

Konrad Jackson

From: Cheryl Gilmour [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 02, 2016 12:27 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: Fwd: Support HB 4002

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Cheryl Gilmour [REDACTED]
Date: June 2, 2016 at 11:31:39 AM AKDT
To: Kurt.Olson@akleg.gov
Subject: Support HB 4002

Dear Honorable Olson,
Please support HB 4002 providing health benefits for Police/Fire employees killed in the line of duty. There sacrifice should never be forgotten nor their families by the State of Alaska. I am acutely aware of the State of Alaska budget deficit however; It is never the wrong time to do the right thing. Please support HB4002.
Sincerely

Cheryl L Gilmour
[REDACTED]
Fairbanks Ak 99708

I am a "Life long Alaskan born in Ketchikan work in Barrow live in Fairbanks" Graduated from High School in Anc and college at UAA and UAF!

Sent from my iPhone

Konrad Jackson

From: Grimes, Daniel [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 1:44 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: HB 4002

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Representative Olson,

Governor Walker has introduced HB4002, "An Act relating to major medical insurance coverage under the Public Employees' Retirement System of Alaska for certain surviving spouses and dependent children of peace officers and firefighters; and providing for an effective date." The bill is scheduled to be heard by the House Labor and Commerce Committee. I am imploring you to support this bill.

I have served in the emergency services field for over 24 years. I am proud of the work that we do, and what it represents – service above self, placing ourselves in harm's way to protect and save others. I did not choose this career field with any concept of "getting rich", nor did I do it for accolades or glory. I serve because it is my calling, because I know that there are others that need me. On the list, the hierarchy of who needs me, my family is on the very top and deservedly so. They sacrifice everyday so that I can do what I do. Missing time, meals, events, anniversaries, these are all par for the course, and they take it in stride. The worrying, knowing that I will be responding day and night to potentially life threatening events, is also a constant specter. They understand, as do I, that this is what I, we, signed up for. They are proud of me, and I am proud of them for allowing me to serve.

What I cannot stand, or stomach – is the fear I must face each day. Not the fear of danger, you see I am trained and equipped to handle that fear – to put it aside, and move forward with calculated risk to do the job I have sworn to do. No, the fear that haunts me is the fear that my family will be left without a husband and father, unprepared for the sudden financial burden of losing their provider. The wages and benefits of my profession are not unpalatable, they allow me to take care of my loved ones which is all I ask. However, the danger exists that one day I may not be able to work. Our retirement system has been structured in such a way as to provide even then, for my family and I to some extent. If I complete my time within that system, I will receive financial benefits that will assist in my waning years. If for some reason I cannot continue to work due to an on the job injury, there are provisions that will allow me to obtain a medical retirement, which still assists me in taking care of myself and loved ones.

And yet, If I die in the line of duty – As my two friends and brothers in arms Scott Johnson and Gabe Rich did two years ago, my family will not have the benefit of that financial security. This is a shame, a travesty really. Yes, we knowingly risk a lot to save others – but is it too much to ask that we can sleep a little easier, knowing that our loved ones will be ok?

Thank you for your consideration,

Dan Grimes, Deputy Chief
Central Emergency Services

231 S. Binkley Street

Soldotna, AK 99669

Ph# (907) 262-4792



Fax# (907) 260-6236

Konrad Jackson

From: Eric Olsen [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 8:34 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Jim Colver; Rep. Liz Vazquez; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Rep. David Talerico; Rep. Mike Chenault; Representative.Craig.Johnson@akleg.org; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; Rep. Dan Saddler; Rep. Tammie Wilson; Representative.Shelly.Hughes@akleg.org; Representative.Steve.Thompson@akleg.org; Rep. Mark Neuman; Rep. Lora Reinbold; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Lance Pruitt; Rep. Cathy Tilton; Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux; Rep. Chris Tuck; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. David Guttenberg; Rep. Scott Kawasaki; Rep. Les Gara; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Harriet Drummond; Representative.Jonathan.Kriess-Tompkins@akleg.gov; Representative.Bob.Lynn@akleg.org; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Benjamin Nageak; Rep. Adam Wool; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Wes Keller; Sen. Mia Costello; Senator.Lesil.McGuire@akleg.org; Sen. Click Bishop; Senator.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.org; Senator.Donald.Olson@akleg.org; Senator.Pete.Kelly@akleg.org; Senator.Kevin.Meyer@akleg.org; Senator.Charlie.Huggins@akleg.org; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Senator.Anna.McKinnon@akleg.org; Senator.Bert.Steadman@akleg.org; Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.org; Senator.Dennis.Egan@akleg.org; Senator.Berta.Gardner@akleg.org; Senator.Johnny.Ellis@akleg.org; Senator.Bill.Stotze@akleg.gov; Sen. Peter Micciche; Senator.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.org; Senator.Mike.Dunleavy@akleg.org; Senator.John.Coghill@akleg.org
Cc: Sen. Mia Costello; Senator.Lesil.McGuire@akleg.org; Sen. Click Bishop; Senator.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.org; Senator.Donald.Olson@akleg.org; Senator.Pete.Kelly@akleg.org; Senator.Kevin.Meyer@akleg.org; Senator.Charlie.Huggins@akleg.org; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Senator.Anna.McKinnon@akleg.org; Senator.Bert.Steadman@akleg.org; Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.org; Senator.Dennis.Egan@akleg.org; Senator.Berta.Gardner@akleg.org; Senator.Johnny.Ellis@akleg.org; Senator.Bill.Stotze@akleg.gov; Sen. Peter Micciche; Senator.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.org; Senator.Mike.Dunleavy@akleg.org; Senator.John.Coghill@akleg.org
Subject: Pass HB 4002
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To the honorable Representative Kurt Olson and other distinguished members of the Alaska Legislative body,

