#)

Representative LeBon asked about the effective draw rate on the \$3 billion.

Mr. Anderson replied that did not know.

Mr. Anderson continued:

At this time I would like to also point out the special appropriation

This is related to the disbursement of the PFD, so please turn to:

Page 90 lines 18 thru 22
Section 38 Special Appropriations for Energy Relief
This section authorizes that \$840.1 million of general funds be used to provide a onetime energy relief payment of \$1300 per Alaskan. This onetime payment will utilize the PFD as the mechanism for distribution.

Please turn to Page 68 Lines 3-6
Under Section 20 Department of Education and Early Development
Subsection (d)
This a \$50 million one-time appropriation outside the formula for school districts, this is contingent upon the failure of the passage of a BSA increase legislation.
The contingent language is later on in the CS.

Page 68 lines 7-10
Subsection(e)
After Subcommittee close-outs, further discussions were had with the Department and the CS reflects the inclusion of the requested \$1.6 million for the expansion of WWAMI program by 10 participants but taking into consideration the fact that the funds might be spent in Fiscal Year 23, the reflects this as a multi-year appropriation so they will have two years to implement the expansion.

Page 68 line 11 through Page 73 line 5
Sections 21 and 22 Department of Family and Community Services and Department of Health
Since the CS deposits funds into the Alaska Housing Capital Corporation, these sections reflect the

appropriations going from the AHCC account into the departments.

Not reflected in this CS is the removal of the Department of Law section appropriating \$4 million for Statehood defense, the department had reported that they had only spent \$270 thousand of the \$4 million appropriated for the same purpose last year.

Additional in the Department of Transportation, Alaska Marine Highway appropriation, UGF backstop language to cover uncollected federal receipts was removed. This was included last year because there was uncertainty about the amount of federal funds that were available, this backstop language is unnecessary this year. It is not needed in this year's budget.

Page 75 lines 11-21

University of Alaska Section 28

The three projects listed from the Governor's budget for the drone program, rare earth minerals and Heavy Oil are funded by CSLFRF like the Governor's original request, they were initially changed to UGF in CS 0.5.

Page 80 Lines 24 through Page 81 line 9

Section 31 Federal and Other Program Receipts

Subsections (e) and (f)

This language provides limits on large RPL requests outside of the typical limited scope of the RPL process, in particular, this excludes flexible ARPA CSLFRF funds, and funds made available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, IIJA.

This requires the Governor to come before the Legislature for authorization before those federal funds can be spent.

Page 86 Lines 19-21

Fund Transfer Subsection (m)

This subsection appropriates an estimated \$10.2 million from Large Vessel Gaming and Gambling Tax Account to the general fund because the State will be collecting the tax this year with a cruise season. This is standard practice when we have a cruise ship season returning.

Subsection (n) Page 86 Lines 22-24

This section is the Revenue Replacement of \$300 million dollars

Reference Document 5 ARPA Rev Replace

The committee will notice 1/3 of the revenue replacement is found in Corrections, this is because the Department has large amounts of general funds available for the fund swap without any necessary concern for how it might impact federal match or other requirements on those general funds.

Page 90 Lines 8-12

Section 36 Shared Taxes Subsection (g)

This clarifies the backstop language for prorating the distribution of revenue if there is any lost revenue for the seven port calls.

Page 90 Lines 23 thru 29

Statutory Budget Reserve Fund

Section 39

Subsection(a and b)

This authorizes the SBR to be used for deficit fill and deposits any surplus general funds in FY23 in the account.

Page 91 Lines 10-13

Section 42 Contingency

This section is the contingent language mention above regarding the \$50 million of one-time funding outside the formula if a BSA bill, House Bill 272 or similar bill is not passed.

[2:13:20 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster indicated the initial plan was to take up amendments in the following week and would get pushed back a week. He indicated members would have additional time for questions.

Representative Josephson thought the date was March 10th.

Co-Chair Foster clarified that it had been moved to March 14th.

Co-Chair Foster WITHDREW his OBJECTION.

There being NO further OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

[2:14:59 PM](#)

Co-Chair Merrick MOVED to ADOPT the proposed committee substitute for HB 282(FIN), Work Draft 32-GH2687\I(Marx, 03/02/22).

Co-Chair Foster OBJECTED for discussion.

[2:15:25 PM](#)

BRODIE ANDERSON, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE NEAL FOSTER, relayed there were no other changes except what was reported in the subcommittee close outs.

Co-Chair Foster WITHDREW his OBJECTION.

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY: FAIRBANKS, KENAI, MAT-SU, ANCHORAGE, BETHEL, CORDOVA, KOTZEBUE, NOME, UTQIAGVIK

[2:16:31 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster indicated the committee would be hearing public testimony. He provided the call-in numbers and the email for submitting written testimony. Official testimony of the budget would end at 3:00 P.M. on Saturday.

