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ALASKA

October 30, 2017

The Honorable Neal Foster, Co-Chair
House Finance Committee
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

RE: HCS CSSB 54(JUD)

Dear Representative Foster:

On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business/Alaska, I wish to respectfully share our continued support for Senate Bill 54. The National Federation of Independent Business is the largest small-business advocacy group in Alaska. NFIB believes it is critically important that this bill pass this year.

SB 54 addresses the need to provide the criminal justice system the means to encourage violators to enter treatment to address the many issues driving them to violate our laws. Our members are experiencing substantially more theft by these same people as a result of the lack of tools our police have to deal with petty theft.

Senate Bill 54 corrects unintentional problems caused by the passage and interpretation of Senate Bill 91 passed by the legislature in 2016. It addresses penalties for 4th degree theft, class A-misdemeanors, and class C-felonies. SB 54, for the most part, reflects recommended changes from the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission.

While SB 54 may not resolve all concerns with SB 91, it is important to, at least, take this modest step now. We have reviewed the version passed by the House Judiciary Committee and believe it should be adopted by the legislature. We believe the changes in SB 54 will help deter misdemeanor crime and provide enforcement agencies the tools to help reduce criminal activity.

Sincerely yours,

Dennis L. DeWitt
Alaska State Director

Cc: NFIB/AK Leadership Council