I am asking for your support for the House and Labor and Commerce Committee to pass HB 4002.

I am a law enforcement officer (LEO) and I have been a LEO for over 18 years in the State of Alaska. During my time as a LEO, I have attended many funerals for fellow LEO's that have been killed in the line of duty. I have looked into the eyes of their surviving families and I have seen the resulting heartaches of dealing with the passing of a loved one. I wasn't even on the job for more than a couple of months before I went to my first funeral for a coworker who was murdered while protecting the citizens of Alaska.

Since then, I have attended funerals of other LEO's and most recently, I attended the funeral of my good friend and fellow coworker, Sgt. Scott Johnson. Scott was not just my coworker, Scott was the flame that ignited the passion of protecting others without asking for anything back. We shared an office together for many years. We responded to calls together, we investigated the worst of the worst behavior in mankind; homicides, sex assaults, sex abuse of children, etc., etc. Scott and I spent time at each others homes and our families shared common bonds. We were a family at work and at home. We were a family within a family.

I'll never forget the day that I was told by my dispatchers that Sgt. Scott Johnson and Trp. Gabe Rich were murdered. My first thoughts were for Brandy Johnson and the children, as well as for Trp. Rich's family. To say that I was devastated and crushed is an understatement. My heart still aches today.

Surviving spouses and families who lose their law enforcement / firefighting loved ones in the line of duty are victimized again when they find out they no longer receive medical survivor benefits due to the death of their loved one in the line of duty. This is totally unacceptable.

We as a society have a direct responsibility to make sure that we take care of those who literally place their lives on the line every time they put on their uniform to serve and protect the public. The job of a law enforcement officer is not easy. There is a reason why LEO's have difficulty making it to retirement. There is a reason why law enforcement departments are not able to fill their vacancies. The job of a law enforcement officer is often a thankless job that absorbs negative sentiment from those they are trying to protect. We as law enforcement officers will place ourselves in harms way to protect others. Why, it's because it's what we do. We took an oath to place our lives on the line to help others in need. We do this job because we are passionate in what we do.

I respectfully implore that you and the rest of the legislative body vote to provide medical benefits to spouses and survivors of police officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty. This isn't something that can wait. It is inevitable that more law enforcement officers and firefighters will die in the line of duty.

Please show the surviving family members that you care, show Alaska residents that you care, show that the legislative body knows and understands the loss of our law enforcement / firefighting brothers and sisters were not in vain. Please show Alaska that you support the passing of law to make sure there are survivor benefits.

This issue is important to our governor, our citizens of Alaska, our working law enforcement officers and fire fighters, and most importantly; it's important to those future families that will endure the hardship of losing their loved one while protecting Alaska. Your vote to pass this bill is more than a simple vote, it's an investment into the hard work that is performed selflessly everyday, hour after hour, minute after minute by those who serve with pride and with loyalty.

Thank you for your time. I sincerely appreciate it.

Eric T. Olsen

[REDACTED]

Kodiak, AK 99615

[REDACTED]

Konrad Jackson

From: Jake Metcalfe <jake@pseaadmin.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 4:21 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson; Representative.Shelley.Hughes@akleg.gov
Subject: FW: HB 4002

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
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Representatives:

I listened to the House Labor and Commerce Committee meeting today. I would like to provide you with information on a couple of questions and issues that came up during today's meeting.

Several committee members asked at today's meeting about other states providing spouse and survivor benefits to peace officers and firefighters. There were also questions raised about the legality of benefits for specific employee groups. The same questions were raised several months ago by legislators, in response to HB 66 and SB 2002.

