

Celeste Hodge

From: Shari Paul <shari_paulak@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 07, 2012 1:00 PM
To: Sen. Bettye Davis
Cc: Celeste Hodge
Subject: Senate Bill 53

Thank you for introducing SB 53 - reinstating the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women by passing Senate Bill 53 during this legislative session.

Back in the late 1980's, I was honored to work for Representative Niilo Koponen who championed this legislation. Representative Koponen and I spent countless hours working with dedicated and brilliant women such as Ruth Lister and Carla Timpone. It was during this time, so much progress and public awareness was made in our state regarding domestic violence, sexual assault, inequality of women's pay etc.

When Commission's come and go, the momentum slows down, previous accomplishments dwindle in support and dedication, name recognition becomes irrelevant though the issues remain incredibly important. With Governor Parnell's commitment in reducing domestic violence and sexual assault, this would be the perfect time to reinstate this Commission and really make a difference in the lives and women and families in our great state.

Feel Free to add this email to Senate Bill 53's bill file.

Shari Paul

713 W 12th Street

Juneau, Alaska 99801

Sen. Bettye Davis

From: Connie Ozer [ozerck@gci.net]
To: Tuesday, March 22, 2011 10:04 PM
Cc: Senator_Bill_Wielechowski@legis.state.ak.us)
Subject: Sen. Bettye Davis
SB53

I am writing in support of SB 53 which will be the subject of a hearing March 24. This is a great time to reestablish the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women. There are unique problems facing women and children in Alaska in the 21st century and it is right that the Legislature is moving forward with this.

Thank you for your efforts.

Connie Ozer
2770 Pelican Drive
Anchorage, AK 99502

Sen. Bettye Davis

From: Rose Stokes [rlistokes@gci.net]
At: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 5:14 PM
To: Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Bettye Davis
Cc: Celeste Hodge
Subject: Senate Bill 53

Dear Senators,

This message is in support of SB53 to reestablish the Alaska Women's Commission because of the needs delineated in this bill. I believe the Commission can offer support to women and children in many ways. In addition, women have many challenges maintaining small businesses in Alaska. We need resources that will focus on the many critical issues that negatively impact women entrepreneurs.

Please let me know if I can offer further assistance.

Sincerely,
Rose Stokes

Sen. Bettye Davis

From: Ramona Duby [doobegone@gmail.com]
At: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 5:07 PM
To: Senator__Bill_Wielechowski@legis.state.ak.us
Cc: Sen. Bettye Davis
Subject: Support SB53 Re-establishment of the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women

Re: SB 53

Reestablishment of the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Ramona (Miss Mona) Duby . I live in Anchorage. I am a daughter, sister, auntie and according to some, their "greatest auntie". I am **"NOW"** also proud to be a member of the Koniag, Inc. and Leisnoi, Inc. , corporations formed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. I say "NOW" because if you were here in the '60's, you may recall the prejudice faced by Alaska Natives and I had a very hard time being proud of my heritage. It took a long time, especially being a woman those years to come to grips with my heritage/womanhood.

I am the past president of Business and Professional Women/Anchorage Local Organization, past chartering president and president of Denali (Wasilla) Business and Professional Women, the '92-'93 President of the Alaska Federation of Business and Professional Women, an ATHENA Society Member, currently on the Board of Directors of Anchorage Community Mental Health Services, Inc., the Alaska Mental Health Board and have served on a variety of other boards and committees over the years.

I regret that I cannot testify in person on the important piece of legislation, however would like to offer my written testimony in support of SB53, the Reestablishment of the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women.

Because of the value of the information in the publications, I still have some that were published by the former Commission under the Cowper and Sheffield administration. The Legal Handbook and the Alaska Women's History Booklet are both excellent references that I have referred to on many occasions over the years. For years, we've heard how Alaska leads most other states in domestic violence and sexual assault not to mention substance abuse, and wage discrimination.

Unfortunately, I am one of the women who has faced every single one of the "issues" personally that are addressed in the statistics gathered on the status of women. From sexual assault / abuse when I was a child to wage and employment discrimination, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, mental illness, financial exploitation prior to the fair credit act of 1981, etc. Some of these issues I am still battling through on a daily basis. Perhaps with the re-establishment of the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women, providing the valuable and useful information as it did in the past, it will assist policy makers and funding organizations that with just a few hundred million dollars invested in treatment rather than billions of dollars in building prisons, Alaska will be not just the Great Land, but the GREATEST Land.

Please, I strongly urge you to join me in supporting the reestablishment of the commission.

Yours Sincerely,

Ramona (Miss Mona) S. Duby

P.O. Box 93016

2009 Wildwood Lane

Anchorage, AK 99517

907-279-1380 (w)

907-952-1850

Sen. Bettye Davis

From: carolyn V Brown [cvbrown1937@yahoo.com]
At: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 6:45 PM
To: Kathy Ruddy
Subject: Senate to Consider Reestablishing Alaska Women's Commission

Kathy:

This is very, very good. I was involved with the original establishment of the Women's Commission in Alaska and was a member of that group with Lillie McGarvey (a powerful Native woman).

When we were in Vermont, I was on the Governor's Commission for Women for 4-5 years and that was extremely productive. We did a lot to advance payment for women's services, domestic violence prevention work, legislative discussion in Montpelier and leadership skills for women in Vermont. It was a good experience for me.

I would expect that, if this costs a dime, it won't go anywhere. But we do have to keep trying.

