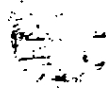


HB

331

<target><bill>HB 331</bill><subject>HB
331</subject><comm>HFIN26</comm></target>



REPRESENTATIVE CATHY MUÑOZ

House Bill 331

Youth Court Funding

For the past twenty years the Alaska Youth Court has emerged as one of Alaska's most effective crime prevention programs. It has provided youth offenders and volunteers a better understanding of our legal system with an emphasis on accountability. Youth Courts strategically operate in Alaska communities from Ketchikan to Nome. It is the only diversion program available in District Court to enable individuals to have their cases dismissed without resulting in a criminal record. For many this brief involvement in the justice system is a turning point.

Funding for this program comprises a mix of state funds, the private sector, municipal grants, and federal funds. To help ensure continuation of Alaska's Youth Court program **HB 331** directs a source of funding from a portion of criminal fines. This bill will require the state to account separately for these fines which currently are spent on the general administration of state government. Consequently it will allow the legislature to appropriate up to 25% of criminal fines to support youth courts.

Each youth court is adapted to fit the needs of the individual community. Youth volunteers participate in various roles while youth offenders receive an alternative sanction from the formal justice system. In 2002 the Urban Institute, a non-partisan, policy research non-profit, studied teen courts in four states. The study compared recidivism outcomes for youth courts with youth handled by our regular juvenile justice systems. The results indicated only 6% of offenders in the Anchorage program were back in court within a six month period compared to 18% by the regular juvenile justice system.

Using criminal fines to pay for crime prevention makes sense for Alaska's future. **HB 331** will provide a means for the legislature to allocate funds annually and support this effective, worthwhile, and cost efficient program.

Contact: Terry Harvey, 465 5392

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



CSHB 331

Explanation of Changes made in (H) JUD Committee

There was one amendment adopted.

The words '**up to**' were added on page 1, sec 3.

"The legislature may appropriate '**up to**' 25% of fines imposed under AS 12.55.035...."

This change allows for the legislature to cap the percentage of fines collected for funding purposes rather than mandate the amount. In turn it will provide more flexibility with budget recommendations from the Juvenile Justice Division to the legislature during the budget process each year. It will allow more flexibility for the legislature during the budget process as well.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
 Bill Version: CSHB 331(JUD)
 (H) Publish Date: 3/1/10

Identifier (file name): HB331-DHSS-YC-2-22-10 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
 Title: Youth Courts and Criminal Fines RDU: Juvenile Justice
 Component: Youth Courts
 Sponsor: Munoz
 Requester: H Judiciary Component Number: 2768

Expenditures/Revenue (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2011	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
OPERATING EXPENDITURE								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual								
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims								
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE								
----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES								
---------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts								
1003 GF Match								
1004 GF								
1005 GF/Program Receipt								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other Interagency Receipt								
TOTAL		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2010) c: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

HB 331 allows the legislature to appropriate 25 percent of the fines imposed under AS 12.55.035, collected and separately accounted for by the state under AS 37.05.142, to the Department of Health and Social Services for distribution to youth courts established under AS 47.12.400. The bill would provide an alternate source of funding for youth courts, which have been supported since FY2006 with a Congressional appropriation that will be exhausted by early FY2011. Youth courts are typically operated as nonprofit organizations or within municipalities. The Division of Juvenile Justice relies upon these courts as a community-based diversion response for low-risk juvenile offenders. In FY09, 13% of all delinquency referrals made to the division were referred to youth courts and other community-based diversion panels.

The division is submitting a zero fiscal note because no new authorization is necessarily invoked by passage of this bill.
 (Continued on page 2)

Prepared by: Stephen F. McComb
 Division: Juvenile Justice

Phone: (907) 261-4335
 Date/Time: 2/11/10 4:24 PM

Approved by: Alison Elgee, Assistant Commissioner
DHSS Finance & Management Services

Date: 2/22/2010

FISCAL NOTE #1

STATE OF ALASKA
2010 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSHB 331(JUD)

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

Should the Legislature decide to appropriate the full balance authorized through this legislation, an additional appropriation will be necessary.



- Case Law
- Statutes, Rules & Regulations
- Constitutions
- Miscellaneous
- Search

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Alaska Statutes.

Title 12. Code of Criminal Procedure
Chapter 55. Sentencing and Probation
Section 35. Fines.

previous: [Section 30.](#) Discharge of Indigents Imprisoned For Nonpayment of Fine. [Repealed, Sec. 16 Ch 53 SLA 1973].
next: [Section 36.](#) Day Fines.

AS 12.55.035. Fines.

- (a) Except as provided in AS [12.55.036](#) , upon conviction of an offense, a defendant may be sentenced to pay a fine as authorized in this section or as otherwise authorized by law.
- (b) Except as provided in AS [12.55.036](#) , upon conviction of an offense, a defendant who is not an organization may be sentenced to pay, unless otherwise specified in the provision of law defining the offense, a fine of no more than

(1) \$500,000 for murder in the first or second degree, attempted murder in the first degree, murder of an unborn child, sexual assault in the first degree, sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree, kidnapping, promoting prostitution in the first degree under AS [11.66.110](#) (a)(2), or misconduct involving a controlled substance in the first degree;

(2) \$250,000 for a class A felony;

(3) \$100,000 for a class B felony;

(4) \$50,000 for a class C felony;

(5) \$10,000 for a class A misdemeanor;

(6) \$2,000 for a class B misdemeanor;

(7) \$500 for a violation.

- (c) Except as provided in AS [12.55.036](#) , upon conviction of an offense, a defendant that is an organization may be sentenced to pay a fine not exceeding the greater of

(1) an amount that is

(A) \$1,000,000 for a felony offense or for a misdemeanor offense that results in death;

(B) \$200,000 for a class A misdemeanor offense that does not result in death;

(C) \$25,000 for a class B misdemeanor offense that does not result in death;

(D) \$10,000 for a violation;

(2) three times the pecuniary gain realized by the defendant as a result of the offense; or

(3) three times the pecuniary damage or loss caused by the defendant to another, or to the property of another, as a result of the offense.

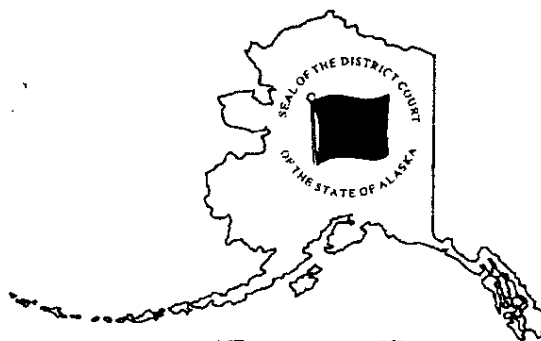
- (d) If a defendant is sentenced to pay a fine, the court may grant permission for the payment to be made within a specified period of time or in specified installments.
- (e) In imposing a fine under (c) of this section, in addition to any other relevant factors, the court shall consider
- (1) measures taken by the organization to discipline an officer, director, employee, or agent of the organization;
 - (2) measures taken by the organization to prevent a recurrence of the offense;
 - (3) the organization's obligation to make restitution to a victim of the offense, and the extent to which imposition of a fine will impair the ability of the organization to make restitution; and
 - (4) the extent to which the organization will pass on to consumers the expense of the fine.
- (f) In imposing a fine, the court may not reduce the fine by the amount of a surcharge or otherwise consider the applicability of a surcharge to the offense.

