



March 19, 2021

Letter of Support for Amendment 6 to House Bill 76 - Business Liability Protection

To: Alaska House Finance Committee
Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative Kelly Merrick, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Ortiz, Vice Chair
Representative Adam Wool, Member
Representative Bryce Edgmon, Member
Representative Andy Josephson, Member
Representative Sara Rasmussen, Member
Representative Steve Thompson, Member
Representative Bart LeBon, Member
Representative Ben Carpenter, Member
Representative DeLena Johnson, Member

I am writing in support of Amendment 6 to House Bill 76. I am a Fairbanks resident and owner of Vivlamore Companies, which includes the Clarion Hotel & Suites, Chena Bistro, Sunrise Bagel & Espresso, Frontier Supply Company, The Showcase, and MVI Realty & MV Investments. Several of my businesses rely on customers coming in and ordering food, or even renting a hotel room, and restaurants and hotels all over the state have been hit especially hard due to the shutdowns in 2020. Now that we are opening back up and expanding capacity, I find myself threatened with yet another potential economic disaster: lawsuits by people alleging they contracted the virus while in my business spaces.

My businesses bring my customers into contact with me, my employees, and customers, as well as other Fairbanks residents and businesspeople. I run nine food service locations and a hotel, as well as several other businesses that bring people into contact with each other. I have practiced compliance with changing health and safety recommendations and took actions to keep my businesses clean and my employees and customers safe. Protocols have been observed and will continue to be observed for as long as the virus threat exists, yet I, and business owners like me, could find ourselves facing significant financial risk if a lawyer files a claim on behalf of a person who claims they contracted COVID-19 while in our businesses. This is simply too much of a burden; one that threatens to take away what is left of the companies into which I have invested my efforts, finances, livelihoods, and reputations. I – and fellow



business owners all over the state – need protection from such lawsuits at this unprecedented time, and House Bill 4 will provide us that protection.

Alaska businesses have suffered enough. We want to get back to work feeding and hosting people and providing resources for them to enjoy Fairbanks and the state. For that to happen, we need to be protected from frivolous lawsuits and situations we took, and are continuing to take, great efforts to prevent. I encourage the passage of House Bill 4.

Sincerely,

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ALASKA

POLICY FORUM

March 19, 2021

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Amendment 6 to HB 76
COVID liability immunity

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Honorable Representatives,

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, at least 16 states have taken action to protect their economies, jobs, businesses, and business owners. It is time for Alaska to follow suit. I urge your support for Amendment 6 to House Bill 76.

Many of our state's businesses which have not already closed their doors are still struggling to stay afloat. They are doing their best to comply with the myriad of new and sometimes mismatched guidelines to keep their clients and customers safe in this new environment. And yet they are operating under the continuous threat of lawsuits which could destroy their businesses. It would only take one customer or client

contracting COVID while on the premises, or while the business provides services elsewhere, to push a small business past the point of viability.

Alaska has taken the necessary precautions to protect individuals from the health threat. But the economic threat looms: it is critical that we get Alaska's economy back on track, and that will not happen unless our businesses feel confident that they are protected.

If business owners take reasonable safety precautions by following available public health guidelines, they should not have to work under the threat of virus-related litigation. In fact, polling tells us that 44 percent of Alaska's businesses face long-term negative impacts due to the economic shutdown. The last thing Alaska businesses need is to be financially burdened by lawsuits, despite taking steps to avoid spreading coronavirus.

Alaska businesses need assurance that if they employ the right measures, are not negligent, and do not act with malice, they will be held harmless from further damage due to the pandemic. This amendment will send the message that they are free to do business once again. This is one of the keys to restarting our state's economy.

Sincerely,

Tim Barto

Tim Barto
Vice President External Relations
Alaska Policy Forum

From: Gee Denton [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 19, 2021 12:12 PM
To: House Finance [REDACTED]
Subject: HB76

My name is Glenda L. Denton, I am a registered Ak voter living in Homer, Ak 99603

I am strongly opposed to HB76 extending the emergency mandates of the covid event.

Please make note that Alaskans, myself included expect live to move forward in the freedoms which we pursue as Americans and Alaskans.

Thank you kindly,
G.L. Denton
2405 Judy Rebecca Ct.
Homer, Ak 99603