Thank you for sharing and I will welcome any update as there is movement.

carolyn V Brown MD MPH
1640 Second Street
Douglas Alaska 99824 USA

-364-2726
907-364-2727 fax
907-321-0784 cellular

cvbrown1937@yahoo.com

--- On Tue, 3/22/11, Kathy Ruddy <ruddys99801@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: Kathy Ruddy <ruddys99801@yahoo.com>
Subject: Fw: Senate to Consider Reestablishing Alaska Women's Commission
To: "carolyn V Brown" <cvbrown1937@yahoo.com>, "Marjorie Menzi" <marjoriemenzi@msn.com>, "Marie Olson" <naayadi3@gci.net>, "Ed Kunz" <seitaan@hotmail.com>, "Mickelyn Kunz" <micdale@gci.net>, "Doloresa Cadiente" <dcadiente@gci.net>, "Barbara Cadiente-Nelson" <cadiente.nelson@gmail.com>, "Jackie Dailey" <krcjd@gci.net>
Date: Tuesday, March 22, 2011, 6:38 PM

Thank you all who helped with the event honoring Elizabeth Peratrovich-

-
what a successful working together of the Alaska Native Sisterhood and the League of Women Voters!

Here is some news about the Alaska Women's Commission that I think has come to me because of Sen. Bettye Davis' sponsorship of the Elizabeth Peratrovich Day 2011 legislative citation, so I wanted to pass it along to all of you.

Sen. Bettye Davis

Subject:
Attachments:

Celeste Hodge
FW: SB 53
SB 53 Commission on Women.rtf

From: Jana Varrati [mailto:janav@nome.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 7:12 PM
To: Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Cc: Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Donny Olson; nealwfoster@yahoo.com
Subject: SB 53

Please find attached a letter of support for SB 53 from the Arctic Business & Professional Women (Nome)

I am very ill with some kind of persistent pneumonia (7 weeks now!) but will crawl out of my sick bed to testify for this bill in the AM.

The impact of the reestablishment of the Commission will be immense not only for urban areas but especially for those of us in the rural areas. I live it!

Jana

Arctic Business & Professional Women

Post Office Box 814

Nome, Alaska 99762

Bill Wielechowski
Chair
House Committee on Health & Social Services

Dear Chairman Wielekowski and members of the HSS Committee,

The Arctic Business & Professional Women (Nome) are in full support of reestablishing the Commission on the Status of Women - SB 53.

The purpose of the Commission was and still is important to the lives of women and children in this state. Unfortunately, since the demise of the Commission, the type of research focusing on the status of women in this state has been sorely lacking. That lack is reflected in general statistical information which does not clearly represent issues as we see and live them.

Our state is a vast one. It covers so many cultures, so many economic bases, and a wide range of ages and needs. The State of Alaska provides general services to all members of our societies but does *not* focus on the special needs of its women citizens.

I will bring up the unspoken truth: Without Women and Children, we would have *no* Society. No families. No enforcement of rules/laws except Thou Shall Not Kill!

Those of us who live in rural Alaska, the Frontier, as it were, understand and constantly battle against domestic violence, sexual assault, incest, other forms of women and child abuse. We fight against racial discrimination, hiring prejudices, and brushing under the rug violations of law, regulation, and policy.

To pursue a grievance means a woman must be able and willing to file with myriad state agencies for relief. It's confusing and oh so frustrating!

Before its demise, the ACSW provided a central clearing house for those women. Without it, women are left to try to make sense of federal, state, local laws and ordinances to even file a complaint, let alone receive relief.

The Arctic Business & Professional Women has taken on this task as our First Issue - untangling bureaucratic red tape for the women in our Region. We are a clearing house for information, relying on our contacts, our backgrounds, on the Blue Book, advising on how things are supposed to work

I will respectfully remind you that there is NO Community without women and children! The sustainability of any community relies and is based on the health and well-being of its women and children. Without us, it's just a camp, not a community.

As economies suffer, so does the status of women in this state! If you truly believe that women are an integral part of the future and of the economic and social bases of the State of Alaska, you will reinstate the Commission on the Status of Women.

Sincerely,
Jana Varrati
President,
Arctic Business & Professional Women
(907) 443-3961

Sen. Bettye Davis

From: D. Robbins [drobbins.r@gmail.com]
To: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 8:14 PM
Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Joe Paskvan; Sen. Albert Kookesh; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Cathy Giessel
Cc: Sen. Bettye Davis
Subject: SB 53: Reestablish the Alaska Commission on Women
Attachments: Support for SB 53 Reestablish the Alaska Commission on Women.doc

Senate State Affairs
Chair: Senator Wielechowski
Vice-Chair: Senator Paskvan
Members:
Senator Kookesh
Senator Meyer
Senator Giessel

Please accept my attached letter of testimony in support of SB 53: Reestablish the Alaska Commission on Women. This is likely the best legislation that you will hopefully pass for families in years because of the value it casts in the lives of many Alaskans; women and children in particular.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

 Doris Robbins

1281 Overhill Dr.
Fairbanks AK 99709-6753
(907) 374-0597
drobbins@gci.net

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Doris Robbins

(907) 374-0597
Fairbanks AK 99709-6753
drobbins.r@gmail.com

Natural Soaps Soothing to the Skin
www.alaskasoaps.com

Doris Robbins

1281 Overhill Dr., Fairbanks, AK 99709-6753
(907) 374-0597
drobbins@gci.net

March 23, 2011

Senate State Affairs
Chair: Senator Wielechowski
Vice-Chair: Senator Paskvan
Member: Senator Kookesh
Member: Senator Meyer
Member: Senator Giessel

Senators,

I Support SB 53: Reestablish the Alaska Commission on Women

I support Senate Bill 53 to Reestablish the Alaska Commission on Women. There should be no question about this as it should have never gone away!

