



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of
Health and Social Services

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

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April 30, 2019

Representative Chris Tuck
Alaska State Capitol, Room 24
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Subject: ACoA Letter of Support, HB 115

Dear Representative Tuck:

The Alaska Commission on Aging is pleased to offer support for HB 115, "Absentee Voting" authored by you. The right to vote is the most effective way for citizens to have a voice in the democratic process. Based on our understanding, the intent of this voter reform legislation is to encourage voter participation and citizen engagement in the political process by allowing Alaskans the option to receive absentee ballots by mail automatically without having to apply for one at every election. By making voting more convenient, voter turnout has been shown to improve particularly in local and midterm elections that typically have lower participation rates overall. Voters who receive their ballot in the mail are also prompted to pay more attention to the issues being discussed and the political information sent prior to Election Day so that they may cast their ballots responsibly as informed voters.

Seniors are "super voters" as they are proud to exercise their right to vote in almost every election. While many seniors cast their ballot in the traditional voting booth on Election Day, there are times when they are unable to make it to the poll due to unexpected changes in health status, inclement weather conditions, or not having someone to help them get to the polling place. The option of having a ballot mailed automatically provides peace of mind that they will be able to vote for those who prefer this method. HB 115 does not replace going to the polls – rather it adds another option to cast a vote for those who request this flexibility.

The Commission supports HB 115 and appreciates your leadership of this legislation to promote greater voter participation in Alaska. Please contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's Executive Director, at 465-4879 or denise.daniello@alaska.gov for further information about the Commission's position.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Gordon Glaser in blue ink.

Gordon Glaser
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Handwritten signature of Mary E. Shields in blue ink.

Mary E. Shields
ACoA Vice Chair

Handwritten signature of Denise Daniello in blue ink.

Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director