

GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND REHABILITATION
OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Juneau, Alaska
April 10, 2007

18 PUBLIC TESTIMONY

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20 MS. BISBEE: We'll go around the table
21 and introduce ourselves so that you know who we are.
22 And then as I call your name, if you would come up to
23 grab one of these chairs and use the microphone, we
24 would be glad to hear from you. Hello, Mr. Don
25 Brandon, welcome. Sue Ellen, would you like to start?

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1 MS. O'CONNOR: I'm Sue Ellen O'Connor
2 and I'm a counselor in our Wasilla DVR office.

3 MS. SIMPSON: I'm Becky Simpson, I

4 represent a community rehab provider in Anchorage, and
5 I'm also the vice-chair of the committee.

6 MS. DIEBELS-PARAMORE: I'm Liza
7 Diebels-Paramore, and I'm a community rehab provider
8 here in Juneau.

9 MS. TOOYAK: My name is Pinky, I
10 represent the employer. I'm a Tribal Voc Rehab
11 supervisor and I'm in northwest Alaska in Kotzebue
12 area.

13 MR. BOYNTON: My name is Ron Boynton and
14 I also represent the employer.

15 MS. SINNOTT: I'm Gale Sinnott, I'm the
16 director of Division of Voc Rehab.

17 MR. EVANS: I'm Mayfield Evans from
18 Anchorage, Alaska, and I'm an employer.

19 MS. STRATTON: I'm Pam Stratton, I'm in
20 Anchorage, and I'm the director of the Client
21 Assistance Program for the state.

22 MS. BISBEE: I'm Jackie Bisbee, and I'm
23 from Fairbanks, and I'm a Tribal Voc Rehab
24 representative on the committee.

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MR. BURTON: I'm Jim Burton, I'm from

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1 Fairbanks, and I'm a DVR recipient.

2 MS. BISBEE: Okay, Bryan Johnson.

3 BRIAN JOHNSON: Hello. My name is Brian

4 Johnson, and I recently arrived here and I feel kind

5 of awkward. I'm just trying my best, so I want to

6 just keep, you know, continue.

7 So I tried to look for -- I had to look

8 for a job, and I put down things I volunteered for,

9 just, you know, what it means, the information, there

10 is so much information, services and technology. So I

11 have a CD, a CD for JST, and I volunteered and I gave

12 that CD with my resume, and the boss looked it over

13 and put it in and I have a video on there that I did.

14 So then I -- it already was set up, I

15 had my resume there, gave them the information about

16 how I could maybe work there and explained the things

17 about the job, so looked over it and it seemed like it
18 could help. So I was impressed.

19 Some people are laid off, and I was kind
20 of stuck, you know, up until now, almost two years.

21 I'm trying to hope and continue to look for a job.

22 Also, you know -- well, really that's all have. Thank
23 you for your help.

24 MS. BISBEE: Lucinda George.

25 LUCINDA GEORGE: I wish I had a partner

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1 here. Good afternoon, my name is Lucinda George, I'm
2 originally from Angoon. I've had to relocate to
3 Juneau because I have many problems, health problems,
4 and one of them is osteoporosis. I've had both legs
5 broken, I believe because of my allergies, I have a
6 hard time hearing because of alcoholism.

7 I have problems socially, and I've

8 always been a loner all my life. I come from a very
9 big family, and basically I don't believe I learned
10 anything in school because I hated boarding school.
11 And I had a younger brother that wanted to help me,
12 the very youngest brother, talked me into going to the
13 University of Hawaii, and that's where I went. And I
14 have to admit I never knew I had so many problems.

15 I sat in class with a big bandage on my
16 ear because I had to have operations. I had no idea I
17 had -- that I was bipolar, too. I had just recently
18 found that out, and what can I say?

19 I mean, I'm 57 years old, and if it
20 weren't for DVR I don't know what I'd be doing. I
21 really don't believe that I would be here. I had just
22 recently accepted a job at the Mendenhall Glacier, but
23 that's a seasonal job. I'm very happy to work, I'm
24 happiest when I'm working, but I would really, really
25 enjoy the idea of having a permanent job where I could

1 finally have my independence and my freedom to make
2 choices for myself. I've been sober for many months
3 now, and what a different world, what a different
4 world.

5 I spent the last week going to church.
6 I belong to the orthodox church, and it was great to
7 be a participant singing in the choir, making Easter
8 bread and everything like that, and I wouldn't be this
9 productive person if it weren't for DVR.

