



February 21, 2013

The Honorable Anna Fairclough
State Capitol, Room 514
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Fairclough,

On behalf of the Juneau Suicide Prevention Coalition, I am writing in support of the continuation of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council.

The Juneau Suicide Prevention Coalition, established in 2008, is an active coalition of mental health/social service providers, educators, survivors, faith-based community, law enforcement, veteran's advocates, concerned citizens, community groups, and other dedicated community members working together to maintain community wide suicide awareness and prevention in Juneau.

Our Coalition is committed to reducing the loss and suffering caused by suicide and suicidal behavior in Juneau. The Coalition offers information and education about issues relating to suicide, as well as support to families and community members who have lost loved ones to suicide. It is our hope that through our efforts we can lessen the incidence of suicide and the stigma associated with suicide loss.

Year after year suicide continues to be a significant issue in our state, and now the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council's work and presence is more important and relevant than ever. Alaska's suicide rates continue to be twice as high as the national average. With Alaska's population of smaller, tight knit communities these losses have a tremendous effect on all of us.

In January 2010 the Statewide Council brought various entities and stakeholders together to discuss and share suicide prevention efforts across the state. The Council published a comprehensive statewide suicide prevention plan, *Casting The Net Upstream: Promoting Wellness to Prevent Suicide*, to promote healthy Alaskan's and strengthen the ties across our state.

Because of the distance between communities within our state, communication and collaboration on a statewide level has proven difficult. The presence of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council has helped to bridge the gaps between these communities so that we can share ideas and work together as one state in a coordinated and consistent fashion to prevent suicides throughout Alaska. Please extend the Council's statutory authority, since they continue to play a vital role in our state.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Walter Majoros'.

Walter Majoros
Co-Chair