There was the survey that was recently done that shows a majority of Alaska women have been abused or are being abused at some time.

We know that women earn about 67 cents on the dollar for the same work that men do. I think it may have actually gotten worse in recent years and had been at 70 cents one time.

I'm hearing again the excuse that men are the breadwinners so they are being hired over women more than ever after the recession. Many women are the breadwinners; and regardless of that they deserve equal pay for equal work. If a man is single, do you expect him to take a lesser salary?

I have seen recently that there are still practices of assuming the woman, in an issue such as divorce or financial disagreements, is the one that is the problem. She is too often assumed to be the one at fault. It isn't just the ditzy blond prejudice but that women are fickle or some other excuse.

In fact, my daughter who is the owner of her house that she signed the mortgage on and continues to pay off, being the only one who ever paid a dime on it and holds all the paperwork, had the experience when her husband moved out of being treated as if she had no say in that house.

When she went to have the power, phone, TV, put in her name alone she had to argue the point and actually take her ownership paper work to the aforesaid companies before she could eventually have the changes made so she would not be without necessary services. (He was no longer there and had demonstrated he could care less, other than continuing to find ways to charge things to her.)

You may think I am prejudiced, but if you talk to other women you will see that this is typical. We certainly do need a Commission to help see that women get fair treatment regardless of their status.

Often women fear abandonment and tolerate too much mistreatment. Others attempt to better things and find the mountain they have to climb is just too steep. Years later perhaps the police investigate abuse that had gone on and wondered why a woman would tolerate such.

The climate, through conditions that sometimes continue to exist today, gives sanction to bad treatment. You still hear things like: "That's a woman for you!" "Must have been a woman driver!" "She just blew the whole paycheck!"

When do you hear: "She is the one who does the books and manages the check book!" "I can't believe how she holds down her full time job and goes home to fix a dinner from scratch!" "The best military pilots are women!" (They are equal or above the performance of men if you check.)

No more and no less, just treat women fair; the Commission will help make that happen.

Sincerely,

Doris Robbins

SB53 RECEIVED

MAR 23 2011

Sen. Bettye Davis

From: hattietaylor@ups.com
To: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 11:32 AM
Subject: Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Sen. Bettye Davis
I SUPPORT -- SB53 (Reestablish the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women)

Senator Wielechowski,

Please acknowledge this communication to reflect my support for SB53 (Reestablish the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women).

Kind Regards,

Hattie Taylor

UPS Corporate
Global Sales Operations
hattietaylor@ups.com

SB53

Sen. Bettye Davis

From: Ann [apstrick@yahoo.com]
To: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 8:04 AM
Cc: Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: Sen. Bettye Davis
I support SB 53

3-23-2011

I AM EMAILING THIS LETTER IN MY SUPPORT OF SB53 REESTABLISHMENT OF THE ALASKA COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN.

ANN STRICKLAND
P O BOX 34997
JUNEAU, AK 99803

apstrick@yahoo.com

RECEIVED

MAR 22 2011

Celeste Hodge

From: Ramona Duby [doobegone@gmail.com]
To: Monday, March 21, 2011 8:13 PM
From: Jana Varrati
Cc: Celeste Hodge
Subject: Re: SB53
Attachments: SB0053A.PDF

Hi Jana:

You are just so awesome!!!! Attached is the bill.

It will be heard on Thursday the 24th at 9:30

Please send letters to committee chair and copy Bettye. You can call Celeste Hodge in Senator Davis office for information if you are unable to access the bill from basis.

Hugs to you and thanks for all you do!

Ramona (Miss Mona) Duby
279-1380

On Mon, Mar 21, 2011 at 6:54 PM, Jana Varrati <janav@nome.net> wrote:

(Mona,
es, it's me, Jana. I'm trying to help on this bill but can't get the info about it reestablishing the AWC. I have our BPW members here ready to write letters, etc to support but I can't give them the basic info on which to base those letters. I lobbied the creation of the AWC, worked with them on so many issues, and was a member of first Anch. Women's Commission.

Help me, Sister!

Jana

Re: SB 53

Reestablishment of the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Sue C. Johnson and I live in Anchorage. I am a mother, daughter, sister, wife, and very recently a grandmother, I am the Past President of the Alaska Women's Political Caucus, a member of the Athena Society (a program of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce dedicated to encouraging the potential of women as valued members and leaders of the business community), a member of the League of Women Voters and the Business and Professional Women of Alaska.

I regret that I cannot testify in person on the important piece of legislation, but for the record, I have the following comments supporting the Reestablishment of the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women.

In my view, the Alaska Commission is a vehicle for addressing some of the very critical key issues facing Alaska as a society. That the Commission focuses on women's issues does not mean it is just some vehicle to "study women" - my husband says he has been doing that unsuccessfully his whole life. Rather, the focus on women encourages evaluation of important issues facing Alaska as a community.

During recent months and during election time, we heard over and over again about how we lead most other states in domestic violence and how most Alaskan women have experienced it firsthand. We have also heard about the astronomical number of rapes and sexual assaults that occur in our state. Rather than being leaders about sexual assault and rape of women, let's be leaders in how we treat the women of Alaska. I believe this commission would put us on track to do that.