10 My only complaint is this. I am, in my
11 decision to be sober, I had enrolled into the Yale
12 study program, and they are studying the Alaska
13 Natives here, and I met some wonderful, wonderful
14 doctors, Dr. Brobin, Dr. Levinston, and they had bent
15 over backwards for me, and helping me find myself, I
16 guess. The drugs have become my silver bullet, so to
17 speak. It works for me. I can't speak for anybody
18 else, but I know that they will use this study for the
19 rest of my family, and I am so excited.

20 I'm so excited, I feel like I'm a child,

21 and just now beginning to grow, and I need to thank
22 the state's DVR as well as the employment center, as
23 well as public assistance. I think it's just great
24 the way it's set up, and I need to thank them for
25 helping me. I have to pay for my own drugs, and I was

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1 just on my way to Ron's. Scott has given me -- the
2 pharmacist has given me credit, trust that I could go
3 and buy my medication from there, and I'm really
4 excited that SeaAlaska has made a distribution, so I
5 want to run there and pay them off and give them some
6 Easter bread, that's how happy I am. That's all I
7 have to say.

8 MS. BISBEE: Thank you.

9 LUCINDA GEORGE: Thank you for
10 listening, and thanks DVR.

11 MS. BISBEE: Michael Traux on the phone.

12 MICHAEL TRAUX: Okay, I'm here.

13 MS. ELSTAD: We have Michael on the line
14 that would like to testify.

15 MICHAEL TRAUX: Well, I'm a stroke
16 victim, and I've had a couple of mini strokes that
17 affected my eyesight, and I have been out of work
18 since 1999. And I decided to go to the Department of
19 Vocational Rehab and see what they could do to help me
20 get back into being employed. And I still have not
21 gotten a solid permanent job as yet, but I'd like to
22 express my admiration for the people at DVR, they are
23 some of the finest and most professional people that I
24 have come across since I moved to Alaska. They have
25 always been exactly on time when I needed them, and in

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1 continuing to do job searches to get me back into a
2 regular life. I'm sick and tired of collecting
3 disability and doing nothing.

4 The lady who spoke just a moment ago
5 from Angoon, I'd like to tell you that I was an
6 alcoholic for over 20 years, and I gave it up, I
7 walked away from it ten years ago, and I have not
8 indulged in one drop of alcohol. So I guess what I
9 can say to you is that I know all about what the fight
10 is all about to get away from alcohol and you can do
11 it. I've done it.

12 I don't know what I would have done to
13 continue on living the life with a disability of doing
14 no work, just wasting day after day, and DVR has
15 provided an excellent outlet for me to do job search
16 and to get out and to talk to people and see what the
17 labor market is in the state of Alaska.

18 What else can I say? But the only
19 problem I guess I've found so far is just Haines is a
20 very, very small town, and unfortunately a lot of
21 businesses fold, small businesses, and I don't know
22 how much longer Haines is going to be sustainable. So
23 I need to get out and into a larger environment and
24 work. And what I would like very much to do is work
25 in a food service industry for people, I find it

1 satisfying to work with the older people. I don't
2 know who I'm calling older person, I'm almost 60 years
3 old myself. But in any event, DVR has been just
4 unbelievably helpful for me with the job search and
5 getting to where I need to be and so on.

6 I guess the next thing I'm going to have
7 to do, because if I can find work in Juneau or in
8 Anchorage or Fairbanks is the next thing I'm going to
9 do, is the hurdle I have to get over is housing.

10 I guess that's about all I have to say.
11 The lady from Angoon, Angoon, she talked alcoholics
12 and alcoholism. Probably the thought of alcoholism is
13 far more troubled than the actual act of getting away
14 from it, that's what I know about it. So I guess
15 that's about it for me.

16 MS. ELSTAD: Thank you, Michael, for

17 taking the time to testify today.

18 MICHAEL TRAUX: Okay. Shall I hang up
19 the phone now?

20 MS. ELSTAD: That will be just fine,
21 thanks.

22 MICHAEL TRAUX: Great, bye-bye.

23 MS. BISBEE: We need the mic back over
24 here. Gerald Sandy Roberts.

25 GERALD SANDY ROBERTS: I put the Sandy

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1 because a lot of people know me as Sandy.