[2:21:11 PM](#)

JAMES LOW, CIVIL AIR PATROL, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of the Civil Air Patrol. He had been involved in the Civil Air Patrol for many years. The Fairbanks hanger was the largest in the state and the second largest in the US. With technology changes they did not due as many rescues, and shared that the Fairbanks squadrons supported 17 members.

Representative LeBon thanked the testifier and indicated the Civil Air Patrol had broad support from the committee.

[2:24:14 PM](#)

DAVID GUTTENBERG, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), currently sat on the Fairbanks North-Star Borough assembly which had a legislative priority list. He wanted to focus on support Community Assistance. He hoped Alaskans would not get hit locally. He urged members to place as much as possible into revenue sharing.

Representative Wool was keeping Representative Guttenberg's "seat warm."

[2:26:41 PM](#)

JEANETTE GRAST, NAMI FAIRBANKS, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), thanked members for reversing behavioral health treatment and recovery grants, and spoke in support of the 20 percent increase over the governor's request. The pandemic had increased the need for behavioral health services, and stress that mental health treatment was effective if a person could get it.

[2:28:42 PM](#)

SHERRY METTLER, ALASKA ASSISTED LIVING, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the DHSS assisted living program. She highlighted that it had been over 20 years since there had been an increase in the budget. The rate was all-inclusive which meant there would be access to food for three meals plus snacks on a daily basis. She remarked that a large portion of the population had mental illness.

Co-Chair Foster reminded testifiers they could also submit their testimony to the email he provided.

[2:32:58 PM](#)

LUCY BAUER, ALASKA ASSISTED LIVING, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funded for assisted living. She echoed the comments from Ms. Mettler.

[2:34:37 PM](#)

ERIN TERRY, AK ASSISTED LIVING, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), operated a 16-bed assisted living home. She thanked members for their support. She would provide written testimony.

[2:35:24 PM](#)

MARY NICHOLSON, NICHOLSON'S ASSISTED LIVING, KENAI (via teleconference), owned and operated Nicholson's Assisted Living for 24 years. She stressed that there were a limited amount of assisted living facilities on the Kenai. In 2002

when the rate was set minimum wage was \$5.64 per hour. In 2002 gas price was \$1.64 per gallon a 76 percent increase. She commented that with prices going up she would not be able to continue with the current rate.

[2:37:46 PM](#)

GREG MANSKIE, ACCESS ALASKA, WASILLA (via teleconference), spoke in support of the services ACCESS Alaska. They were very helpful to him and he wanted to see additional support head their way.

[2:38:46 PM](#)

GORDON GLASER, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), was the former chair for the Alaska Commission on Aging. He spoke in support of the increase in funding for the Alaska Commission on Aging. The funding would get beneficiaries out of a hospital bed and into a care facility or home. He stressed the need for a competitive salary in the field.

[2:41:06 PM](#)

KEVIN MCCOY, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), practiced law for 44 years. He opposed the governor's proposed supplemental appropriation to fund \$500,000 in settlement costs. He stressed that the state should not be responsible for paying those settlement costs.

[2:45:27 PM](#)

JEAN HOLT, SELF, PALMER (via teleconference), suggested rescheduling public testimony in order for the public to have time to review the changes made in the bill, particularly related to the PFD. She thought the energy relief check was a bribe to buy the public's vote. She stated the testimony the previous day involved special interest groups wanting money. She stated the bloated budget had not gone down.

Co-Chair Foster indicated there would be another opportunity to testify tomorrow on Saturday, March 5, 2022.

[2:48:45 PM](#)

TREVOR STORRS, PRESIDENT AND CEO ALASKA CHILDREN'S TRUST, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), applauded the commitment to

adding frontline social workers, because they help families on the brink. He spoke of the benefits of children's early learning.

Co-Chair Foster encouraged people to submit written testimony of it is longer than 2 minutes.

[2:52:17 PM](#)

HELEN HOWARTH, CITY MANAGER, CITY OF CORDOVA, CORDOVA (via teleconference), supported the states continued support of funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). She also applauded the direction of additional School Debt Bond Reimbursement. She spoke in support of additional state investment of \$2 million for Cordova's construction of a new harbor.

[2:55:32 PM](#)

DANIEL STANTON, ADMINISTRATOR AND OWNER, ANCHORAGE ABODE ASSISTED LIVING, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), was an owner of an assisted living home for mentally ill individuals. He stated that as a five-bed facility, it supplied five beds for people who would otherwise be on the street. The only way the vulnerable people to be house was through support, and stressed that people came to his facility with nothing. He explained the breakdown of costs in his facility.

