

NFIB

The Voice of Small Business.®

ALASKA

April 1, 2016

The Honorable Berta Gardner
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Attention: Katie Bruggeman

RE: Senate Bill 156

Dear Senator Gardner:

On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business/Alaska, I wish to respectfully share our continued opposition to Senate Bill 156. The National Federation of Independent Business is the largest small-business advocacy group in Alaska.

The NFIB/AK continues to question why it is appropriate to mandate this benefit on small employers yet not mandate it on your own state employees.

We appreciate your sharing the March 28, 2016 opinion from the Division of Legal and Research Services. We do not question the discussion and conclusion regarding the ERISA presumptions. We do, however, believe that the State of Alaska, as an employer, has the opportunity and responsibility to decide the content of benefits provided under AS 39.30. The design of a health care program is the province of the employer working with its employees. The determination of the choice of it being a traditionally insured or self-insured program is a different decision.

NFIB continues to believe that the state can and should decide the benefits its employees receive through AS 39.30, not necessarily by attempting to do so through AS 21. We would still feel the unfairness of small businesses being required to provide benefits that are not mandated on those employers large enough to self-insure.

Certainly, if the state of Alaska believes this is important to mandate this benefit, it is difficult for small businesses to understand why it is not an important benefit for employees of the state of Alaska and its political subdivisions.

Sincerely yours,



Dennis L. DeWitt
Alaska State Director

Cc: NFIB/AK Leadership Council