2 My name is Gerald A. Sandy Roberts. I
3 reside here in Juneau. I found out about this
4 happening just today, and I wanted to come down here.
5 It's important to me to let you and the Governor know
6 that DVR is very special to the people in Alaska. The
7 reason I say that personally, I'm a disabled Vietnam
8 veteran. I moved here to Alaska in 1976. I moved to

9 Juneau four years ago. I've been a client of DVR for
10 three years now, and in that three year time frame
11 they have done more for me than my government has,
12 federal government, in helping me with my physical and
13 mental ailments, and impediments.

14 I wouldn't have glasses today if it
15 wasn't for DVR. I've gone to the VA, I've gone to the
16 VA, I've gone to the VA, in fact I go the 27th again.
17 Finally they are going to do something after 36 years
18 as being a veteran, 36 years the VA has finally heard
19 my voice, whereas DVR heard my voice as soon as I
20 became a client of DVR.

21 They have treated me with more respect
22 and dignity than I've received at any VA place. I
23 have an aversion to government agencies and
24 organizations, to this day I do. But not to DVR. And
25 they basically have helped me over the hurdle.

1 I spent a lot of time in the brush in
2 Alaska staying away from everyone, and when I decided
3 to come out of the brush and seek gainful employment,
4 I'm so happy that there is an agency there to assist
5 me, and I just want to encourage you, if you have the
6 Governor's ear, don't cut funding, if anything
7 increase the funding to help folks like myself and
8 those that are testifying here today, it's very
9 important. So thank you very much for your time, and
10 have a good day.

11 MS. BISBEE: Thank you, Sandy. Scott
12 Feldman.

13 SCOTT FELDMAN: My name is Scott
14 Feldman, I live here in Juneau, I'm a retired veteran.
15 I did 27 years of service between the Army and the
16 Coast Guard. I retired with a 50 percent disability,
17 various reasons, and I spent the first year-and-a-half
18 after I retired trying to get assistance from the VA,
19 their vocational rehabilitation program also.

20 I stumbled upon DVR. I wasn't aware of
21 the program, but I was in the Job Center and was

22 guided to them. Within a week I was getting
23 assistance from them. I still am getting assistance
24 from them, it's been a year-and-a-half now. I'm not
25 seeking gainful employment because I'm trying to self

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1 employ. So far I am self-employed, me and my wife
2 started a small business here in Juneau about a
3 year-and-a-half ago. We're trying to expand -- I'm
4 trying to expand my capabilities to be able to make
5 the business a full time business for both of us.
6 Right now she's employed gainfully and she can't quit
7 her day job yet.

8 I would like to say that DVR, and
9 backing up what Sandy said, is amazingly efficient and
10 they do treat you very, very well. I struggle with
11 the federal government. I'm still struggling with the
12 VA trying to get assistance from them, and it sounds

13 like it's going to be a few more years before I do get
14 assistance, knowing from Sandy. But I really would
15 like to say and to promote DVR to the Governor, that
16 it is a very viable program within the state of Alaska
17 for people like myself and other people with
18 disabilities. They listen to you, they try to find
19 out what you need, they try to create programs within
20 their guidelines to help you be a better citizen in
21 this environment and in this state. That's about it.

22 MS. BISBEE: Thank you very much. Karla
23 on the telephone.

24 MS. ELSTAD: Sure. Karla, we'll be
25 taking you next as soon as we get the microphone.

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1 MS. JUTZI: How is the sound? I wanted
2 to start by thanking the Governor's Committee for
3 putting the Center for the Blind and Visually
4 Impaired, the project, our rural projects on your

5 legislative priority list.

6 MS. ELSTAD: Karla, could you speak up
7 just a little bit, we can barely hear you.

8 MS. JUTZI: Maybe I should start by
9 introducing myself. I'm Karla Jutzi, I'm the director
10 of the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually
11 Impaired, and I wanted to start by talking with you
12 today about the special projects in the DVR budget
13 that the center is seeking in order to provide
14 outreach and community-based training to people in
15 rural Alaska who have visual disabilities. Are you
16 able to hear me, Velja?

17 MS. ELSTAD: Yeah.

18 MS. JUTZI: Okay. First I'd like to
19 thank the committee for making this project one of
20 your legislative priorities, I think that's wonderful.
21 You may already have the information. The project is
22 currently included in the senate version of the
23 budget, of course we have a long way to go before
24 final passage, but we're very hopeful that it's in the
25 senate version of the budget. And when you go to the

1 legislature tomorrow, the senators most responsible
2 for that are Senator Thomas, French, and Davis, and it
3 would be wonderful if you could thank them.