[2:59:06 PM](#)

SELENA HOPKINS-KENDALL, CHAIR, BEST BEGINNINGS, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for Best Beginnings. Her children benefited from early childhood education. She hoped the funding would remain in the budget. She reiterated the importance of Pre-K education funding. She thanked the committee again for the support for early childhood education.

[3:01:20 PM](#)

DENICE GILROY, ARCTIC ACCESS AND INDEPENDENT LIVING NETWORK, NOME (via teleconference), thanked the members for the increments for assisted living. She worked for an independent living center, which was one of four in the state.

[3:03:24 PM](#)

ELLEN GANLEY, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), called to encourage members to support a 13 percent increase to senior services grants. The services cost an average of \$509 per day. She spoke of support for family care givers. She relayed that she and her sister found themselves having to support their father. She shared that they had enrolled in classes that made a huge impact on their lives. She remarked that they were able to make their father comfortable and safe, very important elements at the time. Otherwise, he would have been in a nursing home. She felt the power of the services and asked for continued support.

Representative LeBon thanked the testifier for calling in.

[3:06:11 PM](#)

WILLIAM EDWARDS, ARCTIC ACCESS, NOME (via teleconference), spoke in support of HB 281. He spoke of experiencing a severe head injury. Denise Gilroy helped him with his situation through Arctic Access. He spoke of all the services provided. He thought many people would not have the benefit of Arctic Access.

[3:08:39 PM](#)

JON ERICKSON, CITY MANAGER, YAKUTAT (via teleconference), spoke in support of the AMHS and community assistance. He also asked for support for the harbor. He urged members to keep the city's harbor project alive. He spoke of the need to extend the city's waterline.

Co-Chair Foster noted he had mentioned the harbor budget and he would see it in the capital budget.

Mr. Erickson wanted to make sure he mentioned it.

[3:11:28 PM](#)

RONDA BURNETT, ARCTIC ACCESS, NOME (via teleconference), testified in support of funding independent living. She remarked that Arctic Access worked closely with the reentry program for those people being released from jail.

[3:12:32 PM](#)

NICKY EISEMAN, SELF, ESTER (via teleconference), was a librarian and 4th grade teacher. She spoke in favor of an increased BSA. She spoke about the funding issues that she and others in the Fairbanks North-Star Borough have faced in recent years. She remarked on the lack of funding increases, and stressed

Representative Wool thanked the testifier for calling in and appreciated her contribution to the Fairbanks News Miner.

[3:16:04 PM](#)

LANCE JOHNSON, NORTON SOUND HEALTH, NOME (via teleconference), thanked members for the increase to behavioral grant funding, and stressed that flat funding was no longer sufficient to fill the needs.

[3:18:31 PM](#)

KARA MORIARTY, ALASKA OIL AND GAS ASSOCIATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), thanked members for including the governor's oil tax credits and the \$60 million in the supplemental budget. She spoke in support of supporting the oil and gas industry.

[3:20:00 PM](#)

AMBER VASKA, TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE AND ALASKA REGIONAL COALITION, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in favor of the subcommittee increments specifically for the increase increment for Medicaid; supported the governor's proposal for full funding of community assistance; also supported public broadcasting; and supported the budget items related to the Village Public Safety Officer Program.

Co-Chair Merrick encourage the testifier to provide written testimony for the remainder of her testimony.

[3:23:00 PM](#)

TOM CHARD, ALASKA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), asked members to reject the governor's cut to behavioral health treatment and recovery, and support a modest increase to the programs. He asked members to look for ways to continue to support behavioral health.

[3:24:15 PM](#)

KATIE BENDER, PRESIDENT OF BOARD, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), expressed support for the University of Alaska's budget. Her company believed in hiring Alaskans, because it was important to look at investing in the state's future.

[3:25:18 PM](#)

RANDI SWEET, SELF, SELDOVIA (via teleconference), spoke in support of the \$912 million to senior community-based grants.

[3:26:38 PM](#)

CRYSTAL NYGARD, CITY OF WASILLA, WASILLA (via teleconference), spoke in support of the GO Bonds, which included the development of the Wasilla Airport and terminal.

Co-Chair Merrick noted that the GO Bonds were not part of the operating budget.

[3:28:00 PM](#)

KEISHA SIMMONS, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the intellectual/developmental disability waiver waitlist. She hoped the legislature would work to get people off the wait list.

[3:29:31 PM](#)

BERT HOUGHTALING, SELF, BIG LAKE (via teleconference), spoke of a "law maker versus a law breaker." He spoke in opposition of an increase to the BSA of \$50 million. He noted the conflicting laws of the POMV and the PFD law. He compared legislators to drunken sailors. He noted gas at the pump had jumped by 50 cents.

