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March 16, 2011

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

Dear Chair Olson:

RE: HB 11 (Gara)—Support

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 11, authored by Representative Les Gara and co-sponsored by Representative Max Gruenberg.

On behalf of the AARP members in Alaska, we would like to indicate our support for your bill to include 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.

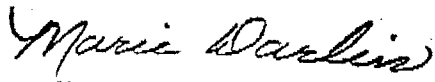
AARP strongly supports this bill which will provide sensible preventive care to public employees who retire before Medicare eligibility.

AARP recommends an "AYE" vote on HB 11.

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,



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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 Les Gara