

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
Alaska Mental Health
Trust Authority

MIKE DUNLEAVY, GOVERNOR

**Office of the Long-Term Care
Ombudsman**

3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 200
Anchorage AK 99508
Phone (907) 334-4480
Fax (907) 334-4486

April 15, 2022

To: House Finance Committee
Re: Letter of Support for HB 308

The Alaska Long-Term Care Ombudsman's program fully supports HB 308, which implements a statewide dementia awareness program. Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD) is a growing public health crisis in Alaska. Alaska has the fastest growing senior population in the United States according to the Administration on Aging data. The fastest growing age group in Alaska is the 85 and older group. 91, 281 Alaskans aged 65 and older currently reside in Alaska. The size of Alaska's population aged 55 to 64 suggests the number of seniors will increase over the next decade. Statistics also reveal that approximately 8500 Alaskans aged 65 and older are currently living with Alzheimer's. The increasing aging population indicates that Alaska will have more individuals living with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD) in the very near future.

It is critical that Alaska find better ways to help to navigate our system of care and supports for seniors living with ADRD. Increasing public awareness will help seniors and their care partners to recognize signs and symptoms of ADRD and seek appropriate interventions and supports to enhance the quality of life of seniors living with ADRD. HB 308 is a step in the right direction in supporting individuals living with ADRD and their care partners.

Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of Alaskans living with ADRD.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Wheeler,
State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

