

**Representative Zack Fields, Co-Chair
House Labor and Commerce Committee**

Subject: House Bill 316

Dear Representative Fields and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ina Timling and I live [REDACTED] in Fairbanks, AK 99709. I am writing in support of House Bill No. 316, amending AS 09.17.010.

On July 20, 2023, my husband Ronald 'Ronnie' P. Daanen was killed in a helicopter crash. I would like to tell you a little about my husband.

Ronnie worked at the Department of Natural Resources in the Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys as a geohydrologist and permafrost scientist for 10-years, managing the geohydrology program. In 2020, he was a critical member of the landslide hazard response team sent to Haines to assist with the Beach Road landslide.

For nearly 10-years prior to his work at the State of Alaska, Ronnie conducted groundbreaking research involving permafrost, groundwater and soil movement at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. His research on the Frozen Debris Lobes along the Dalton Highway in the Brooks Range led to the re-routing of the Dalton Highway to ensure the continuous support of the oil fields on the North Slope of Alaska.

Ronnie and I were married for 25 years. It was love at first sight when we met at a research Institute in Finland. Five months after Ronnie's death, we would have celebrated our 25th Wedding Anniversary. To celebrate this milestone in our lives, we had planned to hike the Pacific Crest Trail along the West Coast of the US. Our love for science, nature and art was an additional glue in our marriage. We loved our annual camping and boating trips in the Alaskan Wilderness and going together to Chitina for dipnetting salmon in the Canyon. Three weeks before the helicopter crash, we did our last camping trip to hunt morels. Sitting along the Koyukuk River we were so excited about the bounty of mushrooms and planned to serve them during many upcoming winter dinner parties with friends. On our long car trips through Alaska, we would sit quietly next to each other and absorb the beauty and grandeur of the passing landscapes. We felt so at ease with each other, that we did not need words during these hours. Later in the evening we would recall the day and discuss what we saw during these quiet car trips. I consider, being quiet with someone on your side for hours and feeling completely comfortable, a very special gift.

Additionally, every year we were especially looking forward to our three day Ice carving date at the World Ice Art Championship, where for nearly 20 years, we would translate scientific concepts into ice art for the public. Visitors loved to discuss ice sculpting with Ronnie and he proofed to be a passionate teacher explaining the scientific concepts to visitors of all ages from 4 to 90.

Finally, Ronnie was instrumental for developing my small 'Made in Alaska' business as a printmaker. To have time to create my wood- and linoleum cuts, he would take on most chores around the house. In addition, he built all the frames and helped me selling prints at the famous Christmas Bazaars in Fairbanks with plans to include Anchorage.

Ronnie was my compass, my 'true North'.

And now....?

- no Wedding Anniversary celebrations anymore,
- no hiking the Pacific Crest Trail,
- no camping in the Alaskan Wilderness,
- no dipnetting in the Chitina Canyon,
- no mushroom hunting in recently burned forests,
- no quiet car trips with my true soul mate,
- no 3-day ice carving dates at the World Ice Art Championship
- no continuation of my "Made in Alaska" printmaking business
- no compass and no 'True North'

Instead, I cremated what was left and found of him on our 30th anniversary of meeting in Finland, where we fell in love at first sight.

Ronnie's early, sudden, and traumatic death is devastating to our family, his colleagues, and to the scientific community in and far beyond Alaska.

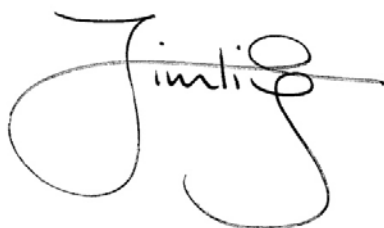
I was shocked and devastated to learn that my husband's life, and all the pain and anguish me and my children have and will continue to suffer because of his absence, has a value of \$400,000.

After sharing my new knowledge with a colleague, she said that she was stunned that all the pain and suffering, emotional distress and loss of companionship, which will remain for the rest of our lives was "worth" only three years of salary. That statement emphasized the disservice of a cap *per se* and that this cap is completely inadequate in reflecting the enormous loss we are dealing with.

In February of 2024, the Alaska Legislature honored Ronnie's life with an In Memoriam. For your convenience, I have attached the In Memoriam.

Sincerely,
Ina Timling

Fairbanks, March 28, 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ina Timling'. The signature is stylized with a large, looping 'I' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

ALASKA LEGISLATURE

IN MEMORIAM

RONALD "RONNIE" P. DAANEN

The members of the Thirty-Third Alaska State Legislature remember and honor the life of Ronald "Ronnie" P. Daanen, who passed away on July 20, 2023, at the age of fifty-one.

Ronnie was born on May 10, 1972, to parents Hendrik and Wesselina Daanen in Groesbeek, The Netherlands. He grew up the youngest of six children on the family farm where he was often found tinkering, playing, and exploring the world. After graduating high school, Ronnie attended 't Vanck Horticultural School in Nijmegen, The Netherlands, where he received an associate degree in arboriculture. He continued his studies, earning a bachelor's degree in environmental engineering from the University of Groningen and a master's degree in agricultural engineering from the University of Wageningen, both in The Netherlands. While in Finland doing research for his master's, he met his future wife, Ina Timling. They had twins, Annemarie and Tane. After coming to the United States in 1997, Ronnie received his Ph.D. in water resource science in 2004 from the University of Minnesota, modeling liquid water flow in snow and developing and implementing wastewater treatment and agricultural drainage systems in rural areas in Northern Minnesota.

After graduation, Ronnie and Ina moved with their children to Fairbanks where Ronnie became a post-doctoral fellow and research associate at the Department of Mining and Geological Engineering and the Geophysical Institute, as well as a research professor at the Institute of Northern Engineering, University of Alaska Fairbanks. His groundbreaking studies involving permafrost, groundwater and soil movement earned him a position in 2013 as a permafrost and groundwater expert managing the Geohydrology program for the State of Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys. In 2020, he was a critical member of the landslide hazard response team sent to Haines to assist with the Beach Road landslide.

Often compared to MacGyver for his knack of fixing field equipment and household appliances, he combined his love of engineering and art to work out solutions. He built the family home and much of its furniture. Ronnie was also a prolific gardener and had a fondness for flowers and fruit gardens. Additionally, Ronnie and Ina created multi-media sculptures together and later combined their love of art and science to compete in the World Ice Art Championships. Their entries often communicated scientific concepts to the public. Ronnie was well-known for his love of Gouda cheese, his homemade spruce tip-flavored gin, and his enigmatic smile.

Ronnie is survived by his loving wife, Ina Timling; and his children, Annemarie and Tane.

The members of the Thirty-Third Alaska State Legislature extend their sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Ronald "Ronnie" P. Daanen. His countless contributions to the great state of Alaska and to geohydrology and the study of permafrost will continue to inspire and educate for generations to come.




CATHY TILTON
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE


GARY STEVENS
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE


REP. ASHLEY CARRICK
SPONSOR


SEN. SCOTT KAWASAKI
CO-SPONSOR

Date: February 14, 2024