

**HOUSE BILL NO. 338**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE COSTELLO

Introduced: 2/23/26

Referred: Labor and Commerce, Finance

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 "An Act establishing the Alaska Work and Save Program for employees who do not  
2 have access to a qualified retirement savings plan at work; relating to the duties of the  
3 commissioner of labor and workforce development; and providing for an effective  
4 date."

5 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

6 \* **Section 1.** AS 43.23.130(a) is amended to read:

7 (a) Notwithstanding AS 43.23.200, the Department of Revenue shall prepare  
8 the electronic Alaska permanent fund dividend application to allow an applicant who  
9 files electronically to direct that money be subtracted from the dividend payment and  
10 contributed to the applicant's Alaska Work and Save Program participant  
11 account (AS 44.25.400 - 44.25.490), the crime victim compensation fund  
12 (AS 18.67.162), the peace officer and firefighter survivors' fund, or one or more of the  
13 educational organizations, community foundations, or charitable organizations that  
14 appear on the contribution list contained in the application. A contribution to an

1        **Alaska Work and Save Program participant account**, the crime victim  
2        compensation fund, the peace officer and firefighter survivors' fund or to an  
3        organization may be \$25, \$50, \$75, \$100, or more, in increments of \$50, up to the  
4        total amount of the permanent fund dividend that the applicant is entitled to receive. If  
5        the total amount of contributions elected by an applicant exceeds the amount of the  
6        permanent fund dividend that the applicant is entitled to receive, contributions shall be  
7        deducted from the dividend in the order of priority elected by the applicant on the  
8        application until the entire amount of the dividend that the applicant is entitled to  
9        receive is allocated for contribution. The electronic dividend application form must  
10       include notice that seven percent of the money contributed will be used for  
11       administrative costs incurred in implementing this section, and money from the  
12       dividend fund will not be used for that purpose.

13       \* **Sec. 2.** AS 43.23.130(b) is amended to read:

14                (b) The department shall list each educational organization, community  
15                foundation, or charitable organization eligible under (c) and (d) of this section, each  
16                university campus that applies under (l) of this section, **the Alaska Work and Save**  
17                **Program**, the crime victim compensation fund, and the peace officer and firefighter  
18                survivors' fund on the contribution list. The department shall maintain an electronic  
19                database for the contribution list that is accessible to the public and that permits  
20                searches by organization or fund name, geographic location, and type. The department  
21                shall provide a statement of the contributions made by an individual that is suitable for  
22                federal income tax purposes to each individual who elects to contribute under (a) of  
23                this section.

24       \* **Sec. 3.** AS 43.23.130(m) is amended to read:

25                (m) In addition to the application fee in (f) of this section, the department shall  
26                withhold a coordination fee from each organization, foundation, or university campus  
27                that receives contributions under this section in the immediately preceding dividend  
28                year. The coordination fee for an organization, foundation, or university campus that  
29                receives contributions under this section shall be seven percent of the amount of  
30                contributions reported by the department under (j) of this section for the organization,  
31                foundation, or university campus for the immediately preceding dividend year. The

1 coordination fee shall be separately accounted for under AS 37.05.142 and shall be  
 2 accounted for separately from the application fee collected under (f) of this section.  
 3 The annual estimated balance in the account maintained under AS 37.05.142 for  
 4 coordination fees collected under this subsection may be appropriated for costs of  
 5 administering this section. The department may not withhold a coordination fee for  
 6 contributions to **an Alaska Work and Save Program participant account**, the crime  
 7 victim compensation fund or the peace officer and firefighter survivors' fund.

8 \* **Sec. 4.** AS 44.25 is amended by adding new sections to read:

9 **Article 5. Alaska Work and Save Program.**

10 **Sec. 44.25.400. Alaska Work and Save Program.** (a) The Alaska Work and  
 11 Save Program is established in the Department of Revenue. The commissioner of  
 12 revenue or the commissioner's designee shall administer the program.