4 I don't know if any committee members
5 were able to go over to the senate finance committee
6 today and testify, but this week several of us will be
7 offering testimony to the senate finance committee and
8 it will go from there to the full senate and hopefully
9 to a full conference committee.

10 When you go to the legislature, other
11 members of the finance committee are Senator Olson,
12 Senator Dyson, Stedman, Huggins and Elton.

13 And to refresh your memory, this is a
14 grant on the federal project line of the DVR budget
15 that would allow the Alaska Center for the Blind and
16 Visually Impaired to employ a vision professional to
17 let people in rural Alaska know what services are

18 available when they have a visual disability and
19 provide training in their community to people who
20 can't get into the centers in Anchorage for whatever
21 reason. And we believe there are, the statistics show
22 there are as many as 3,000 people who could be helped
23 by this project.

24 The center is also quite excited about
25 being able to provide training on vision

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1 rehabilitation that's coming up the last week in April
2 to all the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
3 counselors, the Tribal Voc Rehab counselors and
4 others, and we have a national speaker coming, and we
5 think this will be a really positive training project.

6 And lastly I wanted to make sure that
7 all the members of the committee had a personal
8 invitation to the center's 30th anniversary

9 celebration. It will be in Anchorage Saturday May
10 19th from noon to 3:30. It's going to be a picnic,
11 and we are excited that DVR's director, Gale Sinnott,
12 will be one of our dignitaries who will be speaking,
13 and we're hoping the Governor will join us. She's
14 been invited. And we'll have food and music and
15 activities and informational booths, ATLA and Access
16 Alaska will be participating as well as the center, so
17 they will have informational booths, and we hope that
18 members of the committee can participate with us and
19 can attend.

20 Thank you very much for the opportunity
21 to talk with the committee today, and I'll be glad to
22 take any questions if there are any.

23 MS. ELSTAD: Any questions for Karla?

24 MS. SIMPSON: Can you clarify, I was
25 wondering if you could clarify where the party is in

1 Anchorage.

2 MS. JUTZI: I'm sorry, it's on the Park
3 Strip in Anchorage, the far west end by 9th and L by
4 the Hawthorn Suites.

5 MS. SIMPSON: We'll see you there.

6 MS. JUTZI: We'll get the invitations
7 out. We've been creating them this week and they will
8 go in the mail soon.

9 MS. BISBEE: Thank you, Karla. Larry
10 Johnson.

11 LARRY JOHNSON: Hello, my name is Larry
12 Johnson, on July 11th, 2005 I had a massive heart
13 attack, and that's left me with less than 50 percent
14 of a functioning heart. And I stumbled on to DVR
15 through the employment office out there, and initially
16 met with Ray, who continues to introduce me as a
17 miracle, but I, between DVR and TVR, the Tlingit Haida
18 other half of Voc Rehab, have determined with my
19 doctor that I needed to change my field and put me
20 through a five month business computer class and now
21 I'm working a temporary position in town. So all

22 along they have been extremely helpful, extremely
23 professional, and have paid for my schooling and paid
24 for my clothes for work, and continue to help me
25 trying to get permanent employment. So I just wanted

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1 to throw my two bits out and say they are good people
2 and doing a good thing.

3 MS. BISBEE: Thank you.

4 LARRY JOHNSON: Thank you.

5 MS. BISBEE: Deborah Bush.

6 DEBORAH BUSH: Hi, good afternoon. My
7 name is Deborah Bush, and I reside here in Juneau and
8 I'm a client with an active plan funded by the
9 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Because of the
10 services and support I've received through DVR, I'm a
11 certified optician, through the American Board of
12 Opticianry. I'm currently working through the final
13 requirements to hold a state license, occupational

14 license in my chosen field.

15 I've experienced a nine year absence
16 from the work force due to a disabling injury. I was
17 struggling to meet the very basic living needs and had
18 to start over. I returned to work in 2004 as an
19 optician's assistant, I knew I had the physical
20 capacity and the academic ability to pursue more in
21 opticianry, and with some accommodations I could earn
22 enough to stay in my community.