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Note to HTML Version:

This version of the Alaska Statutes is current through December, 2007. The Alaska Statutes were automatically converted to HTML from a plain text format. Every effort has been made to ensure their accuracy, but this can not be guaranteed. *If it is critical that the precise terms of the Alaska Statutes be known, it is recommended that more formal sources be consulted.* For statutes adopted after the effective date of these statutes, see, Alaska State Legislature If any errors are found, please e-mail Touch N' Go systems at E-mail. We hope you find this information useful.

This page has been updated: 01/05/2009 15:54:16



District Court

State of Alaska

FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

KEITH B. LEVY
Judge

P.O. BOX 114100
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-4100

(907) 463-4730
FAX (907) 463-3788

Juneau Youth Court/JDHS
10014 Crazy Horse Drive
Juneau, AK 99801
Attn: Beth Leban-Cordinator

Tuesday, January 26, 2010

Dear Beth:

I am writing to express my appreciation for the work done by the Juneau Youth Court. The Youth Court is an integral sentencing option for students under the age of 18 who are charged with consuming or possessing alcohol for the first time.

As you know, students who choose the Youth Court option are given the opportunity to have their District Court case dismissed if they successfully complete the Youth Court requirements. For some, this brief involvement in the criminal justice system is a turning point. Those who choose Youth Court and succeed are far less likely to return to District Court on other criminal charges. The students benefit because they end up with no conviction on their record. And the community benefits because the Youth Court graduates are contributing to the community rather than causing harm to themselves and others.

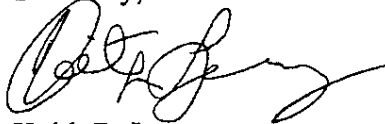
The Youth Court is the only diversion program available in District Court to enable individuals to have their cases dismissed without resulting in a criminal record. The trust the program has earned from both the District Court and the prosecution is a testament to the value and integrity of the program.

I appreciate that you or another representative of the Youth Court always attends the arraignment hearings for minor consuming. The information you provide to the students about Youth Court is invaluable and helps them understand their options in the justice system.

Finally, the Youth Court program provides an opportunity for students to be judged by their peers. I believe this is valuable because the students in the program have far more information about the defendants than is provided to me in formal sentencing proceedings. The Youth Court is able to impose consequences that are more meaningful than the limited options I have when sentencing.

Thanks again for the important service the Youth Court provides to the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith B. Levy", written in a cursive style.

Keith B. Levy



KETCHIKAN DISTRICT COURT

TO: WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

FROM: KEVIN G. MILLER, JUDGE

SUBJECT: KETCHIKAN YOUTH COURT

DATE: 2/11/2010

CC:

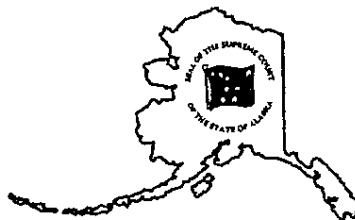
Thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter supporting the Ketchikan Youth Court's efforts in Ketchikan.

I am a District Court Judge and have referred many cases to the Youth Court since its inception. The majority of the cases referred relate to minors consuming alcohol or tobacco.

Alcohol related crime and crimes committed by persons that are alcohol dependant make up the majority of criminal cases that come before the District Court in Ketchikan. Thus a coordinated approach between the Court System, treatment monitors and providers is the only practical response to assure public safety, rehabilitation and meaningful consequences for offenders.

The Ketchikan Youth Court is a vital tool in a coordinated approach to youth offenders. I am impressed with the dedication of the Youth Court members as well as the results. Youth that complete the Youth Court Program are much less likely to reoffend than those youth offenders that do not enter or complete the program.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this support letter, if you need any further information, please let me know.



Mary P. Treiber
MAGISTRATE

Alaska Court System

415 Main Street
Ketchikan, AK 99901
(907) 225-3195; FAX (907) 225-7849

February 5, 2010

Margaret McCloy
Executive Director
Ketchikan Youth Court
2417 Tongass Avenue, Suite 215
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Dear Ms. McCloy:

As the Magistrate for the Ketchikan Trial Courts, I am the judicial officer who most frequently deals with school age teenagers charged by the State of Alaska and the City of Ketchikan with violations of laws or ordinances prohibiting possession or consumption of alcohol by minors, establishing curfews, and prohibiting possession or use of tobacco products by minors. The existence of and the programs offered by the Ketchikan Youth Court provide me with a meaningful sentencing alternative in dealing with these cases.

The KYC process teaches teens referred by the court to KYC about the court process itself, and provides a group of same-age and same-interests teens for these youthful defendants to work with. The resolution of cases through KYC requires engagement of both the defendant and that teen's parents, ultimately strengthening the family abilities to deal with problems a defendant is having as expressed through these quasi-criminal charges. The Court System sees fewer recidivists among those teens who are referred to and who successfully complete the KYC program.

KYC has added the Prime for Life alcohol information classes, and has agreed to make the class available to teens other than those actively participating in the full KYC program. This is a good program, and adds significantly to the resources available within Ketchikan.

I fully support Ketchikan Youth Court.

Sincerely,

Mary P. Treiber
Magistrate

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

SEAN PARNELL, Governor

Kodiak District Probation
204 Mission Road, Room 131
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
(907) 486-4788

February 16, 2010

Kodiak Teen Court
Darlene Turner, Program Manager
610 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, AK 99615

Letter in support of the Kodiak Teen Court,

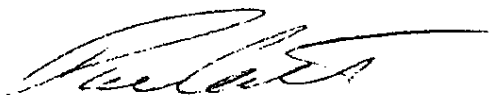
I am writing to express my strong support for the Kodiak Teen Court and its ongoing efforts to enhance the court's sustainability.

As we all know, juveniles are highly influenced by their peers. The Kodiak Teen Court takes advantage of this by having juveniles stand in judgment by their peers. Kodiak students make up the membership of the court and act as both attorneys and judges. In doing so, they learn valuable lessons about the legal process while have an opportunity to help their community. In addition, low-level, first-time offenders are given opportunity to have their case diverted from the juvenile justice system. This is a win-win situation.

Over the years, my office has referred a number of cases to the Kodiak Teen Court. The feedback I have received from the juveniles and their parents has been very positive. Few of these juveniles ever return to the system. This has allowed me to focus my attention on those juveniles who pose a more serious risk to the community.

I look forward to continuing the relationship between my office and the Kodiak Teen Court and strongly support your efforts to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Respectfully,



Paul Caldentey
Juvenile Probation Officer II

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Sarah Palin, GOVERNOR

*2252 Hospital Drive
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801
PHONE 907-586-9433
FAX 907-463-4933*

April 4, 2009

To whom it may concern:

The Juneau Youth Court is a pertinent and vital resource used by the Juneau Probation Office. The referral's that we send the youth court help free up time for Probation Officer's to deal with more serious and needy client's that frequent our large caseloads. The youth court also serves as the entry level in the continuum of services offered by probation and in many cases, helps divert juvenile's from committing further criminal acts. Client's that are non-compliant with the youth court process are showing probation that they need a more restrictive intervention and in that respect, the youth court acts as a litmus test. Please continue funding for this important piece of the juvenile justice system as it both important and necessary.

Sincerely,
Joe Adelmeyer



Chief Probation Officer, Southeast Alaska
Tel. 523-6828

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

DIVISION OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

3132 Channel Drive, Room 200
P.O. Box 112500
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-2500
PHONE: (907) 465-4070
TTY/TDD: (907) 465-3652
FAX: (907) 465-6984

April 7, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

The Alaska Highway Safety Office supports the Juneau Youth Court as an alternative to the juvenile justice system and an opportunity for young people who are accused of breaking the law to be judged by their peers. The court consists of students who fill various roles from judge to juror to address juvenile crime in their community. Nationally, Youth Courts have found that sentences imposed by teen peers have a tremendous impact and effectively defer them from becoming repeat offenders.

