



March 6, 2014

The Honorable Mike Dunleavy
Chairman, Senate Labor & Commerce Committee
Alaska State Senate
Capitol Room 510
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: House Bill 141 – Workers' Compensation Medical Fees

Dear Senator Dunleavy,

The mission of the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce (Alaska Chamber) is to promote a positive business environment in Alaska. The Alaska Chamber represents hundreds of businesses, manufacturers and local chambers from across Alaska. Our members support legislation that updates and clarifies laws, provides regulatory certainty, and that generally improves Alaska's business climate. The Alaska Chamber supports House Bill 141 (HB 141) as it contributes to reducing the costs of workers' compensation for Alaska businesses while also providing predictability.

Reducing workers' compensation costs in Alaska benefits all Alaskans by making Alaska more competitive in creating and maintaining jobs. A reformed system will improve treatment programs, promote injury recovery and return to full employment by injured workers. Alaska's workers' compensation costs are the highest in the nation. Every employer is impacted by workers' compensation and having the highest rates in the nation makes Alaska less competitive in creating and maintaining jobs.

HB 141 eliminates the potential for workers compensation claims that are treated in another state to bill at Alaska's higher rates. This legislation specifies that reimbursement for services is billed under the workers compensation statutes of the state where services are rendered within 180 days after the services are rendered. This eliminates the ability for providers to back bill for claims that were paid and presumed by the employer to be closed, years after the fact, which can be financially devastating for employers. This legislation provides predictability, and therefore stability to Alaskan businesses as they budget and plan for the future.

HB 141 is certainly not a cure-all for Alaska's high workers' compensation costs, but it is an important step in the right direction. The Alaska Chamber appreciates your work to improve Alaska's business climate and respectfully asks you support HB 141 in the Senate Labor & Commerce Committee and final passage on the Senate floor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Rachael Petro'.

Rachael Petro
President/CEO