23 I began an apprenticeship but didn't
24 have the financial needs for travel and testing costs,
25 educational materials, nor tools or equipment. I

1 received partial funding through an injured workers
2 fund and purchased needed tools and equipment. I
3 sought assistance from DVR to accomplish the rest. My
4 DVR counselor reviewed my plan and helped establish

5 goals. Once my plan was approved, DVR provided the
6 funding to meet the educational costs and satisfy the
7 financial aspects of state licensure. I am now an
8 enabled worker and I'm a contributor to this
9 community. My earnings are now higher than my
10 pre-injury wage.

11 I'm a productive member of this great
12 state's work force because I received the supports and
13 services through the Division of Vocational
14 Rehabilitation. Please continue to provide this
15 opportunity to others. Thank you.

16 MS. BISBEE: Thank you. Pam
17 Mueller-Guy.

18 PAM MUELLER-GUY: Hello. My name is Pam
19 Mueller-Guy, I'm from Juneau. I work for SAIL,
20 Southeast Alaska Independent Living at the deaf
21 services and interpreter referral program. I wanted
22 to say DVR has really been very helpful, because when
23 I first started working I had a low paying job, and
24 then I had a fall-through and my job was cut, then I
25 started all over. I developed all the way up with all

1 the help with school and so forth. Now my career
2 ladder is going up, up, up. Now I'm not no longer
3 Medicaid, I can support myself, and I want to thank
4 DVR for all the help. Hopefully I will get a higher
5 level when I finish with my degree. Thank you very
6 much for that.

7 MS. BISBEE: Thank you. Becky, do you
8 have some written testimony to read.

9 MS. SIMPSON: This letter is from Rachel
10 M. Sergent. Before I came to Alaska in June of 2006 I
11 had no clue that DVR even existed or else -- and would
12 have applied a lot sooner. A friend of mine by the
13 name of Michelle Fred told me of DVR when she brought
14 me up here. Because she knew that I wanted to get
15 into school again and she knew that I qualified for
16 the program, she brought me to the Job Center to help
17 get me started. From there I believe it was Claire

18 who told me that in order to get into DVR I would need
19 to go to the orientation and fill out the papers. I
20 did what she said and of course I got into the
21 program.

22 When I got into the program I was
23 introduced to Vanessa Stevenson who was to be my DVR
24 counselor. At first I wasn't sure if I liked her but
25 now I trust her with my life.

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1 Vanessa has helped me in so many ways I
2 don't know where to begin. I guess that first and
3 foremost she hired Liza Paramore, who is now my CRP,
4 and she's also been my job coach for my new job at
5 Reach. I used to work at Safeway as a courtesy clerk
6 since Reach did not accept me the first time. However
7 six months later I reapplied for Reach and my neighbor
8 Bob who works for Reach knocked on my door and more
9 than two weeks after I turned in my application said

10 that he was wondering if I could come in and have an
11 interview with Kim Love, who is now my boss. I now
12 work for Kim at the state office building downtown,
13 and I do the bathrooms in the AOB from 5 to 9 Monday
14 through Thursday. I quit my job at Safeway so I could
15 work for Kim, and it's an honor to work for her.

16 Vanessa and Liza both helped me get out
17 of Aware and into my own place as well. If it wasn't
18 for them I might or might not still be homeless. They
19 helped -- they also helped me into so many programs
20 that I have lost count and I cannot remember them all.
21 DVR is also helping me with getting my teeth taken
22 care of. My wisdom teeth were killing me before
23 Vanessa they would help me see a dentist to get them
24 taken out, and I do not feel any pain and do not have
25 to take pain meds.

1 In the future I'm hoping DVR will be
2 able to get me on to Social Security and back into
3 school so that I can make my dreams come true. I plan
4 on becoming a writer, English teacher, and I plan to
5 open Illusions, which is going to be my own theater
6 company. I don't care what or how long it takes,
7 these things will happen, and if for whatever reason
8 DVR can't help, I'll find some other way. My first
9 play for Illusions is going to be Peter Pan by James
10 Barrie. All of my books are going to be dedicated to
11 him, because even though I never got to meet him he
12 was the one author who inspired me to write. This is
13 also why I want to create Illusions. Every single
14 play I direct is going to be dedicated to him. I
15 really wish I could have met him to tell him all this.
16 I hope DVR will be able to help me so I can do this.
17 All of it is why I joined DVR. Sincere Rachel M.
18 Sergeant.

19 MS. BISBEE: Okay Nancy Webb.

20 NANCY WEBB: I just arrived, but as I
21 understand you want to hear testimony from people who
22 have been helped through the office, is that correct?