We also know that many Alaskan women are the single wage earner for families and that the numbers of women in the workforce, as well as their chosen career paths have dramatically changed over the past several years. However, they still fall far behind men when it comes to wages and benefits, especially as they related to health care and retirement. One of the biggest complaints I hear regularly from young mothers is the difficulty in locating reliable, affordable and safe child care for their children. I've been hearing that same complaint for the thirty five plus years I have lived in Alaska and I have personally had the same experience. We can do better than that.

These are only small samplings of concerns facing Alaskan women and families. It is time to stop ignoring them. Alaskan women have made numerous contributions and sacrifices for the State of Alaska and they deserve to know the government is looking out for their best interests.

I urge you to support the reestablishment of the commission.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sue C Johnson
2131 Belmont Drive
Anchorage AK 99517
J7.301.5005

Celeste Hodge

From: yvonne@gci.blackberry.com
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2011 8:54 AM
Subject: Senator Bill Wielchowski@legis.state.ak.us; Sen. Bettye Davis; Celeste Hodge
SB53 REESTABLISHMENT OF THE ALASKA COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Importance: High

Sent from my BlackBerry® smartphone

From: "Gutierrez, Yvonne" <GutierrezYM@ci.anchorage.ak.us>
Date: Thu, 24 Mar 2011 08:44:23 -0800
To: 'yvonne@gci.blackberry.com' <yvonne@gci.blackberry.com>
Subject: SB53 - REESTABLISHMENT OF THE ALASKA COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Dear Alaska Legislature:

I support the Reestablishment of the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women. There are many reasons that this commission should exist. Some of which include to:

- Monitor the status of sexual assaults against women.
- Monitor domestic violence against women.
- Monitor employment status and equal opportunity compliance i.e. through Affirmative Action, which in many companies and government agencies is no longer enforced or monitored.
- Monitor the status of sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Monitor access to health care for women.
- Monitor or serve as a clearing house of agencies that assist women to be successful in overcoming all of these challenges.

For these reasons, I support this legislation and ask all senators to unite and see that this commission is reestablished.

Sincerely,
Yvonne Gutierrez
3630 Chaffee Circle
Anchorage, Alaska 99517
(907) 854-4057

Pamela Marsch

From: Marge Larson <mstoneking@girlscoutsalaska.org>
Sent: Friday, January 20, 2012 3:06 PM
To: Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Joe Thomas; Sen. Johnny Ellis; Sen. Lesil McGuire
Cc: Sen. Bettye Davis
Subject: SB53 Testimony_not heard due to technical difficulties

Good morning, Chairman Hoffman and Members of the Senate Finance Subcommittee;

Thank you for hearing SB53 in Finance Committee this morning. I was on the line to testify on behalf of the 7,500 girls and adult volunteers of Girl Scouts of Alaska this morning, but my line was not unmuted so I'm sending written testimony instead.

The reestablishment of the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women is of great interest and benefit to the next generation of women, Alaska's girls. Perhaps it should even be Alaska Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

As you heard, the wage gap between men and women in Alaska is of grave concern. I'd like to offer some other vital issues this Commission could make a difference for.

Leadership. Women are 50% of the population and more than 50% of college graduates, yet women in decision making leadership positions do not reflect those numbers. In fact, nationally, women represent only 17% of elected leadership positions, and even less corporate board seats or CEO offices. The courageous women we have in leadership positions here in Alaska are valuable, but they are not enough. This country, this state deserves more leadership, we deserve gender balanced leadership.

Girl Scouts own research reflects that girls and boys think of leadership differently, and real life experiences show that when leadership is gender balanced, we all do better. A recent study of the Fortune 500 shows that American corporations whose boards are at least one-quarter women outperform other companies by 53% on return on equity, 42% on return on sales, and 66% on return on invested capital (Catalyst/Chubb Corporation 2007). And in fact the country of Norway in 2003 enacted legislation requiring that women hold at least 40% of board seats in publicly traded Norwegian companies. In 2010, *Newsweek* named Norway as "the only Western industrialized state to escape the global economic meltdown relatively unscathed. It bears a healthy banking sector, record-low unemployment, and one of the hottest sovereign wealth funds around." All this to say that things work best when we engage all of our potential instead of only half of it for leadership, when we have gender balanced leadership.

And yet, 61% of girls are either deeply ambivalent about leadership or say that it's not important to them. Negative influences abound, including peer pressure to not stand out, unhealthy images in the media about beauty, a lack of mentors, little support for girls with an interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and bullying. This cycle of discouragement that begins in grade school goes on to have far-reaching impact on our society.

We can do better for our girls. Alaska Commission on the Status of Women could assist in balancing leadership in our state, and thus improving our economy and state overall for the next generation.

A similar story exists in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers regarding women's representation. A new study by Girl Scouts Research Institute tells us that 73% of teen girls ARE interested in STEM subjects, but do not take the final step of making STEM career choices. This is especially concerning because STEM jobs have a higher pay scale than many others, and women are not benefitting from that. Engineering, for example, a critical field of study and career choice for a state as rich in natural resources as ours is, and yet only 3% of all girls are currently interested in being engineers, and only 32% of girls who identify themselves as interested in STEM. Here in Alaska you can get a degree in any kind of engineering there is, and yet our companies often have to look Outside for engineering candidates.