To address these questions and concerns, PSEA Local 803 requested and provided research to legislators from our International Union, AFSCME. We asked AFSCME how many states provided health care benefits to spouses and survivors of peace officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty, and the legality of such benefits. The AFSCME research response to our request is bolded below. As you will read, the benefits provided in HB 4002 are not new to other states, illegal or likely subject to legal challenge.

If you have any questions, please let me know. If you like, I can request Mr. Romero testify as to the research he did that is bolded below.

Last, and for your information, when the language of HB 4002 was offered as an amendment to SB 91 during the regular session this year, the Legislature's attorney, Dan Wayne, provided a legal opinion that concurred with my Romero's research below. I'm sure Mr. Wayne's opinion is available for your review.

HB 4002 is a simple bill, with little cost, that provides a benefit to those that have made the ultimate, life circumstances changing, sacrifice. Please pass it.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Jake Metcalfe

Executive Director

PSEA/AFSCME Local 803

907-337-1979

Brother Metcalfe:

I did a Lexis search in the 14 states that currently provide health insurance benefits to survivors of police officers killed in the line of duty and was unable to find any reported cases in which other public employees challenged these benefits on grounds that they did not receive the same benefit or coverage.

As a general rule public employers have discretion when structuring health benefit plans and are able to make distinctions among employee populations regarding access to and the level of benefits offered. Such distinctions must be based on bona fide employment-based classifications (e.g., date of hire or length of service, differing occupations, full-time versus part-time employee status) and not on health factors or other discriminatory bases (i.e., race, color, sex, national origin or religion of the insured). The legislatures in states with the survivors health insurance benefit have recognized that police officers, firefighters and other public safety officers work in hazardous conditions to protect life and property and have determined that the survivors of those who have died in the line of duty deserve special consideration. It is unlikely that a court would invalidate this distinction.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

In solidarity,

Juan Romero

Labor Economist

AFSCME

1625 L Street, NW

Washington, DC 20036

202-429-1221

jromero@afscme.org

Konrad Jackson

From: Jessica [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 9:38 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: HB 4002
Attachments: 20160508_183251.jpg

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Kurt,

I'm writing you tonight in regards to HB 4002. As an Alaska State Troopers wife I urge you to pass this bill.

My husband and I met in Juneau, while we were in high school at JDHS. During those days we talked about our hopes and dreams. I always remember home saying "I want to become someone not only my children will look up to but my community as well" He joined the coast guard at the young age of 19. While he was stationed in the lower 48 I stayed in Alaska and worked on my college degree. But after six years he didn't get that feeling he'd always talked about. That's when he decided to become an Alaska State Trooper.

Its been almost six years since he signed on with the Troopers. We now have two beautiful little girls. Our oldest looks up to her daddy and adores him. Now that she is older she is starting to realize daddy isn't home much and its hard to explain to 4 year old that her daddy isn't here with her because he's making sure everyone else's families are safe.

As his wife I've placed my dreams on hold. My husbands long, odd hour shifts make it hard for me to find a job that can work with those hours.

So now you're telling me if my husband is killed while trying to protect our community my kids and myself will be kicked to the curb like junk. He spends upwards of 50-60 hours away from us weekly to help protect others. If we were to loose him, we'd loose everything.

My husband recently told me that his job is so demanding he feel that he lives just to work. That is dedication. So he's dedicating his life to this state but they are saying if he dies they could care less about his fa iky.

Please I beg you to take a minute and think out this. Place yourself in our shoes. I'm not sure if you have children but if you do, think about them and how life would be if this happened to your family. Now take another moment and look at these two little girls and imagine how hard their life would be if they lost their dad in the line of duty.

Thank you for your time,

Jessica Brent

Konrad Jackson

From: Katherine Tilley [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 11:18 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: HB 4002

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear committee members,

My name is Katherine Tilley, I'm a life long Alaskan mother of two amazing little boys, and the spouse of a Alaska state trooper. I've written multiple letters, pleaded with my fellow Alaskans to do the same, shared information and done everything I can conceive to show my support in providing health insurance for the families of peace officers and fire fighters who have died protecting the people of Alaska.

Recently it has been said that the dependents of those who gave their lives in the protection of the people of Alaska "don't have enough skin in the game.", and the request for health insurance coverage was compared to a child asking for toys. This is not only absolutely unacceptably disrespectful to the families mourning the loss of a husband, father, wife, or mother, it is wholly untrue.

Scott and Brandy Johnson paid 23 of 25 years into PERS, not to mention the personal sacrifices throughout those 23 years that come with being a law enforcement officers family.

We give hours of lost sleep afraid for our loved one. We lose relationships with friends and even blood relatives over a peace officers career choice. Our children are told by friends that they're not allowed to play with them anymore. Our children don't get to celebrate regular holidays with the peace officer, or have them at important events.