13 (b) An employer that does not offer a qualified retirement plan shall facilitate  
 14 participation of the employer's employees in the program. Any person who earns  
 15 compensation in this state is eligible to voluntarily enroll in the program.

16 (c) An employee is automatically enrolled in the program at the default  
 17 contribution rate established by the administrator. A participating employee's  
 18 contribution rate increases at the default rate established by the administrator. An  
 19 employee may

20 (1) opt out of the program or a contribution rate increase;

21 (2) make contributions at a rate different than the default rate  
 22 established by the administrator;

23 (3) increase contributions at a rate different than the default rate  
 24 established by the administrator.

25 (d) The state, the program, and the administrator

26 (1) may not guarantee a specific rate of return or interest for a  
 27 contribution;

28 (2) are not liable for any loss incurred by a participant as a result of  
 29 participating in the program;

30 (3) have no proprietary interest in contributions to, or earnings on  
 31 amounts contributed to, participant accounts.

1           **Sec. 44.25.410. Purpose of program.** The administrator is the trustee of all  
2 contributions and earnings on amounts contributed to participant accounts. The  
3 administrator's primary mission is to

4                   (1) develop a retirement program for employees in this state who are  
5 not offered a qualified retirement plan by an employer;

6                   (2) conduct a market and legal analysis of the program; and

7                   (3) facilitate the investment of funds contributed to participant  
8 accounts.

9           **Sec. 44.25.420. Powers and duties of the administrator.** (a) The  
10 administrator shall

11                   (1) develop and administer the program;

12                   (2) adopt regulations to implement AS 44.25.400 - 44.25.490;

13                   (3) establish a process for enrollment in the program, including  
14 automatic employee enrollment and a process for an employee to opt out of the  
15 program;

16                   (4) direct the investment of funds contributed to participant accounts  
17 and professionally manage participant accounts, consistent with

18                           (A) investment restrictions established by the administrator;

19                   and

20                           (B) standards of prudence;

21                   (5) provide a range of investment options and establish the rules by  
22 which a participant may direct the participant's investments among those options;

23                   (6) obtain an external performance review to evaluate the investment  
24 policies of the program and include the results in the report provided under (7) of this  
25 subsection;

26                   (7) by the first day of each regular legislative session, report to the  
27 governor and legislature on the financial condition of the program and any civil  
28 penalties issued under the program;

29                   (8) develop an annual operating budget;

30                   (9) in accordance with Internal Revenue Code limits, set a minimum,  
31 maximum, and default contribution rate and set a default rate for contribution

1 increases;

2 (10) allow a participant to adjust the rate of contributions to the  
3 participant's account and the rate of increases to the contribution rate;

4 (11) establish a process to allow a participant to make contributions, in  
5 addition to the participant's contributions through payroll deduction, to the  
6 participant's account, including contributions from the participant's permanent fund  
7 dividend;

8 (12) establish a process to allow a participant to withdraw funds from a  
9 program account;

10 (13) deposit a contribution to the program directly in a participant  
11 account;

12 (14) maintain separate records and accounting for each participant  
13 account;

14 (15) provide program and account status reports to participants at least  
15 once a year;

16 (16) allow participants to maintain a program account regardless of  
17 employer;

18 (17) disclose to employees, employers, and program participants

19 (A) the benefits and risks of contributing to the program;

20 (B) instructions on contributing to the program and changing  
21 contribution rates;

22 (C) the process to opt out of the program;

23 (D) the process to withdraw funds from a participant account;

24 (E) how to obtain additional program information;

25 (F) that the program is not an employer-sponsored retirement  
26 plan;

27 (G) that financial advisors are best positioned to provide  
28 financial advice and that employers are not liable for employee financial  
29 decisions made under AS 44.25.400 - 44.25.490;

30 (H) that the state, the program, and the administrator do not  
31 guarantee participant accounts or a rate of return;

1 (I) how an employee may file a complaint against an employer  
2 who fails to facilitate employee participation in the program.