We are not tapping 50% of our potential resources to meet that need, our girls. Alaska has a chapter of Society of Women Engineers, but that is not enough. Their members, women engineers, are hard at work being successful in their fields, and cannot bear the burden of closing this gap alone. Neither can Girl Scouts.

For all these reasons, Girl Scouts, as we celebrate 100 years, have designated 2012 as the Year of the Girl to call attention to these issues and change the paradigm for the next generation. Girl Scouts of Alaska enthusiastically supports SB53 to restore the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women, an appropriate and effective move to improve our state during the Year of the Girl.



Marge Stoneking
CEO
Girl Scouts of Alaska
907-248-2250
1-800-478-7448

Inspiring Girls to Lead
www.girlscoutsalaska.org

Pick. Click. Give.

To give a little extra:

1. Complete your PFD application online
2. Choose "Complete List Alphabetized"
3. Choose "Girl Scouts of Alaska"
4. Contribute



Women's Council
· Wisconsin ·

WOMENSCOUNCIL.WI.GOV

January 20, 2012

On behalf of the Wisconsin Women's Council, I respectfully submit this letter in support of the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women.

As a state government agency, the Wisconsin's Women's Council works with Wisconsin's elected officials to identify key issues, assist in policy development, and promote the advancement of women in key policy area such as education, employment, job development, and business ownership.

Alaska and Wisconsin have similar statistics regarding the status of women and the challenges and barriers we still face in fully garnering the contributions of women to the economic health of our states. Wisconsin, like Alaska, faces disproportionately high levels of poverty among women of all ages, made more difficult by lower median earnings across industries and occupations and a correspondingly high gender wage gap. Indeed, we find that in the recent economic recession, families headed by single mothers and families that depend on women's wages have been the hardest hit and remain at the most economic risk. And, in Alaska as in Wisconsin, only about one-quarter of private firms are majority woman-owned – below the national average – yet still accounting for tens of thousands of businesses and jobs and billions of dollars in receipts in for the state's economy.

Facing similar challenges, Wisconsin's policy leaders renewed their support for our state's women's commission in our most recent budget to continue to identify and advance opportunities for women to contribute to critical state priorities, such as job creation, business development, a job-ready workforce, economic self-sufficiency, and, ultimately, economic recovery.

The Alaska Commission on the Status of Women provides key leadership in working to focus conversations about the strengths and challenges facing women and how this can be applied to current policy challenges, including education, jobs and our economy. However, successful work in this area requires dedicated staff and sufficient funding.

We respectfully urge your support for the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women. As a member of the National Association of Commissions for Women, I know that I am joined by all of our national partner organizations when I say that our women and girls are a critical investment for state government and a key element of our economic recovery and success. Thank you for your consideration.

“When women are fully involved, the benefits can be seen immediately; families are healthier; they are better fed; their income, savings, and reinvestment go up. And what is true of families is true of communities, and eventually, of whole countries.”

Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize winning economist

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Lidbury
Executive Director

Celeste Hodge

From: Smith, Sally (Begich) <Sally_Smith@begich.senate.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2012 10:02 AM
To: Celeste Hodge
Subject: RE: Alaska Senate Bill 53- Reestablish Alaska Women's Commission

Celeste, thanks so much for reaching out to me on this. My travel was a bit intense and there was no opportunity to call in. I'm hopeful the wisdom of re-establishing the commission was so obvious there was no need for me.

From: Celeste Hodge [mailto:Celeste_Hodge@legis.state.ak.us]
Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2012 5:00 PM
To: Smith, Sally (Begich)
Subject: Alaska Senate Bill 53- Reestablish Alaska Women's Commission

Sally,

I left a voicemail message at your office and also emailed Susanne about getting support from SMB's office for SB53 – Reestablishment of the Alaska Women's Commission. I understand you are out of the office until next week, but hope you can testify at the Senate Finance hearing tomorrow morning, 9 AM. If you're unable to testify in person, please call the teleconference number at 855-463-5009. Please let me know if you have questions. See email below and attached for information about the bill. Thanks.

Celeste Graham-Hodge, Committee Aide
Senate Health & Social Services Committee
Office of Senator Bettye Davis
716 W. 4th Avenue #400
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(907) 269-4049; (907) 269-0148 (Fax)

(While in Session)

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 465-4906; (907) 465-3756 (Fax)
Toll Free: 1-800-770-3822
Celeste_Hodge@legis.state.ak.us

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From: Katya Wassillie
Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2012 1:52 PM
To: Celeste Hodge
Subject: Alaska Senate Bill 53- Reestablish Alaska Women's Commission

Hello,

My name is Katya Wassillie and I'm an intern with the office of Senator Bettye Davis at the Alaska State Legislature. I'm writing to inform you and request your support of a bill that our office is currently working to pass, Senate Bill 53. This bill, which you can find as an attachment to this email, along with the sponsor statement, will reestablish the Alaska Women's Commission. The Commission was originally created in 1978, then renewed and renamed the Alaska Women's

Commission in 1983. In 1993, the Commission was combined with the Alaska Human Relations Commission and the Alaska Commission on Children and received no funding. In 1996, the combined Commission was declared inactive. Now, staggering statistics indicate a need to reestablish the Commission. Because of this, we are requesting your help.

