



Senator Scott Jiu Wo Kawasaki

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Sponsor Statement - SB 237 - 34-LS1428\A

“An Act relating to data sharing by the Department of Administration for driver’s license data verification purposes; and providing for an effective date.”

Senate Bill 237 makes changes to the Alaska statute to allow Alaskans to apply online to replace a lost Social Security card. We are the only state in the union that does not allow a fully online process for this common occurrence. Currently, citizens must either travel to one of the three Social Security Administration offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, or Juneau or mail their sensitive documents to those locations to replace a lost card. This practice is time-consuming, costly and inefficient.

For Alaskans who live in one of the three cities with a Social Security Administration office, replacing a lost card is an inconvenient afternoon. It could mean lost time at work and frustration dealing with lines, missing documents and bureaucracy. According to the US Census Bureau, hundreds of thousands of Alaskans do not live in these urban centers. For those individuals, replacing a lost card requires either traveling long distances to an office or mailing sensitive original documents.

The hardship of not enacting SB 237 would be felt the most by our rural communities. They would travel hundreds of miles at their own expense to verify their identity in person. For those unable to afford travel, mailing their original documents is their only option. Mail service in rural Alaska is less reliable than in city centers. Which means a person’s driver’s license, passport, or birth certificate can get lost in the mail. The entire process of mailing original documents to replace a lost Social Security card can take up to 45 days, leaving the citizen unable to verify their identity during that time.

Enacting SB 237 and enabling Alaskans to apply for lost Social Security cards online would eliminate several barriers rural Alaskans face in this process. They would no longer have to spend money traveling to a city center or fear that their sensitive documents would be lost in the mail. It would also be convenient for our urban citizens who would appreciate the time saved in their days.

I urge you to support me in the passage of SB 237 to eliminate the barriers to replacing a lost Social Security Card for all citizens of Alaska.