Co-Chair Merrick clarified that the BSA increment would only pass if BSA legislation did not pass.

[3:32:22 PM](#)

BRANDY HARTY, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding education. She reviewed all of the benefits of robust schools with proper funding. She had two elementary school-aged children. She was a dual certified teacher. she was aware of the devastating effects of teacher layoffs. She urged members to effectively fund Alaska's schools.

[3:33:56 PM](#)

GARRISON COLLETTE, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), worked in the energy field. He provided a brief background. He asked or an increase in the tax investment. The fossil fuel industry was not being honest, and in Alaska 90 percent of energy was reserved for mining.

[3:35:56 PM](#)

MARY DAVID, KAWERIK CORPORATION, NOME (via teleconference), spoke in support of VPSO funding in the Department of Public Safety (DPS) budget. Her corporation also supported the increment for the BSA, and funding for pre-K education. She also spoke in support of public broadcasting.

[3:37:56 PM](#)

THERESA REED, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), had been in Fairbanks since 1964. She encouraged members to support the BSA increase. She thought that if Alaska's education was not strong, the state would not be strong. She thanked members for their work.

[3:39:31 PM](#)

RANDY GRIFFIN, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of the tax credit payments to oil companies because of the message it sent to investors in the state. He reported sending his check back to the state explaining why he was sending it. He was under the impression that the state had not repaid the CBR. He thought that because it was a constitutional requirement. It be paid before oil prices crash again. He also thought people should consider changing the collective bargaining agreement, as it would save significant funding.

Representative LeBon thanked the testifier for calling in.

[3:42:43 PM](#)

DENNIS BOYER, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), was a retired teacher. He had seen significant changes. He thought the state had a problem with Alaska's education. He supported reinstating a defined benefits package. He had heard feedback from teachers in the Lower 48 that Alaska had the worst benefits package in the system. He thought teachers should be able to contribute to a retirement system. The state needed to do something to attract teachers.

[3:45:04 PM](#)

TIMOTHY LEDNA, FAIRBANKS REENTRY COALITION, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), called to support funding for the behavioral health grants. He asked members to continue to support the budget initiatives he mentioned regarding behavioral and mental health funding.

[3:46:55 PM](#)

CARRIE HARRIS, SELF, ANCHOR POINT (via teleconference), spoke in opposition of the operating budget. She made several reduction recommendations. However, she supported additional funding for DPS and Department of Corrections (DOC). She encouraged members to put AK 47s in the hands of Ukrainians.

[3:48:39 PM](#)

DARLENE SUPPLEE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FAIRBANKS SENIOR CENTER, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), supporting funding services for seniors. She advocated providing safety nets for seniors in the state. She suggested that if Alaska did not provide a net of support in senior services, the cost would be higher down the line in medical service.

Representative LeBon thanked the testifier for all she did for the community of Fairbanks.

[3:50:58 PM](#)

NICOLE ZEGIESTOWSKY, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the University of Alaska budget. After 3 years of flat funding, the university was in great need

of additional funds. The subcommittee's recommendations were a great start.

[3:51:55 PM](#)

BENJAMIN JOHNSON, PRESIDENT AND CEO, BLUE CREST ENERGY, DALLAS (via teleconference), thanked members for the bill for the remaining payments of oil tax credits. He remarked that Alaska had a promising future in oil and gas development.

Representative LeBon thanked the testifier for his testimony.

[3:53:57 PM](#)

MARGE STONEKING, AARP ALASKA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of restoring Public Assistance positions in senior services.

[3:56:25 PM](#)

ERIC GURLEY, ACCESS ALASKA INC., ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for senior based community grants as listed in the operating budget. He asked members to continue support of the measure.

[3:59:01 PM](#)

SK SON, ANCHOR HOUSE, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), supported the proposed increase for behavioral health grants. He spoke of the challenges he has had with providing services.

[4:00:57 PM](#)

CARL WEISNER, NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH, KOTZEBUE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the School Bond Debt Reimbursement funding and BSA funding. He provided details about what projects would be funded. He also appreciated the included VPSO intent language. He thanked members for their work.

[4:01:22 PM](#)

SUZI PEARSON, ABUSED WOMEN'S AID IN CRISIS, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), thanked members for supporting Abused

Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), and pointed out the full funding of the program. She asked for continued support for Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) funding. She shared the where the funding would be directed and personal stories within AWAIC.

[4:01:22 PM](#)

KALEENE LAMB, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of behavioral health grants. She had a disability and appreciated the proposed budget for independent living.

Representative LeBon thanked the testifier for calling in, because she "had ended the public testimony on an uplifting note."

Co-Chair Foster reviewed the agenda for the following meeting. He reminded folks they could also submit written testimony.

HB 281 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 282 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

[4:08:45 PM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.