Tomorrow, January 20th, this legislation will be heard in the Senate Finance Committee at 9:00 A.M. (Alaska time). Senator Davis is hoping that you can testify in support of SB 53 via teleconference. The number to dial into the teleconference is 855-463-5009. We ask that you please testify on how your Women's Commission has been of benefit to your state to encourage our state to reestablish a Women's Commission and experience the same positive results. You can also contact the members of the Senate Finance Committee by clicking on this link:

http://aksenate.org/davis/send_letter.php

If you have any questions, please call me at (907)-465-5194. If I'm unavailable when you call, leave me a message with your contact information and I will return your call as soon as possible. I will be happy to forward you any supporting documents you may need. Also, you can visit BASIS (the state legislation database) at www.legis.state.ak.us to find detailed information about the bill.

Thank you so much for your help and support.

Katya Wassillie
Intern- Office of Senator Bettye Davis
(907)-465-5194

Sen. Bettye Davis

From: Barbara Belknap [bjbelknap@gci.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 27, 2011 7:09 PM
To: Sen. Bettye Davis
Subject: SB 53 - Alaska Commission on the Status of Women

RECEIVED

MAR 27 2011

Dear Senator Davis,

I was thrilled to hear that this bill had been introduced to reestablish an Alaska Commission on the Status of Women. We have been traveling and just got back to town. I went on BASIS and saw that it was heard but don't see any more hearings scheduled.

What can I do to help?

Barbara Belknap
4481 Abby Way
Juneau, AK 99801
209-8602



AARP Alaska
3601 C Street
Suite 1420
Anchorage, AK 99503

T 1-866-227-7447
F 907-341-2270
TTY 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org/ak

February 21, 2012

To: Members of the Alaska Senate

RE: SB 53 (Davis)—Support

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we encourage you to vote in support of SB 53, authored by Senator Bettye Davis and co-sponsored by Senator Johnny Ellis and Senator Lesil McGuire.

SB 53 would reestablish the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women.

Women's issues are different from those of the entire population. AARP has always paid particular attention to women's issues simply because they are often unique and need to be viewed through a different lens.

We understand that the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women would address issues of importance to Alaska women of all ages.

But simply from the standpoint of women over the age of 50, we believe the Commission is worthwhile and should be re-established:

- Women are at a higher risk of poverty as they age. Nearly twice as many women as men will face poverty in their retirement years. Women earn 77 cents on the dollar compared to men. This translates as an average of \$250,000 less over their work lives to invest in retirement.
- Women over age 50 are more than twice as likely as men over 50 to frequently miss activities due to a lack of transportation.
- Older women face particular challenges in getting access to training and educational programs that enable them to increase their job skills. The AARP Foundation has a scholarship program for older women with low incomes. A third of the recipients are grandparents and almost half of the recipients were in dead-end jobs.
- Working women are often the sole or primary economic support for their families, yet they tend to be concentrated in low-paying occupations. More than two-thirds of the part-time workforce is made up of women, with less job security and little or no access to employer-provided benefits.
- The vast majority of family caregivers are women. Many are forced to drop out of the labor force altogether to take on family caregiving responsibilities.

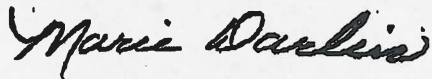
Health care access, displaced homemakers, widowhood, credit issues, economic vulnerability, out-of-pocket health costs, retirement system disparities, Social Security disparities, spousal pension rights...the list goes on and on...all good reasons to have an Alaska Commission on the Status of Women.

AARP recommends an "AYE" vote on SB 53.

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marie Darlin".

Marie Darlin, Coordinator
AARP Capital City Task Force
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506
Juneau, AK 99801
586-3637 (voice)
463-3580 (fax)



AARP Alaska
3601 C Street
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January 19, 2012

The Honorable Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska Capitol, Room 518
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

The Honorable Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska Capitol, Room 516
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: SB 53 (Davis)—Support

Dear Co-Chairs Hoffman and Stedman:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we encourage you and your colleagues on the Senate Finance Committee to support SB 53, authored by Senator Bettye Davis and co-sponsored by your Committee colleague Senator Johnny Ellis.

SB 53 would reestablish the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women.

Women's issues are different from those of the entire population. AARP has always paid particular attention to women's issues simply because they are often unique and need to be viewed through a different lens.

We understand that the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women would address issues of importance to Alaska women of all ages.

But simply from the standpoint of women over the age of 50, we believe the Commission is worthwhile and should be re-established:

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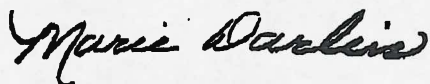
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Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Marie Darlin, Coordinator
AARP Capital City Task Force
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506
Juneau, AK 99801
586-3637 (voice)
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Senator Johnny Ellis
Senator Dennis Egan
Senator Donald Olson
Senator Leslie McGuire
Senator Joe Thomas
Senator Bettye Davis



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March 25, 2011

The Honorable Bill Wielechowski, Chair
Senate State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 101
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: SB 53 (Davis)—Support

Dear Chair Wielechowski:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we encourage you and your colleagues on the Senate State Affairs Committee to support SB 53, authored by Senator Bettye Davis and co-sponsored by Senator Johnny Ellis.

SB 53 would reestablish the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women.

Women's issues are different from those of the entire population. AARP has always paid particular attention to women's issues simply because they are often unique and need to be viewed through a different lens.

We understand that the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women would address issues of importance to Alaska women of all ages.