The Alaska Highway Safety Office mission is to enhance the health and well being of Alaska's people through programs aimed at saving lives and preventing injuries on Alaska's highways. Federal funding is administered to data driven projects which focus on public outreach, education, enforcement, promotion of new safety technology, and the integration of public health strategies.

Priorities of the Alaska Highway Safety Office include impaired driving and teen driving. A recent study compared Alaska's 1995-1999 minor consuming cases with 1995-2006 DUI court cases and found that 24.4 percent of youth with minor consuming arrests go on to have DUI offenses before their 31st birthday. Although teens represent approximately 12 percent of Alaska's motor vehicle drivers, they are responsible for over 20 percent of the traffic fatalities and major injuries in Alaska. Nearly half of these deaths can usually be prevented by simply buckling-up or not drinking and driving. The Alaska Highway Safety Office supports the Juneau Youth Court because it is a data-driven, peer-led program that effectively addresses minor consuming.

Sincerely,



Cindy Cashen
Administrator



City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

February 18, 2010

Alaska Senate
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Re: Legislation in Support of Alaska Youth Court Programs
(i.e., HB 331; SB 257)

Dear Legislators:

This letter is in support of legislation for the financing of Alaska Youth Courts. Currently, HB 331 and SB 257 address this issue, authorizing 25% of fines imposed under AS 12.55.035 to be used for establishing and operations of Youth Courts. There has also been discussion of including in the budget for the Department of Health and Social Services operational monies for Youth Court.

I have witnessed the success of Alaska Youth Courts over the years, serving as a legal advisor or providing pro bono legal service while working for the Municipal Attorney's Offices in Sitka and Anchorage, and serving as outside municipal counsel for various municipalities while in private practice. Youth Courts provide a justice system in which youth offenders are prosecuted, defended, and judged by their peers for certain misdemeanors, violations, and school disciplinary matters, which can range from marijuana use/possession, curfew, theft, vandalism, truancy to violating school behavioral rules. Sentences are imposed, which can include community work service, fines, essays and/or apology letters, drug and alcohol treatment, other treatment programs (shoplifting, anger management, cigarette cessation). More importantly, Youth Courts provide an holistic approach to sentencing, working not only with the offender, but with the family, teachers, school, police, and/or treatment programs.

Currently as Municipal Attorney for the City and Borough of Sitka, I prosecute certain crimes and violations. I prefer diversion programs for youths, such as Sitka Youth Court and the Sitka Tribal Youth Diversion Effort (TYDE – for first time offenders involving alcohol consumption and/or possession). The success of such programs is not only measured in financial savings to the judicial and legal systems, but also in the low recidivist rate of those who complete such programs. These types of programs divert youths from entering and reentering the criminal justice system, involving cost savings to the court system (judges and clerks), prosecutors, public defense, and police. These types

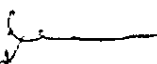
Providing for today...preparing for tomorrow

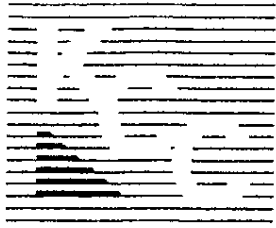
of programs have proven low recidivist rates in comparison to the recidivist rates of those youths entering the revolving door that often occurs when prosecuted through the judicial system. The success rate of Youth Courts statewide is impressive, with estimated recidivist rate as low as approximately 10% reported by programs such as Anchorage Youth Court.

Additionally, Youth Courts throughout Alaska educate all youths, not just offenders, about the legal and criminal justice systems. Youths are trained and actively participate in legal proceedings. They learn about the criminal laws and infractions, and the consequences of violating such provisions, not only on the offender, but on the family, classmates, school, and community of which they are a part. Youth Court members provide a reality check on youthful offenders, and are often not as forgiving or compromising about offenders as adults, knowledgeable of the enticements and excuses, but recognizing appropriate choices. Youth Court members provide an invaluable community service, while being shaped into formidable citizens for which we can all be proud.

Your support of legislation financing existing or new Youth Court programs throughout Alaska is requested and needed. Thank you for your consideration of these types of legislative proposals.

Sincerely,


Theresa Hillhouse
Municipal Attorney
City and Borough of Sitka



**KODIAK
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**

100 E. Marine Way, Suite 300, Kodiak Alaska 99615 • (907) 486-5557 • FAX: (907) 486-7605
www.kodiak.org • E-mail: chamber@kodiak.org

February 11, 2010

Representative Cathy Munoz
State Capitol Building
Room 434
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Munoz,

The Kodiak Chamber of Commerce fully supports HB 331 "An Act relating to funding for youth courts; and relating to accounting for criminal fines"

The United Youth Courts of Alaska provide an extremely important function in the communities they serve. Their handling of approximately 900 cases per year reduces recidivism and crime rates in our State. In addition, savings to the State of Alaska is estimated at \$10,145 per defendant. Youth courts in Alaska generate over \$100,000 worth of Community Work Service product annually, at no cost to the communities or the State.

The juvenile population of our State is expected to increase by 27% by 2015. With this dramatic increase in the juvenile population, juvenile crimes will likely also increase, and thus the sustainability of youth courts is even more critical.

Thank you for the support of House Bill 331.

Sincerely,

Debora King
Executive Director

Dedicated to Kodiak's Economic Future



City of Kodiak
KODIAK POLICE DEPARTMENT
Office of the Chief of Police



February 12, 2010

Representative Cathy Munoz
Regional Affairs, Co-Chair
State Capitol, Room 409
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Youth Court Program

Dear Representative Munoz:

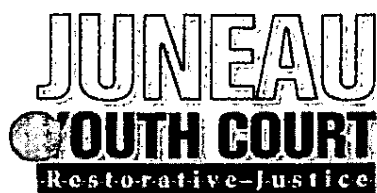
Our department supports legislative funding by money obtained from court fees to support the twelve Youth Court programs in the state of Alaska. These programs offer an option for youth who have had their first experience breaking the law – by having their cases removed from the traditional juvenile justice system by referral from juvenile probation officers and district court judges and diverted to a court of their peers.

The mission of the youth court programs in Alaska is to work in partnership with Alaskan communities and the formal juvenile justice system to develop and sustain innovative youth courts programs. Services offered by the programs in which youth are sentenced by their peers for minor delinquent status offenses and other problem behaviors frees state employees in the court system and the Juvenile Justice division.

The funding of the Youth Court program will serve the needs of Alaska citizens, state agencies, and law enforcement. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Charles "TC" Kamai
Chief of Police



Juneau Douglas High School
10014 Crazy Horse Drive
Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: 523-1594
Fax: 523-1616

JuneauYouthCourt@jst.k12.ak.us

February 12, 2010

The Juneau Youth Court Community Advisory Board supports House Bill 331 and Senate Bill 257, *"an Act relating to funding for youth courts; and relating to accounting for criminal fines"*. This legislation would appropriate 25 percent of the court fines imposed under AS 12.55.035 to established and operating youth courts. Federal funding will not be available after this year and the future of the Alaska Youth courts depend upon state and local ownership.

A recent study shows Alaska Youth Courts to be among the most effective in the nation. According to the Urban Institute's Evaluation of Teen Courts Project, which was based on four teen court programs studied in four different states (Alaska, Maryland, Arizona, and Missouri), the six-month recidivism figures among the programs ranged from 6 percent to 9 percent. Alaska's recidivism rate was the lowest of these four states, and compared to the recidivism rate of 18 percent for the regular juvenile justice system, shows that youth who go through youth courts are significantly less inclined to re-offend within the following year.