We have criminals target our homes, take pictures of our homes, post pictures of our cars and even children on social media, follow us around the grocery store. You quickly learn to never tell new acquaintances what your spouse does for a living. These are all things that have, and do happen to Alaska state trooper families.

We live in places most other people won't, not that I mind, but for others that can understandably be a huge hardship.

Spouses give up careers, and dreams to fill the demand of acting as a single parent in most situations.

Do you know how it feels mentally and physically to hear gun shots and sirens in the distance, and know someone you love is being shot at? I do.

I can't speak personally of what it is like to be a spouse of a fire fighter. However I do have the basic amount of empathy and understanding, any breathing human being possess, which allows me to understand that it comes with tremendous amounts of stress, and hardships a regular civilian can't conceive. I, as an Alaskan am tremendously grateful for the sacrifices the families of Fire fighters make daily to insure my well being, and provide life saving services.

Every day these men and women risk their lives in support of the laws we as the people and law makers of Alaska ask them to enforce, as well as the heroic actions they selflessly do day in/day out.

We as the people of Alaska have a civic duty to ensure the families of these men and woman are taken care of when the unthinkable occurs. Not only because of a duty to the fallen hero, or in honor of their families' sacrifices throughout their careers, but because they as parents, and spouses need the assurance their loved ones will be cared for in their absence in order to perform these duties.

If you were a first responder, could you put on the uniform everyday knowing your children or spouse may lose their medical coverage, should the unthinkable happen?

As a life long Alaskan I've personally benefited from the daily sacrifices of our first responders more than once. If not for their willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty I would not have lived past my 18th birthday, nor would several of the people I love and care for be here today. It's shameful to me as an Alaskan that we are not providing the necessary coverage to ensure the families of our fallen heroes are cared for.

Currently, the United States Armed Forces provides continuing coverage when a hero is lost. My husband honorably served six years with the United States Coast Guard and I was more at peace should he have been lost to a tragic event. Now, my two sons and I no longer have this assurance. This is unacceptable.

When our first responders are under appreciated it's inevitable they will seek other agencies offering more desirable coverage/benefits. This is counter intuitive to the money the State has expended training these selfless heroes. This bill is a small amount in comparison to the time, resources, and fiscal dollars the State has spent hiring and training our first responders.

Thank you for your time and continuing support.

Respectfully,

Katherine Tilley.

Konrad Jackson

From: Larry and Margaret Soden <cardinal907ak@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 02, 2016 9:04 AM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: HB4002

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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I am writing in support of HB4002. The State of Alaska needs to step up and do the right thing for survivors of law enforcement officers and firefighters who die in the line of duty. We may pay these individuals enough to compensate them for what they do on a daily basis, but there is no way we can pay them enough for dying while protecting us from criminals or disaster. Their survivors shouldn't have to suffer the loss of health benefits along with the loss of a loved one. Please do the right thing and secure the passage of this bill.

Laurence L. Soden
Fairbanks

Sent from my iPad=

Sent from my iPhone

Konrad Jackson

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 02, 2016 11:29 AM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: Trooper Family Health Care

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Honorable Kurt Olson;

Good afternoon;

I would like to let my requests be heard on behalf on my family. I am a personal friend of Nikki Toll and knew her and Tage and their family when they moved to Glennallen. Tage and Nikki were influential in my husband also becoming an Alaska State Trooper. Tage called often when my husband was at the Academy in Sitka for 4 1/2 months and checked up on my son and I. They served this state as a family! I would implore you to earnestly move forward with the necessary legislation in HB 4002 that would solidify continued health care for my friends that have suffered an enormous loss. I can't imagine how Nikki feels to have to continually revisit this need for not only her but also the other Trooper families that also experienced loss 2 years ago.

My husband has been an Alaskan State Trooper now for almost 9 years. As a wife and mother I am grateful that Nikki Toll along with other Trooper widows are fighting earnestly for this benefit. I know they need your support and help to make this a reality.

Thank you for hearing my request and I appreciate your work on this.

Maryann Landers

Konrad Jackson

From: M Litster [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 8:44 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: HB 4002

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

> Dear Rep Olson,

>

> I'm writing to again urge you to pass the healthcare bill (now HB 4002) for dependents of deceased Law Enforcement & Firefighters killed on duty. Without this, the widows of AK State Troopers recently killed in the line of duty will be left uninsured. This is not an acceptable outcome for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in service to Alaskan citizens. Rep. Olson, we are asking for the State of Alaska to do the right thing for our families whose husbands/fathers earned at least this by giving their lives.

