

Konrad Jackson

From: Barbara Haney <barbarahaney100@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2026 8:05 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Cc: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Robert Myers; Ann Roberts; Debbie Rathbun
Subject: CSSB 259(CRA)

Written Testimony in Support of CSSB 259(CRA)
Senate Labor & Commerce Committee Hearing
April 20, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in strong support of CSSB 259(CRA). As an economist with more than 30 years analyzing property tax systems and housing affordability in Alaska and other states, I urge the committee to pass this bill today — and to include two narrow, common-sense clarifications that will prevent unintended harm to the very Alaskan families the legislation is designed to protect.

Economic Rationale: Why This Bill Is Urgently Needed Across Alaska

Rapid, market-driven spikes in assessed values are creating real hardship for long-time homeowners. In the Fairbanks North Star Borough, official 2026 projections claimed assessments would rise only about 2.1% with inflation, yet many residents have received notices showing far steeper increases — some exceeding 40%. Similar volatility is widespread: the Municipality of Anchorage has seen assessed values jump as much as 40% in some cases, triggering a record surge in appeals; the Matanuska-Susitna Borough reported average single-family home values up 7.41% and land assessments up 15% under its six-year correction plan, fueling public outrage and even discussion of replacing the property tax with a sales tax; and comparable pressures are hitting the Kenai Peninsula and other growing areas.

CSSB 259(CRA) offers a targeted, locally controlled solution with zero state fiscal impact. It gives every municipality the voluntary option to enact an ordinance capping annual assessment increases on primary residences (owned and occupied as a permanent place of abode for at least 185 days per year) at any level between 3% and 10%. Built-in safeguards — a full market-value true-up every 10 years and immediate reset on arm’s-length sales — ensure the cap remains fiscally responsible. Similar programs in Florida, Texas, and Washington have proven effective at reducing foreclosures, preserving housing equity, and stabilizing neighborhoods. This is tax smoothing, not a tax cut, and it leaves all decisions in local hands.

Closing the Family-Transfer Loophole

The bill is well-crafted overall, but two technical gaps should be fixed. The current language resets the cap to full market value upon any “transfer of ownership.” This appropriately handles market sales, but it inadvertently captures routine family events that do not change economic use or occupancy:

- A widow or widower continues living in the family home as their primary residence after a spouse’s death — only to face a sudden tax spike amid grief and lost income.

- A single homeowner marries and adds their spouse to the deed for standard estate planning — and loses the cap even though nothing about the household has changed.
- A divorced parent is awarded the family home in a court decree and continues raising children there — only to see the cap disappear during an already difficult transition.

These are not tax-avoidance schemes; they are ordinary life events that should preserve the stability the cap is meant to deliver. I urge the committee to clarify the definition of “transfer of ownership” (or add an explicit exception) so the cap continues uninterrupted in these situations, provided the remaining owner still qualifies as a resident primary occupant.

Clarifying “Improved” vs. Routine Maintenance in State Statute

A second critical gap exists in the bill’s trigger for resetting the cap “if the property is improved.” The statute provides no definition or guidance distinguishing capital improvements (which legitimately warrant a full reassessment) from ordinary maintenance and repairs (which should not). This ambiguity leaves too much to assessor discretion and risks punishing responsible homeowners for basic upkeep.

Routine maintenance such as roof repairs, trash clean-ups, and planting flowers must be explicitly excluded from the definition of “improved” in state statute. These actions preserve an existing home’s habitability and value; they do not create new square footage, add rooms, or fundamentally upgrade the property in a way that justifies stripping away the assessment cap. Without this clarification, the bill could inadvertently discourage necessary home maintenance, accelerate property deterioration, and undermine the very predictability it seeks to provide.

Recommendation:

Add a narrow, objective definition or list of exclusions in the bill text itself so that roof repairs, trash clean-ups, planting flowers, and similar routine maintenance and repairs do not constitute an “improvement” that resets the cap. This change is simple, costs nothing, and ensures the policy works as intended for everyday Alaskan families.

Conclusion

CSSB 259(CRA), with the two modest clarifications outlined above — the family-transfer exception and the explicit maintenance-vs.-improvement distinction — would be a smart, pro-family, pro-stability reform. It strengthens housing security, supports local control, protects long-time residents across FNSB, Anchorage, Mat-Su, Kenai, and beyond, and imposes no new state costs. I strongly encourage the committee to advance the bill today with these targeted fixes so municipalities can begin offering this vital protection without delay.

Thank you for your time and service.

Barbara Haney, PhD
North Pole, Alaska
(907 347-5109
Barbarahaney100@gmail.com

My views are my own and do not represent any group or group with whom I might be affiliated.

Konrad Jackson

From: david beistel <imfrozennp@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2026 4:36 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Support of CSSB 259(CRA)

I support CSSRB 259(CRA).