But simply from the standpoint of women over the age of 50, we believe the Commission is worthwhile and should be re-established:

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- The vast majority of family caregivers are women. Many are forced to drop out of the labor force altogether to take on family caregiving responsibilities.

Health care access, displaced homemakers, widowhood, credit issues, economic vulnerability, out-of-pocket health costs, retirement system disparities, Social Security disparities, spousal pension rights...the list goes on and on...all good reasons to have an Alaska Commission on the Status of Women.

AARP recommends an "AYE" vote on SB 53.

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,

Marie Darlin

Marie Darlin, Coordinator
AARP Capital City Task Force
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506
Juneau, AK 99801
586-3637 (voice)
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Vice-Chair Joe Paskvan
Senator Albert Kookesh
Senator Kevin Meyer
Senator Cathy Giessel
Senator Bettye Davis

Sen. Bettye Davis

From: Hall_Sheila [Hall_Sheila@asdk12.org]
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2011 9:59 AM
To: Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Bettye Davis
Cc: Joy Green-Armstrong
Subject: Support of SB53

RECEIVED

MAR 24 2011

Dear Senators,

This message is in support of SB53 to reestablish the Alaska Women's Commission because of the needs delineated in this bill. I believe the Commission can offer support to women and children in many ways. In addition, women have many challenges maintaining small businesses in Alaska.

We need resources that will focus on the many critical issues that negatively impact women entrepreneurs.

As president of the Anchorage chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. I recognize the importance of this bill. Our sorority mission is "Service to All Mankind." We focus on programs and initiatives addressing problems concerning women and girls which lead to the betterment of the expanded community. Our members feel the Alaska Women's Commission is valuable and support SB53.

Sincerely,

Sheila Judge Hall
President
Psi Omega Chapter
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.

RECEIVED

MAR 24 2011

SB53

Sen. Bettye Davis

From: Mary Shields [mshields@pdstech.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2011 9:17 AM
To: Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Joe Paskvan; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Albert Kookesh; Sen. Kevin Meyer
Cc: Sen. Bettye Davis
Subject: Senate Bill 53
Attachments: Alaska Commission on the Status of Women Letter of Testimony.doc

The Honorable Bill Wielechowski, Chair
Senate State Affairs Committee

Honorable Members of the Committee

Please find attached my letter of support regarding Senate Bill 53. If it were possible for me to be in attendance for oral testimony regarding the reestablishment of the Commission on the Status of Women, I would certainly do so as written testimony can only go so far.

Thank you for accepting this letter of support.

Kind regards,

Mary E. Shields

Mary E. Shields
3941 East 7th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

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March 24, 2011

The Honorable Bill Wielechowski, Senator
Chair, State Affairs
Alaska State Senate
Juneau, Alaska

My dear Senator Wielechowski:

Since the Commission was merged with the Human Relations Commission in 1993 only cursory attention has been given to the myriad changes that have taken place for women in our State. In fact, the Human Relations Commission was never funded and declared inactive in 1996.

The function of the Women's Commission was to address the status of women in the home, workforce and community by examining their access to education, work opportunities, and civil and legal rights. A statewide plan was developed which identified and made recommendations regarding the needs of women and children in our state and how to enhance their quality of life.

Needless to say, the roles of women have changed dramatically over the past two decades. More women are employed year round and their occupations are more varied. Women are achieving higher levels of education. Contributions by women to the family income have continued to grow and are often necessary for a family's economic stability.

However, two things have not changed: the gender wage gap is still much too high with women earning only approximately 77 cents on the dollar that men earn, and the status of rape and domestic abuse in Alaska still leads the rest of the United States for this type of crime.

It is my firm belief that as women in our state prosper, so do their families – particularly their children. A woman secure in her person – mentally, physically and financially - is also secure in her ability to complete her education, assist her children in completing theirs and providing the stable home which makes that possible.

As we continue to move forward in this decade, it is time we again recognized that an emphasis in this area is needed. It has been shown since the change in 1993 that without the focus of a commission that takes direct aim at these problems, we will never find a solution.

I urge you to pass Senate Bill No. 53 and reestablish the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary E. Shields

Mary E. Shields
3941 East 7th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

*Sum
Menden*

**Testimony on SB53 – Reestablishment of the Alaska Women's Commission
Senate Finance Committee, January 20, 2012**

I remember when the Alaska Women's Commission shut its doors during Governor Hickel's administration. Governor Hickel replaced it with the Alaska Family Commission. A few months later, in March 1996, there was a women's conference in Centennial Hall and hundreds of women came from around the state.

On the last day, a group of women met in the center of the hall as the janitors cleaned up around us. Several women had been to the 5th United Nations Women's Conference in Beijing, and were anxious to share what they had learned before they returned to their homes all over the state.

On that afternoon, we also talked about what we could do now that the Women's Commission was gone. How would women communicate with each other across this vast state? How would we let women know what resources were available to them? We decided to establish a website, and we called it the Alaska Women's Network. It still exists and is a great resource. I was one of the founding board members, and served as President until just a few years ago.

What we learned at the Alaska Women's Network is that women need a central place to find information. AWN has a lot of information, but it is passive and does not generate new resources for the women of our state.

I have a historical reference here. This is the Women's Legal Rights Handbook published by the Alaska Women's Commission in 1990. Marie Darlin, a longtime community activist in Juneau, gave it to me years ago for safe keeping. Maybe she knew a day would come when the Commission would be resurrected.