>

> Thank you very much for your consideration,

>

> Megan Litster, Trooper Wife

>

>

Konrad Jackson

From: Michael Wery [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 5:05 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: HB 4002

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I highly encourage you and your colleagues to support and pass HB 4002. As an Alaska State Trooper, I am willing to sacrifice my life for the greater good for the citizens of Alaska everyday. The passage of this bill would be a great token for support for all Alaska Peace Officers and Firefighters who put others before themselves and if one makes the supreme sacrifice it would be comforting the family medical would be taken care of and one less burden the family would endear. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance.

Mike Wery
Sent from my iPhone

Konrad Jackson

From: Meagan <Meagan@pseaadmin.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 5:02 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: pass HB 4002

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Representative:

Please debate and vote on HB 4002 that will provide medical benefits to spouses and survivors of police officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty.

Please vote yes on HB 4002. The families of fallen officers deserve health care. It is the right thing to do.

Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

Meagan Carmichael

General Counsel

Public Safety Employees Association

4228 Laurel Street

Anchorage, AK 99508

1-907-337-1979 (telephone)

Konrad Jackson

From: Rachel [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 7:53 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: HB 4002

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To the Honorable Kurt Olson,

"Skin in the game." This phrase has received a lot of attention lately. I am sure you will get a lot of communication with bitterness towards those words, but I would like to approach it with a more practical angle. Please let me share how not just our men on the front lines are the ones sacrificing for the state. Let me tell you how I, as a Law Enforcement Officer's wife, have "skin in the game."

It started at our first post in Fairbanks. We were both starting exciting new careers, my husband, Jake Covey, was thrilled to finally be an Alaska State Trooper. I was proud of my position as a crew scheduler, in training to be an aircraft dispatcher for a local airline. I have a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Science, and during an internship I realized my true love was dispatching. It takes a year, working under a certified dispatcher, to become certified to dispatch commercial aircraft. I was about to take my test, when one night, we got a phone call. It was a call we expected someday, just not so soon... he hung up the phone, and told me we were moving to Kotzebue. I got to take my test. I passed... only to move days after to a place I had never been, without any job opportunities in the career I yearned for. This was the first time I learned what it was like to sacrifice for our state.

Kotzebue was an adventure, but it had more than its share of challenges. I went for opportunities, but being an outsider, was turned down for the ones I wanted most. Many nights I saw my husband leave for a village, knowing how bad the weather was. Knowing his backup was far away. Knowing there was no way to check on him. It took thick skin, and a lot of faith, to trust that if my daughter lost her dad, we would still be ok... my full time job didn't have medical coverage. I trusted that I would be ok though. I had to... I had no other choice.

If Kotzebue's opportunities for me were limited, our next post of Cantwell had NO opportunities. None. Part time at the post office and babysitting. Cantwell is very similar in size to the post our friends, the Tolls, were at in Northway. That is where both of us learned how to homeschool our kids. That is where we dreamed of the joys of home ownership, unable to buy because it was mandatory to rent the state's apartment. Many times the apartment had maintenance issues. Many mornings I woke up without my husband, because he had worked all night. Many times there were knocks on the door from people who needed a trooper, because our apartment was in the same complex as the office. Many times we had to hide the kids from prisoner transports and people who came to cause problems. Because of growing medical problems with my son, we tried for months to bid out... and finally were able to move to Willow.

The sacrifices didn't stop there, though. We had our first house, so we finally had our privacy, or so we thought. We got death threats from criminals who were mad, and would say things like "we know where your kids go to school." Although we tried to keep our house unlisted, neighbors would still call at 2 am drunk and upset about who knows what. Our kids had to limit who they played with when their dad had arrested the kid's parents, no easy job in an already small town. There were still no job opportunities for me that were practical as a mom with 2 kids, other than babysitting... because it's not like his hours were reliable. We had to box up

dinners at restaurants because "it" had hit the fan and he was the sergeant, he had to be there. We had to turn down activities that occurred on any night he was on call. My kids had to memorize a couple vehicles and their plates, to know that if they pulled in the driveway, they were to run and hide. Yes, even the kids have "skin in the game."

Finally, 11 years into our journey, we moved to Wasilla. Finally, I now have opportunities to be able to get my own health care, if needed. We finally live in a nice neighborhood. We joked with Tage and Nikki Toll that our neighbors house was for sale, and it was exactly what they wanted. They were almost debt free. They were almost able to buy their first house. They started to make plans. Easter morning, my husband got the horrible call. I called Nikki as my husband raced to her house, knowing Tage was missing. I sat on the phone with her, praying that it was just like all those other times the guys didn't make it home on time. Praying that they would spend Easter together as a family. Praying... in vain.

