

Submitted April 12, 2021 by:  
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Good afternoon Co-Chairs Hannan, Schrage and committee members. I'm Nona Safra of Homer and I support HB 137.

I usually come in my role as an advocate for seniors and those with disabilities. But, today, I'm here as an Alaskan elder who understands that if HB 137 DOES NOT pass, all Alaskans face the continued possibility of closing state DMVs in rural Alaska leaving many who need mandated in person services paying unregulated arbitrary 'convenience fees' over and above the regulated State fees at privatized DMV's.

As the former DOA Commissioner noted – they have **authority** to close DMV's at will. That '**authority**' does **NOT** best represent any Alaskan in your districts as it is based on data, not on people. It's called quantitative vs. qualitative.

Dr. Oliver Sacks wrote in his book "Awakenings" how he went from quantifying his patients to qualifying his patients and forever changed the field of neuroscience from making decisions based on statistics to seeing patients as people.

The analogy is that Alaskans like me, depend on you, our representatives, to be like Dr. Sacks and see beyond quantifying statistics and see us!

Passage of HB 137 does that!

Simply put – closures in rural Alaska mean compliance with statutes costs more and are difficult to do, especially those who by statute are required to show up in person, cannot use on-line features, can't afford 'convenience fees' and those who need

transactions processed faster than the 6 week turn around using US mail.

I can tell you that as a caregiver for a elder with a terminal illness or dementia who requires a Real ID to travel outside for medical care, the in-person process is a challenge in itself, let alone the financial burden of the 'convenience fees' has on a fixed income or taking the elder to the next closest DMV and driving hundreds of miles with them through bad weather and road conditions.

As to prior testimony that technology **SOLVED** these issues = **NOT TRUE!** Many of the 238,000 Alaskans in rural areas have broadband issues, lack internet connectivity and may not have computers, email addresses or credit cards needed to complete on-line transactions. Connectivity and Broadband must be available before on-line service is viable.

An **effective legislator** is a **legislator** that understands the needs of the people they represent. Today, **BE** that effective legislator by passing HB 137 and ensuring access for all constituents to meet state mandated DMV requirements.

It keeps rural Alaskans from being treated differently than their urban counterparts, which is discriminatory and unacceptable!

Thank you for your time.