The primary function of youth court programs is to determine a fair and restorative sentence for young offenders. Youth courts are programs in which youth sentence their peers for minor delinquent and status offenses and other problem behaviors. According to the National Youth Court Database, in 1994 there were only 78 youth court programs in operation; as of October, 2006, there were over 1127 youth court programs in operation in 49 states and the District of Columbia.

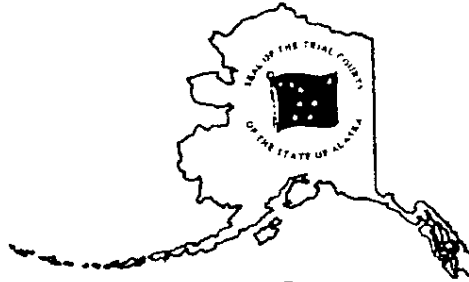
The Alaska Youth Courts is a vital form of community justice and reweaves the fabric of community by forging a partnership between local governmental entities, the private sector, and community groups to facilitate the performance by private citizens of the functions that were once performed by the extended family, neighborhood, and school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy L. Cashen".

Cindy L. Cashen

President
Juneau Youth Court Community Advisory Board



Trial Courts

State of Alaska

Box 869
Wrangell, Alaska. 99929

To Whom It May Concern:

Date: January 8, 2010

Re: Wrangell Youth Court

The purpose of this letter is to express the continued support of the Wrangell Trial Courts for the Wrangell Youth Court program.

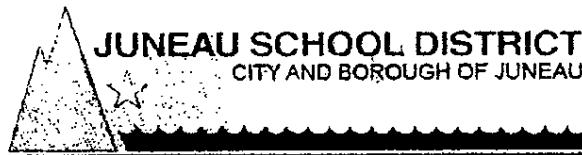
Since its inception ten years ago, the Wrangell Youth Court has been widely accepted and respected in the local community. Having youthful offenders appear before a group of their peers has had a very positive effect in this community. Most individuals appearing before the Youth Court successfully complete their requirements and never return to the court.

The youth court provides the added bonus of "hands on" knowledge of the justice system and public service opportunities for its members. They graduate with solid ethical standards and a commitment to public service and the administration of justice.

Although the success of a program is frequently measured by the number of cases or clients handled, that is not really an adequate standard in looking at a youth court program, particularly in a small town. If this court never heard another case, it would be a successful program based on the dedication and commitment of its members.

Thank you for your continued support of the Wrangell Youth Court program. We are looking forward to continuing to work with this program for the next ten years.

Chris Ellis
Magistrate



Office of the Assistant Superintendent • 10014 Crazy Horse Drive • Juneau, Alaska 99801 • (907) 523-1704

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of legislation that would provide sustainable funding for youth court programs in Juneau and other communities in Alaska. For over a decade Juneau Youth Court has provided a vital and important service to the City and Borough of Juneau.

Juneau Youth Court is a diversion program that removes young people who are first time offenders from the traditional juvenile justice system and handles the case in a court of peers. The program works with families to ensure that teens are held accountable for their actions and that consequences are constructive and tailored to the individual youth thereby benefiting both the young person and the community at large. Last year Juneau Youth Court ordered over 600 hours of community work service that were completed at Zach Gordon Youth Center, the American Red Cross, Meals on Wheels, the Glory Hole, the Salvation Army, and at schools throughout Juneau School District.

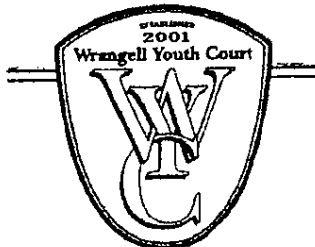
On average Juneau Youth Court serves 50 youth each year handling referrals from both District Court and Juvenile Justice Probation Officers. This frees up the court and probation officers to handle more serious offenders and helps to reduce their large caseloads. Youth Courts have the additional advantage of educating the youth who volunteer for the program. Youth Court advocates reap the benefits of learning about the legal system, performing meaningful community service, and gaining the opportunity to help their peers.

Juneau Youth Court operates on a very small budget of \$35,000 per year with one part time paid staff person, two dozen volunteer student advocates, a community advisory board including representatives from the Police Department, the Division of Juvenile Justice, the legal community, and community partners. The program offers an important service to the community at a very low cost.

Juneau Youth Court is just one example of a successful diversion program known as youth court. Around the state Youth Courts are doing important work for Alaska by addressing juvenile crime in its earliest stage. I strongly urge you to support legislation that would provide sustainable funding to support these community-based programs.

Sincerely,

Laury Scandling



January 7, 2010

To whom it may Concern:

Wrangell Youth court is an innovative alternate traditional justice system and is empowered by the Alaska Statute 47.12.400 to make a positive difference in Alaskan communities.

Youth Court programs are rapidly advancing in goals of Restorative Justice, by developing programs that are not only cost effective but promote youth accountability by involving youth in obligations of taking an active role in their community. Youth are encouraged to connect in our community and in our State, where youth partner together, encourage and share information that enable youth with critical decisions making skills.

The purpose of the program is to decrease juvenile crime and the recidivism amongst juvenile offenders as well as to involve students in implementing restorative justice. Youth Court members learn valuable experiences in assuming the role and responsibility of a judge, prosecute or defend first-time juvenile offenders in a court of their peers.

The Wrangell Youth Court program eases the caseload of the district and superior courts, juvenile probation offices and schools district. We have found that this program is cost effective when you compare to the cost of one incarceration of a juvenile offender. Cost can be greater than \$40,000 for a first time offense. If Wrangell Youth Court prevents one student from attending a youth detention facility it has paid for the entire year of the Wrangell Youth Court program.

In the year of 2000 the community of Wrangell, Alaska had a high juvenile crime rate and an even higher rate of minors consuming alcohol. In fact our community was 30% higher than another community similar in size and location. Since Wrangell Youth Court was established in 2001 the crime rate and rate of minors consuming alcohol has decreased greatly.

This program is a community base form of restorative justice that builds ties between youth, victims and other members of the community, offering youth the option to learn from their mistakes. Youth volunteers that participate, explore a variety of short and long term consequences of substance abuse, including cost to the individual and the community and its relation to other types of crime.

The Wrangell Youth Court has been nothing less than a success and has provided our youth with the opportunity to be involved and vision other career paths that they may had never seen. The training provided in the areas of legal and court procedures have offered a better opportunity to understand our Constitution and Bill of Rights and to actively give them a voice and feel valued, while at the same time engaging and bringing about social change.

Wrangell Youth Court not only mentors peers, has developed a positive relationship with the community, schools, business and other local communities.

Sincerely,

Dorthea Rooney
Wrangell Youth Court Coordinator

February 9, 2010

Wendy Leach
North Star Youth Court
800 Cushman St., Suite 101
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Dear Wendy,

I am writing to compliment you and the rest of the North Star Youth Court on the great job you are doing with Minor Consuming and Minor Operating After Consuming cases that are referred to the Youth Court by our court. It is important for our society to have a variety of options for the administration of criminal justice in order to promote rehabilitation and public safety, and to decrease recidivism. Youth courts are one such option. As you know, our referrals to your court are good for both the offender and for the public. I have seen that the confidentiality of your program is a real benefit to young offenders. Similarly, the public benefits in many ways, including through a reduced financial cost to the court system and law enforcement, through the Youth Court's focus on service to our community, and through the high rate of successful rehabilitation for offenders who complete the youth court program. It is my experience that offenders who are referred to your court are unlikely to return to ours.