That first night I stayed with her, so she wouldn't have to be alone. All I wanted to do was help her. If you look back, I am sure your prayers went to her to. She had no job, the boys had never gone to public school, and Tage had been the one to take care of the finances. That was what this fairly private family wanted. They trusted, as most families in this country do, that they could freely choose to live the life they wanted to live. They lost that choice, because he did what the state asked him to do, and died for it. I know anyone with half a heart wants to help them, because as Alaskans, we have a responsibility to help those who have given the ultimate sacrifice for us. Here I hope I have shown you, though, that an officer is not the only one who sacrifices. They are not the only one who wants to earn their way in life. We do not expect to receive anything we haven't earned. When we give up careers, security, and privacy, we put "skin in the game." We do it because at the end of the day, our LEOs are men of honor, proud of what they do for their family, community, and state. Honor them back. Take care of their families, like they would have, had they the choice. It really has already been paid for... with their blood.

Kindest Regards,
Rachel Covey

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S® 5 ACTIVE™, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

Konrad Jackson

From: Shara j [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 11:56 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: Alaska Law Enforcement healthcare coverage

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Representative of Alaska,

I am the daughter of a retired Alaska State Trooper. I spent my entire life within the Alaskan Law enforcement community. Over the years, I have seen first hand the devastation of the loss of Alaska State Troopers that I grew up knowing. I watched my father go to work the day after one of his closest friends lost his life on the job. I watched my father polish his badge and place the black band over it too many times. I babysat younger children of Troopers while their parents and mine, attended the funeral of yet another who lost his life. Every day we said goodbye to him as he left for work, not knowing if it would be our last.

One loss will always stand out vividly in my mind. It was the loss of Palmer Police officer James Rowland in 1999. My father was stationed in Palmer at the time and didn't come home from shift. You see, he along with many other troopers and police officers, stayed on shift that night and were unable to reach out to their families. I woke up and went to my track meet, not knowing what had happened, only knowing that dad had to stay on shift yet again. About half way through the track meet I overheard some adults talking about the officer that had been shot and killed. I was terrified that it was my dad. I couldn't sit in the grass with my teammates laughing and carrying on like nothing had happened so I just found our bus, got on and sat there until the meet was over. In 1999 we didn't all have cell phones, we didn't have instant communication and I was left not knowing if I was going to go home to find my worse nightmare, "brass" sitting with my mother and little brother. When I got home that night, he still wasn't home, but thankfully dispatch had called to relay a message that he was alright. I was so relieved, but also devastated. It became unbearably real, at that point, the risk my father took every time he put on his uniform and left for work. That Monday at school a friend, who's father was a Palmer police officer, came up and we just hugged each other and didn't let go. We both knew what the other felt without saying a word. Every child of a law enforcement officer knows the fear of loss, knows the guilt of being relieved when it wasn't your dad, knows the pride of watching someone you love put their life on the line knowing it could be the last.

I tell this story, because it was one of 9 officer deaths that happened during the 25 years my father served this state. One of the 9 times we held our breath and waited for a phone call and dreaded a knock on the door. One of the 9 times we grieved for a family that had lost their loved one. Currently, there are 3 families that are grieving the loss of their loved one. All three of these families have children, children who have no father because they sacrificed themselves for the good of others. Ensuring that their healthcare needs are met is the least that this state could do to show gratitude for the sacrifice that these brave, selfless men made, in the service of this great state.

Sincerely & Respectfully,
Shara Habig

Konrad Jackson

From: Stacey and Matthew Kessler [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 01, 2016 11:55 PM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: HB 4002

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi Representative Olson,

First of all, I would like to thank you for the time and dedication serving the people, your job is not easy but is definitely appreciated!

I am emailing in regards to HB 4002 and believe it is very sad that the spouses and children of men and women who put their lives on the line to protect our citizens do not get the same respect as someone who is on Medicaid/welfare. I am not bashing those who receive Public Assistance, however since Medicaid is a service is available to some, why is health insurance at risk of being cut for the surviving families of first responders who risk their lives daily?

I am hoping you hear the voices of those affected, haven't they lost enough? I pray we have your support.

Thank you for your consideration,

Stacey Kessler
AST Spouse

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Konrad Jackson

From: Teri Forst [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 02, 2016 10:31 AM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: Written testimony for HB 4002

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Representative Kurt Olson,

I am writing in support of HB 4002 in three different capacities.

First and foremost I am the wife of an Alaska State Trooper and this bill will directly affect me and our future children. Law enforcement officers are an elite group of people who put themselves in harm's way to protect the public day after day and they do so at the expense of their bodies and minds. At any given time they are responsible for maintaining peace in the community, in addition to ensuring fellow officers' and their own safety. This is enough of a burden for one person, they should not also have the worry that if they were to pay the ultimate price and sacrifice their lives in the line of duty that their loved ones wouldn't have access to vital healthcare.