3 (b) The administrator may

4 (1) contract for services necessary to execute the administrator's  
5 powers and duties;

6 (2) employ outside investment advisors to review investment policies;

7 (3) establish and collect fees to defray program administration costs;

8 (4) consider and purchase pooled private insurance for the program;

9 (5) develop and conduct outreach about the program and retirement  
10 savings;

11 (6) request that the commissioner of labor and workforce development  
12 investigate an employer as provided under AS 44.25.440;

13 (7) when prudent or necessary to do so for the benefit of the program,  
14 enter into agreements, including contracts, memoranda of understanding, partnerships,  
15 or other arrangements, with other governmental entities, including other states, or  
16 agencies or instrumentalities of other states, that maintain or are establishing  
17 retirement savings programs compatible with or similar to the program;

18 (8) change the default contribution rate and default rate for  
19 contribution increases;

20 (9) use private sector partnerships to administer and invest  
21 contributions to the program;

22 (10) access information held by, and enter into service agreements  
23 with, other departments and agencies of the state.

24 **Sec. 44.25.430. Confidentiality of information.** (a) Individual account  
25 information for participant accounts, including an account holder's name, address,  
26 telephone number, personal identification information, contributions, earnings, and  
27 account balance, is confidential and not subject to disclosure as a public record.

28 (b) Notwithstanding (a) of this section, individual account information may be  
29 disclosed

30 (1) to the extent necessary to administer the program in a manner  
31 consistent with the tax laws of the state and the Internal Revenue Code; or

1 (2) if the account holder expressly agrees to the disclosure, in writing.

2 **Sec. 44.25.440. Complaints.** (a) An employee may file a complaint with the  
3 commissioner of labor and workforce development alleging that an employer subject  
4 to AS 44.25.400 - 44.25.490 failed to facilitate employee participation in the program.

5 (b) The commissioner of labor and workforce development may, upon  
6 receiving an employee complaint or upon request of the administrator, investigate an  
7 employer. If the commissioner determines that the employer was required but failed to  
8 facilitate employee participation in the program for six months, the commissioner may  
9 impose a civil penalty on the employer.

10 (c) The commissioner of labor and workforce development may impose on an  
11 employer a civil penalty of up to \$100 for each employee of the employer who is  
12 eligible to participate in the program but for whom the employer does not facilitate  
13 participation in the program. The commissioner may not impose penalties under this  
14 section on a single employer that exceed \$5,000 in a calendar year.

15 (d) The commissioner of labor and workforce development shall notify the  
16 administrator when an employer has failed to facilitate employee participation in the  
17 program and when the commissioner imposes a civil penalty on an employer.

18 (e) The administrator may notify an employer that has failed to facilitate  
19 employee participation in the program that the employer may be subject to a civil  
20 penalty for failure to comply with program requirements.

21 **Sec. 44.25.490. Definitions.** In AS 44.25.400 - 44.25.490,

22 (1) "administrator" means the commissioner of revenue or the  
23 commissioner's designee;

24 (2) "employee" has the meaning given in AS 23.30.395;

25 (3) "employer" means a person or business that has employed one or  
26 more other persons in the state for not less than one year and does not provide a  
27 qualified retirement plan to employees;

28 (4) "program" means the Alaska Work and Save Program established  
29 in AS 44.25.400;

30 (5) "qualified retirement plan" includes a plan qualified under 26  
31 U.S.C. 401(a) or (k), 403(a) or (b), 408(k) or (p), or 457(b) (Internal Revenue Code).

1 \* **Sec. 5.** This Act takes effect January 1, 2027.

# Representative Mia Costello

Alaska State Capitol Room 421  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182  
Phone: 907.465.4993



1500 West Benson Blvd.  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
Phone: 907.269.0200

Official Business

## House Bill 338

### *Alaska Work and Save Program*

#### **Sectional Analysis Version N**

##### **Section 1** – AS 43.23.130(a): PFD contributions

Amends the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) electronic application to add the Alaska Work and Save Program as an allowable contribution option. Applicants may direct a portion or all of their PFD to their Alaska Work and Save participant account, in the same manner they may contribute to listed funds and organizations, with notice that seven percent of the contributed amount is used for administrative costs under the PFD contribution program, not from the dividend fund itself.