Thank you very much for the work done by the young people and the adults of the North Star Youth Court. I would be happy to continue to work with the Youth Court to provide training for your judges, so please let me know when there is a Youth Court Judge who would like to shadow a Magistrate in the Fairbanks District Court or when you would like me to speak at a Youth Court Judge's training session.

Cordially,



Bethany Harbison
Magistrate



Larry Dickerson
Chief of Police

WASILLA
POLICE
DEPARTMENT
City of Wasilla

1800 E. Parks Hwy.
Wasilla, AK 99654

907-352-5401
Fax: 907-357-7877
www.cityofwasilla.com



Vernon Rupright
Mayor

February 9, 2010

Bill Stolze,
State Representative
600 E. Railroad Av
Wasilla, AK 99654

Dear Mr. Stoltze,

I would like to express my support of HB331 and SB257 which would provide continued funding of State wide Youth Court Programs.

I fully support youth courts as statewide diversion programs that address first time juvenile offenses. These programs operate in twelve communities around the state. My current experience with youth courts is with the Mat-Su Youth Court (MSYC) program, which falls under the umbrella of the Wasilla Police Department and is funded wholly through grants. The Wasilla Police Department supports the MSYC with in-kind donations by providing office space and some supplies.

It is my firm belief that without MSYC operating in the Mat-Su Valley the police department would continue to see increased juvenile crime. Young offenders who do not suffer consequences as first time offenders will continue to commit crimes according to recent statistics.

Wasilla Police officers know that when they complete a report on a juvenile first time offender who has committed a low-level offense, that juvenile will not simply be given a letter from the State or a verbal warning from a Juvenile Probation Officer. Virtually every first time offense that is referred to the Division of Juvenile Justice office in the Mat-Su Valley gets referred to MSYC. MSYC takes action to insure the juvenile offender is made aware of what he/she did, who it affected in the community, and what to do to avoid repeating their conduct.

I support these bills to allow youth courts around the state to work on sustainability of their programs and to insure that they continue to address juvenile crime in the State of Alaska.

Greg Wood
Deputy Chief of Police

Hi, my name is Fred Becker V, I am the loss prevention manager for the Abbott Road Fred Meyers in Anchorage, and a active board member for the Anchorage Youth Court.

I have worked in the Loss Prevention Profession for over 26 years in the Anchorage Area. I became concerned with the consequences the youth were receiving very early on in my career as I was apprehending the same individuals over and over again. After discussing with those that I did apprehend a second and third time what had happen to them after the first and second time I found that many had not had any contact with anyone in the judicial system. Most stated they received a letter from McLaughlin Youth Center advising them to stay out of trouble, and some said then did not hear from anyone.

Since the inception of the Youth Court in Anchorage I rarely apprehend a juvenile a second time. I strongly believe that Anchorage Youth Court has provided the consequences necessary to deter individuals from re-offending, and prevented many young adults from having a adult criminal recorded. Because without the Anchorage Youth Court most juveniles would continue with their criminal behavior into their young adult life.

I believe in the successes of AYC as a highly-effective juvenile alternative justice program and that we do transform the lives of over 600 anchorage youths per year. The 300 plus youth volunteers are trained and receive extraordinary experiences in real live judicial matters. The 300-350 juvenile offenders referred to Anchorage Youth Court each year are given an opportunity to make amends to the community and are held personally accountable for their actions. This is why I am honored to be a AYC board member.

As a member of the retail industry I am happy to be part of a program that is also a benefit to our ability to continue to employ

about 300 employees per location with a total of about 3,300 employees in the state of Alaska. The Youth Courts around the state provided a restitution program that did not exist and by providing a deterrent program for juvenile offenders results in less individuals using the five finger discount at our locations. My board membership has also resulted in the financial backing of Fred Meyers to help support our community.

As a board member I feel that some times we are not afforded the opportunity to address some issues because we spend a lot of our productive time finding ways to raise funds to support the financial requirements of AYC. With a stable source of funding I feel the board could focus more of our efforts on making Anchorage Youth Court as beneficial to the community, members, and offenders as possible.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to discuss further my personnel or business involvement with AYC to you.

Fred Becker V
Fred Meyers Loss Prevention Manager
907-365-2026
Emai: fred.becker@stores.fredmeyer.com

Darlene Turner

February 15, 2010

Kodiak Teen Court
610 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, Ak. 99615

Dear Darlene:

I am writing to you today to express my heartfelt thanks and continued support for Kodiak Teen Court. Since the program started in 1995, it has enjoyed tremendous success in our community, giving hundreds of youthful offenders over the years an opportunity to have their cases taken out of the traditional juvenile court system and instead dealt with in a more informal, less intimidating and more meaningful atmosphere, as the teen defendants are literally tried by their own peers serving as teen prosecutors, represented by their own peers as teen defense attorneys and sentenced by their own peers serving as teen judges. Besides being dealt with in a courtroom where everyone else is their same age (who they can relate to more than adult judges and attorneys), the teen defendants are given an opportunity to come out of Teen Court with a clean record if they comply with the sentence given them by the teen judges. It is no wonder, then, that the rate of re-offending in youth courts in Kodiak and in other parts of the State is significantly lower than with those teens who stay in regular juvenile court. Additional benefits to our community include an emphasis on restorative justice, making the victim feel "whole" again, and the imposition of a meaningful amount of community work service that many non-profits organizations in Kodiak find very helpful. Finally, I have been told by all the juvenile probation officers throughout the last 15 years, past and present, that they appreciate Teen Court because it allows them to divert less troublesome teens from the regular juvenile justice system into Teen Court, thus giving them more time to devote to the more serious teen offenders on their heavy caseload that *really* need their help in the formal, structured setting of the traditional juvenile court system.

The Kodiak Teen Court is an asset to our community in another, very big way. As the program celebrates its 15th year in existence this year, I have had the distinct pleasure over these years to work with hundreds of fine outstanding teens at Kodiak High and in our middle schools who have served as teen judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys. These students are given a unique perspective on how our justice system works, they are tremendous ambassadors of the program and great role models to teens who have gotten themselves into trouble and come into the program. Many of these former Teen Court judges and attorneys have kept in contact with me, and are already doing well in their chosen field, whether it's teaching in graduate school at Notre Dame, working as a detective in Portland, serving as a soldier in Iraq or attending good law schools and medical schools across the United States, many of whom intend to someday return to Alaska and work.

Again, I thank you for the wonderful program!

Sincerely yours,

STEVE COLE
Superior Court Judge, Kodiak

PO Box 1841
Nome, AK 99762
February 15, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support of the Youth Court program in Alaska. I moved to Nome, Alaska from South Royalton, Vermont to work as a clerk and deputy magistrate at the Superior and District Court and had no idea I would also be involved with the Youth Court program. When I found out that I was to serve as Youth Court Legal Advisor I was ecstatic. Youth Court excited me because, as a former social studies teacher, I saw a program that raises students' knowledge of the law, legal process and their civic rights and duties and excites a new generation of responsible, active and thoughtful citizens.

Youth Court gives students many unique opportunities and learning experiences. Just the personal responsibility required by participants makes this program invaluable. Students between the ages of twelve and eighteen literally participate in the court process representing clients and handing down legally binding sentences. In doing so they acquire many social skills and thinking strategies. Students learn empathy and professionalism when dealing with clients. They learn public speaking and writing. They learn how to separate facts from belief and emotion, how to see all sides of an issue, and how to logically and carefully present these issues. Through zealous representation of clients students grow as citizens, people and community members.

