

February 24, 2026

Subject: Support for HB 48, Civil Legal Services Fund

Dear Representative Hannan,

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.

Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) is a nonprofit civil legal aid organization that would benefit from this legislation. ALSC has provided no cost civil legal assistance to low-income Alaskans for nearly 60 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 help 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. When ALSC can help Alaska families upstream, households become safer and more stable, resulting in economic savings to our communities statewide.

Since the original passage of 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. HB 48 & SB 1 will be a positive step towards meeting the current need for services.

Thank you for championing 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,

*Jeanette Gallegos, IL Advocate
Veteran Specialist*

Jeanette Gallegos

SAIL- Southeast Alaska Independent Living Agency