##### **Section 2** – AS 43.23.130(b): Contribution list

Adds the Alaska Work and Save Program to the list of funds and organizations that must appear on the PFD contribution list and in the public electronic database. The Department of Revenue must treat the program like other listed funds for purposes of public listing and contribution reporting.

##### **Section 3** – AS 43.23.130(m): Coordination fee

Clarifies that the existing seven percent coordination fee withheld from organizations receiving PFD contributions does not apply to contributions made to Alaska Work and Save participant accounts, the crime victim compensation fund, or the peace officer and firefighter survivors' fund.

##### **Section 4** – Adds New AS 44.25.400–44.25.490: Alaska Work and Save Program

Creates Article 5 in AS 44.25 to establish and govern the Alaska Work and Save Program in the Department of Revenue.

- Establishes the program and requires employers without a qualified retirement plan to facilitate employee participation, with automatic enrollment at a default contribution rate and employee opt-out and rate-change rights.
- States that the state, the program, and the administrator do not guarantee returns, are not liable for losses, and have no ownership interest in accounts.

- Defines the administrator’s purpose as creating a retirement program for uncovered workers, conducting market and legal analysis, and facilitating investment of contributions.
- Sets out detailed powers and duties of the administrator, including adopting regulations, managing investments under prudent standards, providing multiple investment options, arranging external performance reviews, reporting annually to the governor and legislature, setting contribution parameters, allowing additional contributions (including from PFDs), providing annual account statements, and disclosing program risks and limitations.
- Authorizes the administrator to contract for services, hire investment advisors, set fees, purchase insurance, conduct outreach, coordinate with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development on enforcement, partner with other states, adjust default contribution rates, use private partnerships, and access information from other state agencies.
- Makes individual account information confidential, with limited exceptions for tax-law compliance or written consent of the account holder.
- Creates a complaint and enforcement process through the commissioner of labor and workforce development, allowing investigations and civil penalties up to \$100 per eligible employee, capped at \$5,000 per employer per calendar year, with notice requirements between the commissioner and the administrator.
- Defines key terms: “administrator,” “employee,” “employer,” “program,” and “qualified retirement plan.”

**Section 5** – Effective date

Provides that the Act takes effect January 1, 2027.

# Representative Mia Costello

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Juneau, AK 99801-1182  
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Anchorage, AK 99503  
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Official Business

## **House Bill 338**

### ***Alaska Work and Save Program***

#### **SPONSOR STATEMENT**

House Bill 338, the Alaska Work and Save Program, addresses our state's retirement savings gap by creating a simple, automatic way for workers to save when their employers do not offer a retirement plan. Too many Alaskans approach retirement with little or no savings, increasing financial risk for families and pressure on public resources.

HB 338 establishes the Alaska Work and Save Program in the Department of Revenue for employees whose employers do not provide a qualified retirement plan. Employers simply facilitate payroll deductions into individual retirement accounts; they do not sponsor a plan, assume fiduciary liability, or make contributions. Employees are automatically enrolled at a default contribution rate set by the administrator but can opt out at any time or change their contribution level and rate of increase. Participants may also direct a portion of their Permanent Fund Dividend into their Work and Save account.

The commissioner of revenue, or a designee, serves as the program administrator, responsible for developing and managing the program, selecting and overseeing investment options, setting contribution parameters consistent with federal law, and reporting regularly to participants, the governor, and the legislature. The administrator may contract with private-sector partners and coordinate with other states operating similar programs to ensure efficient, professional management.

HB 338 includes important safeguards. The state, the program, and the administrator do not guarantee a rate of return, are not liable for investment losses, and have no proprietary interest in participant contributions or earnings. Individual account information is confidential and may be disclosed only as needed to administer the program or with the account holder's written consent.