Perhaps the most important part of Youth Court is the clients themselves. Youth Court is a diversionary program targeting at risk youth, who, if thrown into the court system at such an early age, hazard becoming the repeat offenders I often see at my job. Youth Court gives these young men and women a second chance. Anybody who has worked with teenagers knows how much weight is placed on the opinion of their peers. In the Youth Court process, defendants are tried and sentenced by their peers, not a mysterious adult. This reinforces lessons learned and allows defendants to feel that they have been fairly judged.

Most importantly, Youth Court is not about punishing these young offenders. Sentences are not handed out in retribution. Instead, sentencing is designed to show the defendant the error of their ways, to intervene and work with the defendant's specific personality so they may see the connection between their actions and the effects of those actions, and finally to benefit the community. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The Youth Court program is many ounces of prevention.

The Alaska Youth Court program is one of the best and most innovative programs in the entire United States. Creating future active, intelligent, informed and free-thinking citizens cannot be measured by dollars or statistics. It would be a shame to see such a program falter for lack of funding. I fully support keeping this wonderful program alive and active.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Davis, Esq.

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Patty Burley
PO Box 2715
Bethel AK 99559-2715
(907) 543-3098

January 6, 2010

Dear Representative Cathy Munoz:

I am writing to you to request your support in ensuring that Youth Courts remain a part of Alaska's legal system. They are invaluable and give so much more than initially may be seen.

Here in Bethel we have a very small youth court still struggling to get squarely off the ground. We have graduated only a handful of youth but I can tell you first-hand the impact such a small project has had on the youth in this area.

While to date we have only graduated a few students, each of those has at one point or another been enrolled at the Bethel Alternative Boarding School (BABS). Each of those youngsters has a unique learning style that makes it difficult for them to fit in or do well in mainstream schools. One of the youngsters was actually a drop-out. Despite those hurdles these teenagers came week after week to the 2 hour-long classes. They studied hard and took both a written final exam and an oral exam. These teenagers who fight so hard just to finish or stay in school actually excelled. They worked incredibly hard and it showed. Each of those teens gained confidence and a sense of accomplishment. A few were on the road to trouble with the law. They were bored, felt they had nothing to offer, and nowhere to go. Youth court changed that for them. It gave them a sense of purpose, a moral compass and a sense of belonging. These individuals will go further than they would have if youth court had not become a part of their lives.

Today I note that there appears to be a strong correlation between underage drinking and crime(s). There is also a strong correlation between underage drinking and trouble at school. Right now we do the best we can for these students via the Community Diversion Panel (CDP). While that is an amazing program that has provided a considerable amount to the community, it is only catching the tip of the iceberg. For many kids, by the time they come to the CDP their problems with alcohol have spiraled out of control. For others, alcohol comes much later in the process - they instead start with truancy and behavior problems at the school. These are the early cries for help. An active youth court would be able to intercede early enough to stem the upcoming tide. It would give minors an opportunity to start anew with the help and support of those whose input they seek the most: their peers.

There are some wonderful youth courts in other areas of Alaska which are at jeopardy as well: Anchorage, Kenai, and Fairbanks just to name a few. These programs have been around a while longer than Bethel's and have made even bigger impacts on the lives of minors. They have also reached out to lend support to those smaller youth courts still working to get established and on more solid ground. These programs are too valuable to lose.

February 5, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to emphasize the importance of the Mat-Su Youth Court to the welfare of the Mat-Su community and to express my support for that organization.

In my almost 20 years on the bench, mostly as a magistrate and superior court master, recently as a district court judge, I have presided over literally thousands of cases involving teenagers. As the Mat-Su Valley population grew, the ability of the juvenile probation office (JPO) to handle all the cases involving teenagers was greatly diminished. Rightfully so, the JPO has to concentrate on the more serious crimes, such as burglaries and felony level assaults, that were committed by teenagers. As a result, many teens who committed lower level crimes, particularly shoplifting, either merely got a warning letter or their crimes were ignored all together.

Participation in lower level crimes leads to a disrespect of the law, of other people's rights in their person and their property, costs local storekeepers significant amounts of money, and often leads to greater criminal behavior if left undressed. Into this gap stepped the Mat-Su Youth Court. Many crimes that would not have been addressed because of the caseload of JPO are being handled by the Youth Court. The imposition of sanctions including restitution, community work service and letters accepting responsibility and apologizing for committing the crime all serve both the victim and the community as well as the defendant, who is more likely to grow to be a responsible citizen from the experience.

Over the years the Mat-Su Youth Court has added a program for first time offenders under the age of 18 convicted of Minor Consuming Alcohol. Not only is the program educational, but being run by a peer group, it sets the example that being clean and sober is an acceptable lifestyle that is respected by one's peers. Given that not only locally but nationally roughly 80% of adult crimes are somehow related to alcohol abuse, getting the message to an offender earlier in life may keep them from becoming part of that statistic as they grow older.

I wholeheartedly support and recommend the Mat-Su Youth Court program and urge others to do so, also.

Sincerely,

David L. Zwink
District Court Judge, Palmer, Alaska

February 5, 2010

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I wholeheartedly support and recommend the Mat-Su Youth Court program and urge others to do so, also.

Sincerely,

David L. Zwink
District Court Judge, Palmer, Alaska



United Youth Courts of Alaska Fact Summary

Youth Courts in Alaska...

1. Handle an average of **1,000** cases per year.
2. Produce an average **reoffense rate of 10.6%**, compared to 23% under the regular court system.
3. **Save** the State of Alaska an estimated **\$10,686 per defendant**.
4. **Generate \$98,930** worth of Community Work Service work product every single year – at no cost to our communities or the State.
5. **Reduce crime rates by 11.1%** overall.
6. Offer a wide range of **classes and mediation services** to offenders.
7. Provide real-world career and criminal justice **training to 2,300 Alaskan youth** volunteers each year.

Did you know?

8. Alaska has already entrusted youth courts with the most comprehensive legislation in the nation (AS 47.12.400, AS 4.16.050).
9. There are 12 youth courts in Alaska: Anchorage, Bethel, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mat-Su, Nome, North Star/Fairbanks, Sitka, Valdez, and Wrangell.
10. Nationally, there are 1200 youth courts in 49 states and Washington, D.C.



United Youth Courts of Alaska Fact Detail

1. 1,000 Cases Per Year

Based on FY2007-2009 statistics, 12 youth courts in Alaska hear over 1,000 criminal cases each year, around 65% referred by Juvenile Probation and 35% by District Court. Additionally, other agencies such as schools send referrals to youth court, but they have not been tracked before FY10. While programs throughout the state differ slightly, all of the youth courts in Alaska hear first time or non-habitual juvenile offenders for misdemeanors, violations, and infractions per State and Municipal laws.

2. 10.6% Reoffense Rate

Based on the national Urban Institute study titled "The Impact of Teen Court on Young Offenders" by Jeffrey A. Butts, Janeen Buck, and Mark B. Coggeshall, the short-term (6 month) reoffense rate for juvenile offenders in the traditional court system is 23%.

For the 65% of cases referred by DJJ, youth courts in our state have an average reoffense rate of 10.6%, meaning that **89.4% of juvenile offenders served by youth court do not commit further crimes within six months.** Some youth courts track reoffense for District Court and other agency referrals as well, but there is no statewide average for this.

