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March 12, 2012

The Honorable Kurt Olson, Chair
House Labor and Commerce Committee
Alaska Capitol, Room 24
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 275 (Lynn)—Support

Dear Chair Olson:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we encourage you and your colleagues on the House Labor and Commerce Committee to support HB 275, authored by Representative Bob Lynn and co-sponsored by your Committee colleagues Representatives Bob Miller and Steve Thompson as well as Representatives Gara, Peggy Wilson, Munoz, and Kerttula.

HB 275 would include PERS and TRS retirees in the colo-rectal screening services available to active employees.

This only makes sense.

Medicare has begun covering colonoscopies for retirees over 65 with no co-payment. The federal government made this decision because prevention is good public health policy. On January 1, 2011, all our public employee retirees on Medicare became eligible for free colon-cancer screenings.

The only group that would not be covered would be Alaska's public employee retirees who are under 65 and not yet eligible for Medicare.

This is also the age group that is most likely to have colon cancer problems and screening makes good economic and health sense.

From what we understand, Buck Consultants have already recommended that the state provide such coverage because it has been determined that screening and early treatment is an economic plus compared to waiting until expensive surgery may be necessary.

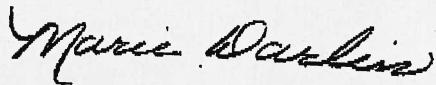
AARP strongly supports this bill which will provide sensible preventive care to public employees who retire before Medicare eligibility.

AARP recommends an "AYE" vote on HB 275.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Marie Darlin, Coordinator
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CC: Vice-Chair Craig Johnson
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Paul Seaton
Representative Steve Thompson
Representative Lindsey Holmes
Representative Bob Miller
Representative Bob Lynn