

PRESS RELEASE

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YOUTH COURT FUNDING DESERVES YOUR SUPPORT
Governor's FY 06 Budget Is Being Crafted Now

(KODIAK) – Representative Dan Ogg (R-Kodiak) has written a letter to Governor Frank Murkowski urging him to add \$200,000 to the Youth Court line item under the Department of Health and Social Services for his FY 06 budget proposal to the 24th Alaska State Legislature.

“I urge every citizen in Alaska to write or call the governor and express your support for an increase in funding for Youth Courts,” said Ogg.

Rep. Ogg gave the following example to the governor to press home his point. The McLaughlin Youth Center costs \$40,000 per patient per year. If the Youth Courts prevent just seven teenagers from going there each year, it would equal the entire current Youth Court budget. “Studies have demonstrated that Youth Courts provide a meaningful response to the problem of juvenile crime. Participants in these courts have a significantly lower recidivism rate than those who are processed in the standard juvenile system. The program has the additional benefit of exposing many Alaskan students to the judiciary process at an early age,” said Ogg.

Rep. Ogg had introduced House Bill 303 during his tenure to properly fund and raise awareness about the Youth Courts in Alaska. They have been consistently losing federal monies over the last several years. In lieu of moving forward with this bill, he was able to work with the House Finance Committee to add an increment of \$200,000 to the House operating budget. Although there was broad support on the House side, the conference committee took the Senate version that did not include the extra money for Youth Courts.

By law, the governor has to present the next fiscal years' budget to the legislature by December 15th of each calendar year proceeding each new session.

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