



January 27, 2025

House Judiciary Committee
State Capitol Room 120
Juneau AK, 99801
Email: House.Judiciary@akleg.gov

Subject: Support for House Bill 48, Civil Legal Services Fund

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

We are pleased to offer our support for HB 48, a bill to amend AS 37.05.590 (the statute creating the Civil Legal Services Fund) so that up to 25% of the filing fees paid annually to the Alaska Court System can be appropriated by the Legislature to the civil legal services fund each year to provide access to civil legal aid for low-income Alaskans with critical legal needs. Increasing the appropriation percentage from 10% to 25% will positively impact Alaska's most vulnerable populations and ensure that access to justice in Alaska does not depend on how much money you have.

The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), which is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska including a membership of 174 federally recognized Tribes, 154 village corporations, 9 regional corporations and 9 regional nonprofit and Tribal consortiums, unanimously passed Resolution 24-15 during the 2024 Annual AFN Convention that urges the Governor and the Alaska Legislature to provide sufficient funding for ALSC to continue their vital work in Alaska to support low-income Alaskans. HB 48 is a critical step towards meeting the current need for services.

Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) is a nonprofit civil legal aid agency who would benefit from this legislation. ALSC has provided no cost civil legal assistance to low-income Alaskans for over 55 years. Legal assistance is provided statewide to assure Alaskans, especially those at greatest social and economic risk, have access to the civil justice system. For low-income Alaskans, ALSC is often the only place to seek justice to protect their livelihood, their health, or their family. Without these vital legal services, low-income Alaskans are at increased risk of losing their home, healthcare, access to food, or even the ability to be protected from abuse. These unresolved issues have devastating consequences when left unresolved and impact the overall health and safety of our communities.

Since the original passage of AS 37.05.590, the community need and demand for legal services has only increased. Demand for help continues to exceed supply, with many Alaskans turned away due to lack of resources with no other option for affordable legal help. Without sufficient funding to allow full access to necessary services, individuals could be subject to unfair treatment and would not be able to fully utilize the justice system.



AFN strongly supports the passage of this important legislation to improve access to the civil justice system and ensure that the Alaska justice system is fully accessible to all residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Mallott', is positioned above the printed name.

Benjamin Mallott
President