



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
STATE LEGISLATURE

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House Finance Committee
Education Finance Subcommittee Chair
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Sponsor Statement
University of Alaska Board of Regents

The Territory of Alaska was established in 1912. Five years later the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines were established. To govern these two post-secondary education institutions, the Territorial Legislature established the Board of Trustees consisting of eight members. Almost 103 years later the University of Alaska boasts a massive 32,000 plus students a year, governed by an 11 member Board of Regents, one of whom is a full time student.

Throughout the past century there have been 143 trustees and regents. Of those, 23 have been Student Regents, 15 have been from Juneau, 28 have been from a community located "off the road system", 31 have been from Anchorage and 56 have been from Fairbanks. Excluding Student Regents, only two Regents have been from the Kenai Peninsula and none have been from the Mat-Su Valley.

In 1946, the state's population was 103,000. In 2015, 69 years later, Alaska has exploded to an estimated population of 735,601. Looking at specific regions of Alaska that have experienced notable growth, it is apparent that, for the last 40 years, the Mat-Su Valley has significantly outpaced the other regions of the state, and even the nation, in regard to percentile population growth. The Kenai Peninsula has also had massive population growth in the last 40 years.

A direct correlation in school district expansion and population growth exists in these two regions. The Mat-Su Borough School District is the second largest school district in the state, followed by Fairbanks and then Kenai. Between 2009 and 2013, an average of 12.6% the University's first-time, degree-seeking, Alaskan freshman, were from the Mat-Su and 6.6% from the Kenai Peninsula.

A visit to the Board of Regents website identifies the following mission statement:

"The University of Alaska inspires learning, and advances and disseminates knowledge through teaching, research, and public service, emphasizing the North and its diverse peoples."

In accordance with the diversity of the University of Alaska, and the state as a whole, this bill calls for a change to the composition of the of the University's Board of Regents giving a voice to those in the Mat-Su Valley, on the Kenai Peninsula, and to those living "off the road system."