HB 338 is a portable, low-cost tool that helps Alaskans build security in retirement while reducing future strain on our state's safety net, and I respectfully ask for your support.

Dear Alaska Legislature;

Small businesses want to provide as many benefits as possible, but it's difficult to do that. The costs and time to get a plan set up is too much for many. It should be easier. Not offering retirement benefits makes it hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits. This makes it hard to find and retain top talent that would help small businesses grow.

Work & Save will help small businesses compete with larger employers in a tight labor market enabling them to hire and keep valuable workers.

Seven in ten Alaska small business owners support a privately managed, ready-to-go retirement savings option that would help small businesses offer employees a way to save for retirement (Republican: 71%; Democrat: 70%; Independent: 76%). Additionally, most small business owners agree that state lawmakers should support a bill to make it easier for small business owners to access a retirement savings option for their employees and themselves.

We urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses can level the playing field and grow small businesses while helping workers save for their own retirement.

Sincerely,

Signature 

Print name Erik Pearson

Phone \_\_\_\_\_



December 4, 2025

Members of the Senate Finance Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

On behalf of the members of AGEnet, Alaska's association of senior service advocates, I urge you to support Senate Bill 21, known as Alaska Work & Save. This bill seeks to establish a public-private partnership that would offer automatic enrollment in an IRA retirement program for employees of private businesses lacking existing retirement plans.

All Alaskans deserve easy access to a retirement saving plan. Nearly 60% of households have no assets saved for retirement. Without access to a retirement savings plan at work, nearly all workers fail to save and are more likely to require public assistance in later years.

According to the Employee Benefit Research Institute, Americans are 15 times more likely to save for retirement when they can do so out of their regular paycheck and 20 times more likely to save if they are automatically enrolled. Some AGEnet members have personally experienced the peace of mind that comes with having money available from employer retirement plans to supplement their social security payments.

Social Security payments are not enough for retirees to make ends meet and private employers do not offer pensions. 47% of Alaska's workers do not have a way to save for retirement out of their regular paycheck while 77% of small business owners in Alaska are very supportive of a public-private retirement savings option for Alaska small businesses.

I understand that SB21 has successfully passed its initial committee of referral, Labor and Commerce, and now awaits review in the Finance Committee in the upcoming session. Please move Alaska Work & Save out of your committee to make it a reality.

Thank you for your consideration.

Marianne Mills, President

For more information, please contact President Marianne Mills at

My name is Dan Newman, the Founder, CEO & Auctioneer of Alaska Premier Auctions & Appraisals, and I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save bill.

With 50 experienced team members, tens of thousands of registered bidders, and a combined local and international email and social reach of 100K+, we are proud to serve every corner of Alaska and beyond with online auctions as a full-service auction house. From our iconic 44,000 sq ft purple warehouse facility & commercial vehicle yard in Anchorage, we help clients statewide handle everything from estate sales to heavy equipment auctions with professionalism and care.

A secure retirement is out of reach for thousands of Alaskans today, especially those who work for themselves or for small businesses. Nearly half of Alaskan employees do not have access to a workplace retirement savings option. While Social Security is critical for retirement, it is not enough to depend on. The average Social Security benefits for a 65+ Alaska family are about \$19,368 per year, while average spending totals \$21,000 per year for food, utilities, and health care alone. This discrepancy shows that many future retirees won't be able to meet the costs of basic needs and health care.

Workplace retirement savings accounts are needed to fill the gap, but many small businesses are unable to offer retirement plans because of the time and costs to set up and administer them. That's why I support Alaska Work and Save to help more small businesses be able to offer a retirement savings program to more Alaskans to save for their futures. Thank you.

Sincerely,



ALASKA PREMIER  
AUCTIONS  
& APPRAISALS  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
YOUR AUCTION SERVICES SPECIALIST

Dan Newman, CAI, AMM, BAS, CES  
CEO, Founder & Certified Auctioneer

Dear Alaska Legislature;

Small businesses want to provide as many benefits as possible, but it's difficult to do that. The costs and time to get a plan set up is too much for many. It should be easier. Not offering retirement benefits makes it hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits. This makes it hard to find and retain top talent that would help small businesses grow.