Second, I am a licensed professional counselor in the State of Alaska. I've worked with hundreds of clients who are experiencing grief from the loss of a loved one. The normal and natural grief process is negatively impacted and often interrupted by stress which leads to people having unresolved grief for many years. Financial stress and the stress of you and your children's health insurance being terminated within the month of your loved ones death is unnecessary stress placed on the spouse of law enforcement officers. Unresolved grief can manifest itself both physically and mentally. My clinical observations and research show that people who have unresolved grief from the loss of a loved one have a higher chance of developing chronic physical pain and illness, and are more likely to develop a mental illness or addiction. The result of this will be costly to the state to have uninsured people using hospital and emergency services, sick leave, and a reliance on state funding that they wouldn't have otherwise needed if their health insurance had remained in place after the death of their spouse. Please consider the positive impact that supporting this bill can have on the spouses and children of the law enforcement officers and on the overall health and wellness of our state.

Third, I am a resident of the State of Alaska and I rely on law enforcement officers to keep me safe. I live in Rural Alaska (Bethel) where there are very few law enforcement officers for a region that has high rates of violence and substance use. These are the men and women that we call when we are at our worst; most afraid and in danger. They often respond alone, due to the geographical remoteness of our region and they do so knowing they are putting their lives at risk. Not only does the nature of their work increase their risk of harm, simply being an officer of the law also increases the risk. The Alaska State Troopers are trained that the priority

of life goes in the following order: 1) Hostages, 2) Innocent bystanders, 3) Police 4) Suspect. The least that can be done to show appreciation for the men and women putting their own lives near the bottom in the priority of life, and to honor those who pay the ultimate price is to ensure that their loved ones insurance coverage will be continued beyond their death in the event they lose their life in the line of duty. It should not be a question; if you give your life defending the peace and safety of the citizens of Alaska, your family should receive the support of the State by receiving continued access to healthcare.

Sincerely,

Teri Forst, MS, LPC, CDC-I

Konrad Jackson

From: Troy Shuey <tshuey@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Thursday, June 02, 2016 6:49 AM
To: Rep. Kurt Olson
Subject: HB4002

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Representative Olson,

I know you have been a proven supporter for Law Enforcement, Firemen and First Responders over your career. I ask that you show your support to those who support them on a much more personnel level so they can go do their jobs and if something terrible happens these brave men and women will know their families have one less thing to deal with. Decisions are made on knowing your families are going to be ok. We have some of the nest first responders in the nation. Please help give them piece of mind knowing if they should die protecting others their families will be cared for.

Thanks

Troy Shuey



CITY OF FAIRBANKS

John Eberhart, Mayor

800 CUSHMAN STREET
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701-4615
OFFICE: 907-459-6793
FAX: 907-459-6787
mayor@ci.fairbanks.ak.us

June 2, 2016

The Honorable Kurt Olson
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

Via email only to Representative.Kurt.Olson@akleg.gov

Re: HB 4002

Dear Representative Olson:

Please allow me to personally thank you and the House Labor and Commerce Committee for hearing HB 4002. This legislation will provide families of public safety employees and firefighters killed in the line of duty with health care benefits.

State and local governments in Alaska ask and require our police and firefighters to protect and serve our citizens, including in situations that can be dangerous. In turn, as the employer of our police and firefighters, I believe that state and local governments have a duty to comfort and assist the families when one of our public safety heroes dies in the line of duty. Providing continued medical insurance to the families that have lost a mother, father, or spouse to death in the line of duty is one way we can meet our duty as employers. HB 4002 provides comfort and assistance to the men and women first responders who risk their lives for us every day and to families that may suffer the ultimate loss.

Thank you for reading my email and considering this request that the House Labor and Commerce Committee pass HB 4002 as soon as possible. I ask that you and all legislators support HB 4002. Please do what's right for Alaska's first responder heroes and their families. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. Your time and services are greatly appreciated. Kindly provide a copy of this letter to all other members of the House Labor and Commerce Committee and have this letter placed in the Committee record.

Please contact me if you have any questions or if you need any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Mayor John Eberhart

Daniel Hoffman

[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, AK
99712

May 28, 2016

Senator Kurt Olson:

Hello! My name is Dan Hoffman. I've been a resident of the State of Alaska since my dad moved our family up here in 1977, attending Jr. High in Valdez, High School in Anchorage, and then attending the University of Alaska Fairbanks. After graduating from college I went to work for the Fairbanks Police Department, where I spent the next twenty years serving our local community. I retired as Chief of Police in March of 2009, and immediately went to work at Pogo Mine, supervising the Security and Risk Management functions here.

