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May 9, 2017

Senate Health & Social Services Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Room 205
Juneau, Alaska 99801

SB 79: Opioids; Prescriptions; Database; Licenses

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of the Alaska Municipal League, I would like to offer our full support of SB 79. We, on the local level, need help dealing with this catastrophic problem. Anything that helps bring attention to the issue can only serve to help us all coalesce to solve this painful dilemma.

The Alaska Municipal League has helped to sponsor 3 forums with which to help municipalities set up task forces within their own community. These task forces are made up of local government officials; police; corrections officials; hospitals; non-profits; etc. We have realized that we cannot arrest our way out of this; educate our way out of this; incarcerate our way out of this or rehabilitate our way out of this. It will take all of these methods to begin to see positive changes.

Municipalities are the ones who must deal directly with the people trapped by opioids/heroin in our communities. As we realize less and less revenue to deal with only the basics of local government, we are seeing an increase in deaths, homelessness; robbery; etc.

However, the main heartbreaking result is that this issue is killing our children. Small babies born in our hospitals already addicted and young adults from all walks of life, overdosing, leaving behind grieving parents and family members. Please connect the dots and realize that as you "tinker" with the economy, people without jobs and purpose tend to be more at risk to turn to ways to help them cope.

Please, pass this bill out of your committee. There seems to be absolutely NO reason for this bill to be held up as a "hostage" item.

Sincerely,

Kathie Wasserman