Work & Save will help small businesses compete with larger employers in a tight labor market enabling them to hire and keep valuable workers.

Seven in ten Alaska small business owners support a privately managed, ready-to-go retirement savings option that would help small businesses offer employees a way to save for retirement (Republican: 71%; Democrat: 70%; Independent: 76%). Additionally, most small business owners agree that state lawmakers should support a bill to make it easier for small business owners to access a retirement savings option for their employees and themselves.

We urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses can level the playing field and grow small businesses while helping workers save for their own retirement.

Sincerely,

Signature

Justin Shoffner

Print name

Justin Shoffner

Biz/Organization

Alpenglow Coffee House

City/community

Cardwood

Dear Alaska Legislature;

Small businesses want to provide as many benefits as possible, but it's difficult to do that. The costs and time to get a plan set up is too much for many. It should be easier. Not offering retirement benefits makes it hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits. This makes it hard to find and retain top talent that would help small businesses grow.

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We urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses can level the playing field and grow small businesses while helping workers save for their own retirement.

Sincerely,

Signature 

Print name Andrew Becavamenth

Biz/Organization

City/community Juneau, AK

com

Dear Alaska Legislature,

My name is Miyah Romano, and I am the owner of Brew D'Licious LLC, a locally owned coffee shop in Anchorage. We currently employ 16 people, many of them young adults and working parents, and we're incredibly proud to provide jobs and serve our community every day.

Like many small business owners, I want to offer my employees as many benefits as possible, but the cost and complexity of setting up a retirement plan on our own has made that very difficult. Not being able to provide retirement options makes it harder to compete with larger employers when hiring and retaining great workers. That directly affects small businesses like mine that are trying to grow and build long-term, stable staff.

Alaska Work & Save is exactly the kind of solution that would help businesses like mine. A simple, ready-to-go retirement savings option would allow my employees to start planning for their futures, while also helping me stay competitive in a tight labor market. Small businesses care deeply about their employees, but we often don't have the same resources or administrative capacity as larger companies.

I urge you to pass Alaska Work & Save so small businesses like Brew D'Licious can better support our employees, strengthen our workforce, and continue contributing to our local economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Miyah Romano

Owner, Brew D'Licious LLC

Anchorage, Alaska

Dear Alaska Legislature;

Small businesses want to provide as many benefits as possible, but it's difficult to do that. The costs and time to get a plan set up is too much for many. It should be easier. Not offering retirement benefits makes it hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits. This makes it hard to find and retain top talent that would help small businesses grow.

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We urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses can level the playing field and grow small businesses while helping workers save for their own retirement.

Sincerely,

Signature 

Print name Liam Coyle

Biz/Organization Coast Pizza

City/community Girdwood

Dear Alaska Legislature;

Small businesses want to provide as many benefits as possible, but it's difficult to do that. The costs and time to get a plan set up is too much for many. It should be easier. Not offering retirement benefits makes it hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits. This makes it hard to find and retain top talent that would help small businesses grow.

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We urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses can level the playing field and grow small businesses while helping workers save for their own retirement.

Sincerely,

Signature E. F. Hickey  
Print name Eugene F. Hickey  
Biz/Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
City/community Juneau

Lawrence Taylor, Jr.  
Flat Lake Engineering LLC  
PO Box 8142  
Ketchikan, AK 99901

My name is Larry Taylor, Jr. I am the Managing Member of Flat Lake Engineering LLC in Ketchikan and generally in Southeast Alaska, with some work in other port cities as well. I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save bill.