Additionally, youth courts in Alaska have a lower reoffense rate compared to those in other states, which may be due to our unique court structure that allows teens to be judged—literally—by their peers, not by adults. According to the study done by the Urban Institute, there are seven principles that make youth court effective:

1. "Peer justice,
2. Procedural justice,
3. Deterrence,
4. Labeling
5. Restorative justice and repentance,

6. Law-related education, and
7. Skill building.”

3. Savings Per Defendant

In the report, “Criminal Justice Economics” by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission, October 2009, Teen Courts were identified as an “effective program.” Youth Courts **save the state \$11,683 per defendant** based on the cost of crime on victims and taxpayers. The average **cost of teen courts per defendant was \$997, for a net benefit/savings of \$10,686 per offender.**

4. Volunteer Work Product

Statewide, youth courts sentence Community Work Service as part of sanctions to repair the harm for the crime that has been committed. The type of work done for CWS might be cleaning up litter and debris on roadways or public parks, helping at soup kitchens, repairing damages caused by the crime, working at animal shelters, or helping elders in nursing homes. Based on statistics from the Division of Juvenile Justice, juvenile offenders successfully completed 19,786 hours of CWS in FY2009. The State of Alaska values CWS at \$5.00 per hour, which means that the value of **CWS completed through youth court last year was \$98,930 at no cost to our communities or the State.**

The work products of other sanctions are not taken into consideration for these figures, but are also valuable contributions to the health of the community. Examples of other sanctions include: restitution to victims, essays, behavior modification classes, apology letters, alcohol or drug classes and counseling, and mediation programs (see “6. Classes and Mediation Services”).

5. Reducing Crime Rates

In 2006, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy completed an exhaustive study of many adult and juvenile prevention and intervention programs. In the report, youth courts were identified as an effective program. Citing five evidence-based studies, the Institute found that **youth courts reduce crime rates by 11.1%**. This reduction in crime rates contributes to overall taxpayer savings (see “3. Savings Per Defendant”).

Youth courts have been proven to reduce crime and reduce reoffense, and they do it by linking the crime to swift, efficient consequences and offering “a continuum of community-based services” to address the issues underlying the crime (DJJ Annual Report, FY2004).

By providing diversion services for District and Superior Court Judges as well as Juvenile Probation Officers, youth courts allow these officials to focus on the more serious offenses or repeat offenders. Because of this and other reasons, judges, clerks, attorneys and Juvenile Probation staff across the state show their support for youth court by instructing classes, volunteering time, serving on Boards of Directors, and offering legal advice on cases.

While youth court programs benefit the juvenile justice system and juvenile offenders, it is important to note youth courts contribute to the social and economic well-being of our communities.

6. Classes and Mediation Services

The 3 main principles of **Restorative Justice** are **Accountability, Community Protection, and Competency Development**—principles which have long been used in the field of juvenile justice to address the root causes of juvenile crime. Across the state, youth courts offer evidence-based and creative ways for offenders to educate themselves and end the cycle of crime. The following youth courts directly provide these classes and mediation services; other youth courts utilize a network of community-based services.

- North Star Youth Court, located in Fairbanks, offers a comprehensive and year-round **Mediation Program**; the three types of mediation offered are victim-offender, parent-teen, and peer-to-peer. Mediation is based on the philosophy of Restorative Justice, the purposes of which are to put key decisions into the hands of those most affected by crime, to reduce the likelihood of further offenses and to provide closure for all parties and a strengthened community. North Star Youth Court also offers an **Alcohol Awareness Class**, as well as a **Parent Information Class on MCAs**.
- Mat-Su Youth Court offers a **Juvenile Anti-Shoplifting class** as part of sanctions for offenses involving theft and concealment of merchandise. MSYC also provides a peer-led **Minor Consuming/Risk Factors class** for youth defendants charged with alcohol and drug crimes. The class covers risk factors youth face every day that influence their future behavior.
- Ketchikan Youth Court provides a certified **PRIME for Life® alcohol and drug prevention/intervention class** for offenses involving alcohol or controlled substances. KYC

also offers a **Money Education Class** for offenses involving theft, concealment of merchandise, or destruction of property; the goal is to provide an overview of community economics and discuss how each person's actions (spending, saving, stealing, etc.) affect other people financially.

- Anchorage Youth Court utilizes a variety of classes to address different issues within their client community. AYC classes include: **Anti-Theft Class, Thinking Patterns, Victim Impact, Drug & Alcohol Assessment and Follow-up, Fire Stoppers, and Weapon Safety.**
- Sitka Youth Court offers classes on **Victim Impact** and **Anti-Theft.**
- Nome Youth Court, in partnership with the court system, offers a certified **PRIME for Life®** alcohol and drug prevention/intervention class.

7. Training 2,300 Alaskan Youth Annually

Youth volunteers who are directly involved in the youth court process receive a minimum of 10 hours of legal training before they can begin working on cases. Throughout the time they volunteer for youth court, volunteers are required to attend workshops, CLEs (continuing legal education), and other trainings to enhance their skills. Most youth courts have a Bar Association that helps to facilitate these trainings and enforce court policies.

Some courts also require juvenile offenders to take these trainings, so that they can better understand the process of justice and perhaps become a part of youth court. Those individuals who start out as offenders are often the most effective and compassionate judges, jurors, and attorneys.

8. Youth Court Legislation in Alaska

Alaska was identified in another recent national study as the one state with the most comprehensive Youth Court legislation, in that our statute **AS 47.12.400** specifically entrusts Youth Courts with adjudicatory as well as dispositional authority. (See "The Organization and Operation of Teen Courts in the United States, A Comparative Analysis of Legislation", Michele Heward, JD, Juvenile and Family Court Journal, Winter 2002.) The legislature has also entrusted Youth Courts with the authority to handle first time minor consuming alcohol violations under **AS 4.16.050.**

In 2003 and again in 2005, youth courts from around the state mobilized to introduce a bill into the state legislature. The Alaska State Legislature considered **HB 303**, a bill to secure sustainable funding for youth courts for the first time: "An Act relating to youth courts and to the recommended use of criminal fines to fund the activities of

youth courts; and relating to accounting for criminal fines." HB 303 passed through the House Judiciary Committee, and every member of that committee added their name as co-sponsors. HB 303 made it to the House Finance Committee, but the session ended before it could be heard. During the 24th Legislative Session, **HB 155, the second "Youth Court Bill"**, was approved through several committees and passed the Alaska House of Representatives in March 2005. The Senate version of that bill was handed over to the Finance Committee but never came up for a hearing.

9. Youth Courts in Alaska

There are 12 community-based youth courts in Alaska: **Anchorage, Bethel, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mat-Su, Nome, North Star/Fairbanks, Sitka, Valdez, and Wrangell**. Many of these courts have been in operation over 10 years; Anchorage has the longest-standing youth court in the state, having been incorporated in 1989.

Communities throughout Alaska who hear about the benefits of youth court continually express interest in beginning their own, and it is a goal of UYCA to facilitate emerging youth courts through mentoring and providing technical assistance.

United Youth Courts of Alaska is a statewide organization which seeks to work in partnership with Alaskan communities and the formal juvenile justice system to develop and sustain innovative youth courts. All of the above named courts are members of UYCA, and use it as a platform to network and support each other's programs through conferences and technical assistance. For more information on UYCA and its members, visit www.alaskayouthcourt.org.

10. Youth Courts in the United States

There is only one state, Connecticut, that does not have youth courts due to their juvenile justice system. In 2006 more than 120,000 youths volunteered to hear more than 130,000 cases, and more than 20,000 adults volunteered to facilitate peer justice in youth court programs.

The National Association of Youth Courts (NAYC) was started with support from four federal agencies: Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Education and the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the National Highway & Traffic Safety Administration. This effort was started in

2003 when OJJDP recognized the huge movement of youth court programs springing up all over the country due to studies showing their effectiveness.

