

February 10, 2016

Senate Labor and Commerce Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 514  
Juneau, Alaska 99801



Dear Honorable Senators:

The Alaska Wellness Coalition works collectively to improve the health and wellness of all Alaskans. The Coalition networks local and regional health and wellness alliances through information sharing of state and local data, evidence-based programming, best practices, strategic prevention, current health trends and statewide advocacy for health promotion.

On behalf of the Alaska Wellness Coalition, I am asking you to support Senate Bill 165 (SB165) to revise portions of Title 4, the Alaska Statutes regulating alcoholic beverages. This Bill is the first result of a four-year process initiated by the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board to engage a diverse group of more than 70 stakeholders to determine how to improve the structure, organization, specific policies and associated implementation issues in Title 4, Alaska's statutes regarding regulation and control of alcoholic beverages in the state.

The proposed revisions are some of the high-priority recommendations to emerge from this stakeholder effort to to improve the overall system of alcohol regulation in Alaska. Specifically, the provisions in this bill will:

- Ensure that the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (AS 04.06.020) fairly represents the interests of all Alaskans by designating seats for public safety and public health, and retaining designated seats for industry representatives and a rural member;
- Reduce and streamline penalties for Minor on Licensed Premises (AS 04.16.049) and Minor Consuming Alcohol (AS 04.16.050), to promote consistent enforcement of these laws while ensuring that underage youth are not criminalized for one mistake;
- Provide an incentive, through a fine reduction from \$500 to \$50, for a young person convicted of either of these offenses to attend an alcohol education program; and
- Prevent any information about a young person's charge or conviction of either offense from being published on CourtView, which otherwise follows that person into adulthood.

Changes to Minor Consuming Alcohol (MCA) and Minor on Premises will have significant benefits for Alaska's youth and for the criminal justice system: in the last five years, over 75% of Title 4 related charges were MCAs, and the vast majority of youth do not return to court with a second charge. I urge you to support the significant multi-year effort of this statewide stakeholder group, and specifically the priority items brought forward for consideration this year, by voting in support of SB 165 and making these important changes to Title 4.

Sincerely,

*Stephanie L. Allen*

Stephanie L. Allen  
Coalition Director