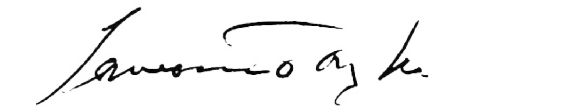
My partners and employees have been doing Air Quality Engineering work in Alaska since 2012. One project we have is a five-year contract with the Alaska Cruise Ship and State Ferry Commercial Passenger Vessel Environmental Compliance Program. Basically, we are certified to monitor vessel smoke emissions and determine if they are within federal and state regulations to protect the health of people in our port cities.

As a business with two part-time employees and one minor partner who has no retirement savings, I want to give them as many benefits as possible, but it's difficult to do that. The costs and the time to get a plan set up for my business is too much. It should be easier. Not offering retirement benefits hurts my chances to recruit and retain employees and makes it hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits. This makes it hard for my business to find and retain top talent that would help my business grow.

Alaska Work and Save is exactly the type of retirement savings option that would work for our business. It would not only help me compete in an already tight labor market but it would also allow my employees to save for their futures. Small businesses are like families, we take care of our employees in ways that larger businesses don't always do.

I urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses like mine can level the playing field and grow our businesses. I understand the legislation as it stands will not cover my part-time employees, but my minor partner has qualified since 2019. I would really like to help her feel grounded with the company to give me some assurance that she will stay with us. She is an excellent worker and deserves to be supported by this legislation.

Thank you, Very truly yours,



---

Lawrence Taylor, Jr.  
Managing Member  
Flat Lake Engineering LLC

Dear Alaska Legislature;


Small businesses want to provide as many benefits as possible, but it's difficult to do that. The costs and time to get a plan set up is too much for many. It should be easier. Not offering retirement benefits makes it hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits. This makes it hard to find and retain top talent that would help small businesses grow.

Work & Save will help small businesses compete with larger employers in a tight labor market enabling them to hire and keep valuable workers.

Seven in ten Alaska small business owners support a privately managed, ready-to-go retirement savings option that would help small businesses offer employees a way to save for retirement (Republican: 71%; Democrat: 70%; Independent: 76%). Additionally, most small business owners agree that state lawmakers should support a bill to make it easier for small business owners to access a retirement savings option for their employees and themselves.

We urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses can level the playing field and grow small businesses while helping workers save for their own retirement.

Sincerely,

Signature   
Print name Josh Hegner  
Biz/Organization Goldwood Brewing Company  
City/community Goldwood

Dear Alaska Legislature;

Small businesses want to provide as many benefits as possible, but it's difficult to do that. The costs and time to get a plan set up is too much for many. It should be easier. Not offering retirement benefits makes it hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits. This makes it hard to find and retain top talent that would help small businesses grow.

Work & Save will help small businesses compete with larger employers in a tight labor market enabling them to hire and keep valuable workers.

Seven in ten Alaska small business owners support a privately managed, ready-to-go retirement savings option that would help small businesses offer employees a way to save for retirement (Republican: 71%; Democrat: 70%; Independent: 76%). Additionally, most small business owners agree that state lawmakers should support a bill to make it easier for small business owners to access a retirement savings option for their employees and themselves.

We urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses can level the playing field and grow small businesses while helping workers save for their own retirement.

Sincerely,

Brent Course

Signature



Biz/Organization

Girdwood Laundry & Showers

City/community

Girdwood

Dear Alaska Legislature;

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Sincerely,

Signature Constance Cooley  
Print name Constance Cooley  
Biz/Organization great Alaskan Tourist Trap  
City/community GIROWOOD

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Sincerely,

Signature   
Print name James M Percino  
Biz/Organization Inlet RX Group  
City/community Girdwood

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Sincerely,

Signature   
Print me FRANS WEITS  
Biz/Organization JACK SPRAT



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Sincerely,

Signature   
Print name Jordan Kesler

B \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 62 \_\_\_\_\_

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Sincerely,

Signature Elaine Hickey  
Print name Elaine Hickey  
Biz/Organization Juneau Public Health  
City/community Juneau  
E