23 MS. BISBEE: Sure.

24 NANCY WEBB: I'm Nancy Webb, and I was

25 able to see Kay Smith several times. Actually I

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1 didn't look at how many appointments, but, you know,
2 it was for several months, and really helped me
3 through a rough spot in my life. I'm one of those
4 people whose kind of disability I have is not one that
5 I bring up very often because people don't know that I
6 have a disability, and there has been a lot of
7 publicity about things like Attention Deficit and that
8 people are skeptical about it, so I generally don't
9 mention it to anyone. But it runs in my family, multi
10 generational, and it comes with learning disabilities,
11 and in my case it affects me in the workplace,
12 especially when I have a lot of anxiety or something
13 is new. If I'm nervous, if I'm very excited, but it

14 can cause a lot of social problems that affect my work
15 and personal life, too.

16 And I had just had my first state job
17 when I came to see Kay, I had had a job for a year
18 with the state, and I was abruptly cut from that job
19 at the end of my probationary period and I was
20 traumatized emotionally by this. The union took my
21 part and there was a settlement as a result, but it
22 basically really traumatized me. And then I went
23 through a period of unemployment and was fortunately
24 able to be hired at the Department of Transportation
25 where I have a wonderful job now but I had to get

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1 through that first year. And it was tough because I
2 had so little confidence and I had several sort of
3 major life events happen, the death of my daughter
4 occurred during that time, and some other -- my
5 divorce, I just had a lot of hard things happen.

6 So I have to say that I never realized
7 what a resource this office was. I never knew what it
8 was really for or about, but I'm sure glad I found
9 out, because by coming in to see Kay she helped me get
10 focused on the things I could do something about. She
11 gave me excellent feedback and helped me navigate
12 through the early months of getting to know my new
13 boss and the people I was working with and it really,
14 really helped me out. And also she was willing to
15 sort of pull any kind of resource in she thought would
16 assist me, and I was very grateful to that.

17 To give you a specific kind of example
18 that's a struggle for me is that I will miss cues when
19 I'm in a group meeting if I get beyond a certain
20 anxiety level. I will end up cutting them off halfway
21 through their sentences without knowing it, and if you
22 can imagine that's really distressing on other person
23 and I don't know what is wrong as well. And
24 auditorily, if I'm on a teleconference and it's a
25 speaker phone or something, and I have learned what

1 are the areas that give me the most trouble. But I
2 can't always correct it, because in Alaska when you
3 have a statewide job you have to use teleconference,
4 so I work with it all the time. But she really gave
5 me some good pointers and just that support I think
6 was really critical.

7 So, you know, I just wanted you to know
8 that and that's why I came down to talk about it. I
9 don't know if you have questions or something for me.
10 And I would like to say I did get past my first year
11 probationary period, and now I enjoy my job. When I
12 first started seeing Kay I was kind of panicking and
13 thought I don't know how I could possibly last in this
14 job because it was a lot of detailed work I didn't
15 know about when I was interviewing, and I was really
16 panicky. And those months -- now I actually enjoy the
17 parts that used to make me panicky, so I feel very
18 happy about that. Thank you very much.

19 MS. BISBEE: Liza, do you have written
20 testimony?

21 MS. DIEBELS-PARAMORE: Yes, let's see.
22 This was sent, this was an e-mail and it was sent from
23 John Bahe, but in case I'm not pronouncing it
24 correctly, it's B-a-h-e, and it is addressed to Ms.
25 Bisbee.

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1 A couple of weeks ago I sent an e-mail
2 to Carol Whelan regarding potential fraud on the part
3 of an individual here in Kodiak. This individual is
4 like me, being assisted with retraining at the Kodiak
5 campus of UAA. The person in question is in most of
6 the same classes as I am. Where I believe fraud has
7 been committed is in the area of truthful disclosure
8 to the local Voc Rehab office when seeking assistance.
9 The person involved has admitted to me that he was in

10 fact not honest about a settlement he received in
11 order to get more from the system. This person has
12 received, yet not disclosed, a settlement in the
13 amount of \$65,000. In addition to this, he did not
14 reveal the income from his bed and breakfast to the
15 Voc Rehab office as stated to me.

16 While I would normally just let this go,
17 the repeated mention of these dishonest tactics by
18 this individual continue to be spoken by him. On
19 Monday he will again be getting assistance from the
20 Division of Voc Rehab in the way of a plane ticket,
21 hotel accommodations and fee coverage to renew his
22 hazwoper card.