I'm writing today in regards to **SB4002**, which would provide health insurance benefits to the family members of fallen police officers and firefighters. As a career public safety professional who has lost several close friends to senseless violence, (including my coworker, FPD Officer John "Kevin" Lamm, who was shot to death on New Year's day 1998 in Fairbanks, and most recently a very close friend- Fairbanks based Trooper Sergeant Scott Johnson, who was killed along with Trooper Gabe Rich in Tanana two years ago this month) **I find it unconscionable that the State is not "stepping up to do the right thing" in assuring that these men's families are being properly taken care of.**

As someone who served in a position of public administration, to include formulation and implementation of publicly-funded budgets, I have a TREMENDOUS amount of admiration - and empathy - for the challenges that you are currently facing. In what is arguably the most difficult time in Alaska's fiscal history, I know that there are no shortages of detractors and nay-sayers when ANY budget proposition (and/or expenditure) is proposed. That being said, I feel that there are certain obligations that should be met solely on the matter of principle. And, in this case, that highly-principled matter happens to coincide with a "benefit-group" that is EXCEEDINGLY SMALL in size, having a negligible impact on the State's overall budget.

I am very respectfully asking that you PLEASE support the health-care provisions outlined in SB4002, as Representative Chenault effectively blocked its inclusion (as an amendment to SB91) for legislative consideration during the regular session. The families of our departed heroes deserve no less, and I believe the vast majority of Alaskan's strongly support this measure.

Yours Sincerely,

Dan Hoffman

Daniel Hoffman
City of Fairbanks Chief of Police (Ret.)



Public Safety Employees Association, Inc.
"Representing Alaska's Finest"
A.F.S.C.M.E. Local 803

PSEA Letter of Support for HB 4002



As a state, and as an employer, we have a duty to the men and women we hire to serve and protect our citizens and to enforce our laws. If we, as a state, are asking these public servants to protect all of our citizens from danger, we owe them the full measure of our support – they deserve to be well paid, well equipped, well trained and well led. They need to know that if they are injured, we will nurse them back to health, and that if they are killed, we will comfort and assist their families.

Paraphrased from "Worthy Fights" by former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta

The Public Safety Employees Association, Local 803, proudly represents approximately 800 law enforcement employees located throughout Alaska. Our members include the Alaska State Troopers, Court Services Officers, Deputy Fire Marshals, Airport Police and Fire Officers, and municipal police employees in Ketchikan, Sitka, Juneau, Fairbanks, Soldotna, Dillingham and Unalaska. The men and women that make up PSEA put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve Alaska citizens.

On March 30, 2013, Alaska State Trooper Tage Toll died in helicopter accident while involved in a search and rescue mission. A year later, on May 1, 2014, Troopers and PSEA members Scott Johnson and Gabe Rich were tragically murdered in Tanana while responding to a call for assistance. These men all left spouses and surviving children. Within days of these senseless tragedies, the spouses of Tage, Scott and Gabe's learned their medical insurance coverage would lapse unless the families opted for COBRA coverage. This meant their survivors would lose medical coverage unless they could afford a monthly COBRA expense of \$1800.00. For a family that just lost a husband, a dad and the main bread winner to a senseless death, this amounted to an unaffordable expense, but also unneeded stress during a time of unimaginable upheaval and grief.

PSEA supports HB 4002 because it provides spouses and survivors of Alaska peace officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty continuing medical insurance coverage until the spouse or survivors age out of medical insurance coverage. Plain and simple, this bill carries out a duty the State of Alaska has to comfort and assist families in a time of need.

These same or similar benefits are provided in 14 other states. Other states have protections for employees because they participate in the social security system. Alaska does not have these or similar benefits or provide public employees with the social security system.

There is no problem with providing these benefits to police and firefighters. In the 14 other states that currently provide health insurance benefits to survivors of police officers killed in the line of duty, there are no reported cases in which other public employees challenged these benefits on grounds that they did not receive the same benefit coverage.

As a general rule public employers have discretion when structuring health benefit plans and are able to make distinctions among employee populations regarding access to and the level of benefits offered. Such distinctions must be based on bona fide employment based classifications (e.g., date of hire or length of service, differing occupations, full-time versus part-time employee status) and not on health factors of other discriminatory bases (i.e., race, color, sex, national origin or religion of the insured). The legislatures in states with the survivor health insurance benefit have recognized that police officers, firefighters and other public safety officers work in hazardous conditions to protect life and property and have determined that the survivors of those who have died in the line of duty deserve special consideration. Therefore, It is unlikely that a court would invalidate these distinctions.

There is no argument that Alaska's state and local police officers, firefighters and peace officers work in hazardous conditions. Unlike other public employees, they are required to go into hazardous and dangerous situations to serve and protect the public. For this reason, their families deserve comfort and special consideration in tragic situations. HB 4002 lessens the burden on families of peace officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty.

PSEA respectfully requests that the Alaska Legislature pass HB 4002.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jake Metcalfe", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jake Metcalfe
Executive Director
PSEA/AFSCME Local 803