Thank You,
David Beistel
North Pole

Konrad Jackson

From: Donald Thompson <dc.thom@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2026 10:31 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: CSSB 259 (CRA)

RE: Strong Support for CSSB 259(CRA) – Please Pass It Today with Two Simple Fixes
Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am a mechanic here in Fairbanks. I can't call in because it is during work hours. I'm writing today to give you my full support for CSSB 259(CRA), the bill that lets boroughs like ours put a 3% to 10% cap on how much our primary home assessments can jump every year. This is one of the smartest, most practical things the Legislature could do for working Alaskans right now.

Every year I get the same sick feeling when the property tax notice hits the mailbox. Last year my assessed value shot up almost 35% even though I didn't add a single square foot to the house. I'm not rich. I fix heavy equipment for a living, and most of my customers are the same — teachers, truck drivers, fellow mechanics. When the tax bill goes up \$800 or \$1,200 overnight having done nothing more than basic things like mow the yard, that is just not right.

This bill fixes that problem without costing the state a dime. It gives the FNSB, Anchorage, Mat-Su, Kenai, and every other municipality the option to protect long-time homeowners like me. The 10-year full reassessment and the reset on real sales are fair. I get it — the borough still needs money to plow roads and run the schools. But we also need to be able to stay in the homes we've already paid for.

Two things need fixing before you pass this bill, and both are easy:

1. Family Loophole – Right now the cap disappears any time “ownership is transferred.” That sounds fine until your spouse dies and you're suddenly the only one on the title. Or you finally get married after years together and add your wife's name to the deed. Or you go through a divorce and the judge gives you the house because the kids live there. In every one of those cases you're still living in the same house, paying the same bills, but the tax assessor can hit you with a full market-value reset. That's not fair to widows, newlyweds, or single parents trying to hold things together. Please add clear language that keeps the cap in place for surviving spouses, marriage title changes, and divorce property divisions as long as the owner still lives there 185 days a year.
2. What Counts as an “Improvement” – The bill says the cap resets if the property is “improved.” I need to know that fixing my roof, hauling trash out of the yard, or planting a few flower beds so the place doesn't look like a junkyard won't count as a major improvement. Those are just normal upkeep so the house doesn't fall apart. Please write it into the statute so roof repairs, trash clean-ups, and planting flowers (and anything similar) are clearly defined as routine maintenance and do NOT reset the cap.

I'm just a guy who wants to keep the house I've worked for years to own without getting priced out by my own borough. This bill, with those two small fixes, does exactly that for mechanics, welders, nurses, teachers, and every other working family across Alaska.

Please vote yes on CSSB 259(CRA) today and include the family-transfer protection and the maintenance clarification. Alaska families are counting on you.

Regards,

Don Thompson
North Pole, Alaska

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Konrad Jackson

From: gail mcbride <gailmcbride@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2026 8:48 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: CSSB 259

Please pass CSSB 259. I strongly support this bill.

Thank you,

Gail McBride



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Konrad Jackson

From: twigt@yahoo.com
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2026 12:57 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Property taxes

Written Testimony in Support of CSSB 259(CRA) Senate Labor & Commerce Committee Hearing April 20, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in strong support of CSSB 259(CRA). As an economist with more than 30 years analyzing property tax systems and housing affordability in Alaska and other states, I urge the committee to pass this bill today — and to include two narrow, common-sense clarifications that will prevent unintended harm to the very Alaskan families the legislation is designed to protect.

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Recommendation:

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Thank you for your time and service.

Hugh Tordoff

Konrad Jackson

From: Libby Dalton <libby.dalton458@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2026 8:53 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: SB 259 Property Tax Bill

I strongly support SB 259 and urge you to as well.

It strengthens housing security, supports local control, protects long-time residents across FNSB, Anchorage, Mat-Su, Kenai, and beyond, and imposes no new state costs. Please vote to advance the bill today with these targeted fixes so municipalities can begin offering this vital protection.

Thank you for your time and service.

Libby Dalton Slane
HD 35- Fairbanks

Sent from my iPhone

Konrad Jackson

From: Rita Trometter <drtrom@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2026 1:10 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Property assessments

Dear Committee,

Please cap property tax assessments for homeowners in our state of Alaska.

Kindly,
Rita Trometter
North Pole



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Konrad Jackson

From: Thomas Gilligan <tom_and_val@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2026 11:03 AM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Property tax

I support CSSB 259(CRA) Cap on Property tax, I also support abolishing property tax. In the Fairbanks North Star Borough, my property tax is \$6,668.72 a year, OR \$555.73 PER MONTH! Property tax is an unfair tax. I own my home. If my income changes I risk loosing my home over unpaid property taxes. This is unacceptable. Alaska has an aging population (myself included) How will I live if I'm reduced to Social security as my only income and \$555 a month of that is property tax. Alaska's seniors should not fear loosing their home because of property tax. Let's be reasonable and come up with a solution that is fair to everyone.

Thank you
Valerie Gilligan