23 With every meeting I have had at the Voc
24 Rehab office I have continued to be forthright with
25 truthful information even when I could have followed

1 his advice and lied to get more. While I would have

2 loved to have Voc Rehab purchase for me a new computer
3 to use for school, I openly admitted that I had
4 already used a portion of my student loans to buy one
5 myself. This whole thing seems to be the reason why
6 it is so hard for people in real need -- are unable to
7 get everything they need.

8 If people had a tendency to be more
9 honest, the ones hardest hit by catastrophe would be
10 in line to receive the much needed help they deserve.
11 The main issue here is that although I sent a message
12 out I felt it should have led to checking these things
13 out. This has gone to a dead end. I make no claims
14 to be a self-righteous person, but I hate to sit idly
15 by and listen to the rants of a person screwing the
16 system that so many of us rely on to help us get back
17 on our feet.

18 If you would be kind enough to look into
19 the fraudulent efforts into the system that save so
20 many I would be grateful. John Bahe, Kodiak, Alaska.

21 MS. BISBEE: Brenda Sterns.

22 BRENDA STERNS: I'm going to have to

23 turn this way so she can see me speak and talk at the
24 same time. I just found out about the meeting last
25 night, but I want to say -- I don't want to cry, so

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1 I'm sorry.

2 DVR has really helped my son, I'm sorry.

3 Kay Smith has really helped him so much, and others
4 that have counseled him. He has a type of
5 schizophrenia, and when he goes to look for a job on
6 his own he doesn't understand why they don't hire him.
7 And he's tried -- thank you -- he's tried so many
8 times on his own, and not succeeded because he doesn't
9 come across very well.

10 But with their help and others with DVR
11 and the job shadowing, he has gotten a job and is
12 doing wonderful, has his own apartment, and I don't
13 know where he'd be otherwise. Sorry.

14 Also when he first moved here, SAIL had

15 supported him with just a big welcome and offered
16 different supports, too, but it ended up DVR was the,
17 you know, the support that he got. So I just want to
18 thank you.

19 MS. BISBEE: Pinky, do you have written
20 testimony?

21 MS. TOOYAK: Yes. I will read it. It
22 is a fax sent out to Velja. Public testimony, April
23 10th submitted by Lawrence Bear Noder.

24 Voc Rehab has taken my concept and has
25 put it into a workable business plan. I would not

1 have been able to do so on my own. They have led me
2 by the hand in the process, which has been immensely
3 helpful. Voc Rehab has given me the equipment and
4 membership services I needed to make my business
5 viable. Their assistance has given me feelings of

6 independence and the ability to earn a living for
7 which I am very grateful. And it was signed.

8 MS. BISBEE: Thank you. Is there anyone
9 on the phone?

10 MS. ELSTAD: Is there anyone on line
11 that would like to testify?

12 MS. BISBEE: Does anyone else have
13 anything they would like to offer? We have about
14 maybe eight minutes. We can sit and chat. We'll stay
15 here until 5:00, and if anyone else comes in we'll
16 welcome them. Thank you for coming.

17 NANCY WEBB: One more thing. One of the
18 things I was told about the office by going to the
19 university and taking a training course, I was looking
20 at what other careers I might have to consider
21 training into if I didn't get a job, because I just
22 moved down here to Juneau from Fairbanks, and I took a
23 class at the university and discovered that the way
24 the tests were done, that I was having a lot of
25 trouble. And I met a few students up there who had

1 disabilities, and I believe that we need a lot more
2 strengthening of maybe the resources in this office
3 and the university, if that's possible.

4 I think that the special education
5 coordinator, whatever they call the position up there,
6 maybe doesn't have strong enough ties to the
7 resources, and so I would believe there are a lot of
8 students probably that get turned away from courses
9 that they really would benefit from and careers that
10 they would benefit from, because they don't have the
11 proper assistance and support there.

12 I feel like that's just something we
13 really need to invest in in the University of Alaska.
14 I just wanted to mention that. Maybe you all know
15 about that, but just from my perspective, it was
16 illuminating.

17 MS. BISBEE: Thank you.

18 MS. STRATTON: Thank you.

19 MS. SINNOTT: Are there any more of
20 these completed?

21 MS. BISBEE: Not yet.

22 MS. STRATTON: Jim.

23 MS. BISBEE: We'll just wait a couple
24 minutes until 5:00.

25 (Meeting adjourned)