



Senator Scott Jiu Wo Kawasaki

Alaska State Legislature

Senate District P

SB No 189

Sponsor Statement

"An Act extending the termination date of the Alaska Commission on Aging; and providing for an effective date."

Senate Bill 189 would extend the Alaska Commission on Aging for eight years, until June 30, 2032, based on the recommendations of the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee.

Alaska's senior population is the fastest growing per capita in the United States, with the population aged 60 and older growing by 62.3% between the years of 2010-2021. This drastic increase in population has come with an increase in the number of seniors living below the poverty line as the cost of living has continued to rise. Additionally, Alaska's senior mortality rate continues to score higher than the national average in areas such as senior suicide, fatal fall, and alcohol-induced deaths. The Alaska Commission on Aging has proved vital in collecting data and providing solutions to the many challenges facing this particularly vulnerable and important group of Alaskans.

The recently completed audit found that the Alaska Commission on Aging is serving the public's interest by formulating and approving the comprehensive State Plan for Senior Services; advocating for older Alaskans; providing education programs; making recommendations to the legislature and the governor on legislation, appropriations, programs and services for seniors; and serving as a federally recognized advisory council to satisfy the requirement of the Older Americans Act, allowing Alaska to receive federal funding through the Administration on Community Living.

Senate Bill 189 is supported by the AARP, Access Alaska, Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, Anchorage Senior Activity Center, Coalition of Mat-Su Senior Centers, Denakkanaaga, Inc., Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, North Star Council on Aging, Senior Citizens of Fairbanks, Inc. and many other organizations.

I would respectfully request your support to extend this vital commission.