Governor Parnell has made reducing violence against Alaskan women one of his top priorities with the Choose Respect campaign. This 31 year old booklet covers Criminal Law and Violence Against Women in plain English with a Glossary in the back. It also

covers adoption, name changes, and other legal matters that might come up for a woman in Alaska. At one time, I had another Alaska Women's Commission report. It was a study of why girls dropped out of school.

In addition to updating old studies, an Alaska Women's Commission could take a hard look at the wage gap for women in this state. It is against federal law to pay a woman less than a man for the same job, but no matter how you cut it, women all over Alaska make less money than men in the same jobs. I hope that military service is the exception, but I don't know that for a fact. The Juneau Economic Development Council's 2011 report on Juneau and Southeast Economic Indicators laid out the wage disparity in every civilian field and at every education level.

The report says that nationally men earned 29% more than their female counterparts in 2009. In Alaska, men earned 37% more for full time year round employment. In Juneau, which is seen as a government town where one would expect wage parity for women, men earned 42% more than their female counterparts.

While many women, including myself, reacted with surprise and indignation at these figures when they came out in the Juneau Empire in April, where could we go with that? Who could dig into those numbers and find out if federal wage laws were being broken or, to be kind, were not understood by employers. I began to study pay equity and I have reams of material, but no authority to enforce the law.

By the way, Representative Munoz told me that her grandmother, Thelma Engstrom, introduced legislation in the Alaska Territorial Legislature in 1946 for pay equity between men and women. That was 66 years ago

It is a fact that far too many women earn less than men for the same jobs in this state. That is illegal, it is not fair, and it impacts our economy. It is a fact that Alaska leads the country in violence by men against women. It is a fact that the cost of living in Alaska is high, and low income women can get stuck in dangerous relationships because they cannot afford to take care of themselves and their children. So they stay.

Pay equity and prevention of violence against women are two of my passions, but an Alaska Women's Commission would provide information and education, conduct research to find out what women need, and make and implement recommendations for the women of this state on a wide range of issues.

Last night, a friend told me that women make up 67% of the University of Alaska Southeast student body. 67%.

Who's going to tell those women that if they become an engineer or an architect in Juneau, the man in the next cubicle will most likely be paid 96% more than they'll get. Their women friends who choose finance or insurance, however, will have male co-workers who make 213% more. Their best bet in Alaska is to take up fishing. There is just a 2% pay differential if they get a boat and a commercial fishing license.

Would you advise these bright young women to stay in Alaska and earn less than their potential, or move to another state where they have a fair shot at equal pay? Alaska ranks 41st in the country in the male to female earnings ratio. California ranks second. As these UAS women are walking to class in 12 degree weather, sunshine and fair pay might sound pretty good to them, to say nothing of the women at UAF and UAA.

Alaska has the dubious distinction of record high sexual and physical abuse of women. Choose Respect is a priority for our current Governor, but what if the next Governor's priorities lie elsewhere? Each Governor comes into the office with his or her own ideas of what Alaska needs.

While Senate Bill 53 doesn't address it, I would respectfully suggest that the Alaska Women's Commission be safeguarded in statute from the philosophical or personal world view of the powers that be. Leaders come and go, we women stay.

I ask you to support Senate Bill 53 to improve the status of the women of this great state in all aspects of our lives. No non-profit can do the caliber of work an official Women's Commission can do if it is fully funded and supported by the Governor and the Legislature.

Submitted by: ASSEMBLY MEMBERS GRAY-JACKSON
Prepared by: Assembly Counsel's Office
For reading: March 29, 2011

**ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AR NO. 2011-**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY IN SUPPORT OF ALASKA
SENATE BILL 53, REESTABLISHING ALASKA WOMEN'S COMMISSION.**

WHEREAS, passage of Senate Bill (SB) 53 will reestablish the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women with nine non-salaried public members appointed by the governor on a nonpartisan and nondiscriminatory basis, with consideration given to recommendations made by civic organizations, employer groups, labor unions, homemakers' clubs, and other organizations having an interest in the welfare and status of women; geographical and occupational diversity; representation of senior citizens, minorities, low income families, persons with disabilities, and women with differing numbers of children; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Legislature first established the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women in 1978, to serve as a statewide network for study and action on a variety of issues including the achievement of equal legal, economic, social and political status specifically for women in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, in 1983, the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women was renewed and renamed the Alaska Women's Commission, and continued to develop and produce a comprehensive statewide plan that identified the needs of children and youth, publishing annual reports and making recommendations to enhance the quality of life for women and children in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Women's Commission merged with the Alaska Human Relations Commission in 1993, but the Alaska Human Relations Commission has never been funded and was declared inactive in 1996; and

WHEREAS, Alaska has the highest rates of sexual assault and domestic violence in the nation, with women and children continuing to be the most common victims of domestic abuse; and

WHEREAS, Alaska has a struggling foster child care system and Alaska's high school students, both male and female, drop out at alarming rates; and

WHEREAS, there is an extreme and renewed need for a commission focused on women's issues and the reestablishment of the Alaska Women's Commission is an additional step toward reversing the current trends that have negatively impacted women and children in our community and throughout our state;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Anchorage Assembly resolves:

The Anchorage Assembly supports passage of Senate Bill 53, reestablishing the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women, and all our state legislators are encouraged during this legislative session, to move forward measures to support and address the challenges faced by women and children within our communities, thereby strengthening our state and ensuring our future.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this _____ day of _____, 2011.

Chair

ATTEST:

Municipal Clerk