NAYC became a 501(c)3 association in 2007. Some current objectives are:

- Encourage the development and expansion of youth courts and state associations of youth courts;
- Provide a forum for training youth and adult volunteers, sharing ideas, and providing 'best practices' and other critical resources for the operation of youth courts;
- Enhance connections to and relations with government agencies and community-based programs or organizations; and
- Educate public and private agencies, businesses and individuals on the benefits of youth courts.

Many youth courts choose to have membership in NAYC to stay abreast of national program trends and to attend conferences. Mat-Su Youth Court Co-Director Lisa Albert-Konecky is Alaska's representative on the NAYC Board of Trustees. Visit www.youthcourt.net for more information.

For more information, please contact us:

Lisa Albert-Konecky, Mat-Su Youth Court Co-Director & UYCA President – lkonecky@ci.wasilla.ak.us / 352-5445

Darlene Turner, Kodiak Teen Court Director & UYCA Vice President – darlene@asmilingbear.com / 481-6390

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Kerri Fox, Bethel Youth Court Director & UYCA Board – bethelyouthcourt@gmail.com / 543-0622

Tracy Hillhouse-Price, Sitka Youth Court Director & UYCA Board – sitkayouthcourt@gmail.com / 747-3687

Wendy Leach, North Star Youth Court Director & UYCA Board – nsyc@mosquitonet.com / 457-6792

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Sharon Leon, Anchorage Youth Court Director & UYCA Board – sleon@anchorageyouthcourt.org / 274-5986

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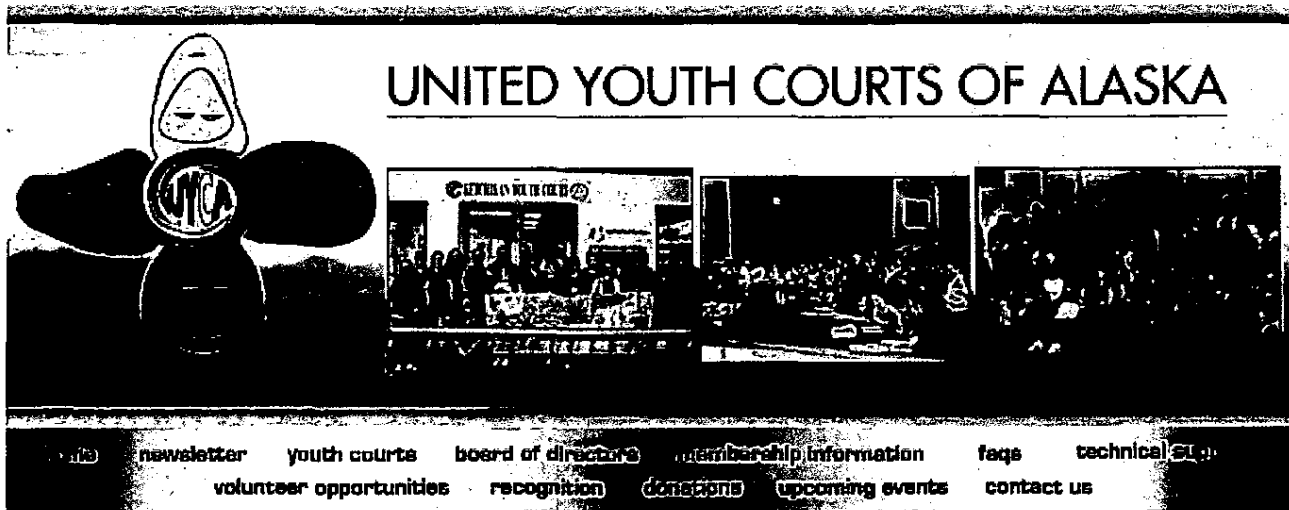
From: Rhonda McLeod [rmcleod@courts.state.ak.us]
Sent: Monday, March 01, 2010 2:55 PM
To: Terry Harvey
Subject: HB331 Youth courts

Per your request, I am confirming that the Alaska Court System collected the following for fines and forfeitures for the past two fiscal years:

FY09 \$5,678,900
FY08 \$5,684,000

These totals include bail forfeitures, which may or may not be applied as a fine. The court system's collections are fairly consistent from year-to-year so a good ballpark estimate excluding the forfeitures would be \$5.3 million. Please let me know if you require any additional information.

Rhonda McLeod
Alaska Court System



FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why do we need youth courts? Click [here](#) for the answer
 2. What are youth courts? Click [here](#) for the answer
 3. Why do we need a state association? Click [here](#) for the answer
 4. How many youth courts are there? Click [here](#) for the answer
- [Email](#) us with any additional questions you have.

1. Why do we need youth courts? It is impossible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), to respond fully to all delinquent acts committed by juveniles. Instead, incidents are prioritized and division resources are devoted to the most serious cases. Low-priority cases, such as first time shoplifting, may result either in no personal contact (a warning letter) or a referral for outside services. Youth who commit these offenses are left with the impression that their criminal actions are deemed acceptable, if there has been no consequence for the crime they committed. Studies indicate, however, that early intervention in lower-priority cases can be very effective in preventing more serious problems from developing in the future. There is an urgent need for communities to complement DJJ's services by providing responses to lower-priority cases. The community suffers each time a crime is committed. Youth courts are a method for the community to respond to delinquency. This voluntary alternative to the juvenile justice system is a form of early intervention designed to foster a sense of well being in the community. [Back to the top](#)

2. What are youth courts? Youth courts are innovative alternatives to the juvenile justice system. Youth volunteers participate in various roles (attorney, judge, bailiff, juror) while youth offenders are offered an alternative sanction from the formal juvenile justice system. Youth courts are implemented in response to the need or concerns of each community. Although the model may vary in style, substance and procedure, the recurring themes among youth court programs are:

Accountability

Youth courts ensure an offender is held accountable for their behavior, requiring them to make amends for the damage they have caused to the community. Offenders are called by peers, family, friends, school staff and/or other caring adults to answer for their crimes.

Significant Peer Influence

Youth volunteers send the message that they don't condone law-breaking behaviors. Positive peer influence!

Competency Skills

Youth court programs teach competency and leadership skills: listening, problem solving, communication, cooperation and conflict resolution. Youth courts also provide real-world career and criminal justice skills to youth volunteers who participate in the court process. Youth courts provide youth offenders and volunteers with a better understanding of the legal system, and also promote more positive attitudes towards law enforcement.

Empowering and Involving

Youth courts allow youth to assume leadership roles and address the issues of crime in their communities.

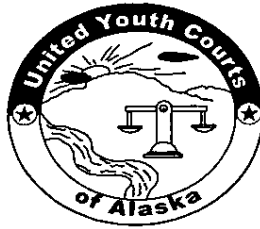
[Back to the top](#)

3. Why do we need a state association? United Youth Courts of Alaska was incorporated in 1998 as a non profit corporation based on the fundamental principal that youth courts need to have the operational flexibility to accommodate the diverse communities throughout Alaska. While engaging the community in partnership with the juvenile justice system, UYCA works with Alaskan communities to increase awareness of youth court programs and to reduce juvenile crime in Alaska. The association provides education and training materials to established and emergent youth courts throughout Alaska. Youth court members will receive technical assistance and training. UYCA reduces the need to 'reinvent the wheel' by networking to create a united voice for Alaskan youth courts. [Back to the top](#)

4. How many youth courts are there? There are currently 12 established and emerging youth courts in Alaska, and others that are developing their programs! Nationally, there are around 1,200 youth courts in 49 states and the District of Columbia. [Back to the top](#)

You can join the mailing list to receive updates about UYCA. Just fill in your name and email in the form below. Don't worry, this won't be shared with anyone.

[learn more](#)



**United Youth Courts of Alaska
Youth Court Directory**

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