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Sincerely,

Signature



Print name

Pamela Hatzis

Biz/Organization

La Bodega

City/community

Anchorage

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Sincerely,

Signature



Print name

LEE ELLIS

Biz/Organization

MIDNIGHT SUN BREWING CO

City/community

Girdwood, AK

Email

\_\_\_\_\_

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Sincerely,

Signature *Ronald D. Allingworth*  
Print name Ronald D. Allingworth  
Biz/Organization North Pole Peonies  
City/community North Pole  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Alaska Legislature;

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Sincerely,

Signature Emma G. Kramer

Print name Emma G. Kramer

Biz/Organization Prince William Sound Stewardship Foundation

City/community Girdwood, AK 99587

ma g @

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Sincerely,

Signature 

Print name Eric Helubrecht

Biz/Organization Powder Hound LLC

City/community Grasswood

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Sincerely,

Signature Jeanne Reilly  
Print name JEANNE REILLY  
Biz/Organization REILLY'S IRISH PUB  
City/community ANCH. PK.  
84



August 6, 2025

Senator Bill Wielechowski  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 103  
120 4th Street  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Wielechowski:

On behalf of Food Bank of Alaska, I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 21 (SB 21), to establish the Alaska Work and Save Program. Since 1979, our organization has worked to eliminate hunger statewide through partnerships, direct services, and anti-hunger policy leadership. We believe this legislation offers a practical solution to help Alaskans, especially those in small business and seasonal work environments, build retirement savings.

Alaska's seniors are uniquely vulnerable. According to Feeding America's 2023 *Map the Meal Gap* report, roughly 11,566 Alaskans aged 60 and over are food insecure, about 7.5% of the senior population statewide.<sup>1</sup> These are Alaska's parents, grandparents, neighbors, and community builders—many who live on fixed incomes that fall short of covering Alaska's high cost of living. Food Bank of Alaska sees the impact of this disparity among the neighbors we support. Through programs like the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and SNAP outreach, we serve thousands of older Alaskans who struggle to afford basic nutrition. Since the pandemic, we've seen a 7-10% increase in seniors seeking food assistance—highlighting the need for systemic solutions that make saving easier.

SB 21 offers one such solution. By creating a pathway for workers to save for retirement through automatic payroll deductions, the Alaska Work and Save Program will help workers, particularly in fishing, tourism, and gig-based jobs, prepare for retirement and reduce future reliance on emergency food assistance.

Thank you for your leadership in advancing this bill to support the long-term financial stability of Alaska's workforce.

Sincerely,  
*Rachael Miller*  
Rachael Miller  
Chief Advocacy Officer  
Food Bank of Alaska

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<sup>1</sup> Feeding America, *Map the Meal Gap: Food Insecurity Among Seniors Age 60+ in Alaska by Congressional District (2023)*, <https://map.feedingamerica.org/district/2023/senior-60-plus/alaska> (last visited Aug. 4, 2025).

Dear Alaska Legislature;

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We urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses can level the playing field and grow small businesses while helping workers save for their own retirement.

Sincerely,

Signature *Christine Bryson*  
Print name *Christine Bryson*  
Biz/Organization *Subway of Juneau*  
City/community *Juneau*

Dear Alaska Legislature;

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Sincerely,

Tana Skye Nevada

Dear Alaska Legislature;


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Sincerely,

Signature   
Print name John O'Leary  
Biz/Organization The GREENS  
City/community GIRDWOOD

---

Dear Alaska Legislature;

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Sincerely,

Signature Carol L Makar

Print name CAROL L MAKAR

Biz/Organization The Ice Cream Shop

City/community Girdwood AK

Dear Alaska Legislature;

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We urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses can level the playing field and grow small businesses while helping workers save for their own retirement.

Sincerely,

Evan Fried



**A LITTLE STORE  
WITH A LOT OF THINGS.**

January 12, 2026

*Happily supplying goods to  
folks in Alaska's magnificent  
Copper River Basin.  
From groceries to goat  
food, you'll probably find it  
at Wenger's.*

Mile 10.3 Edgerton Highway  
HC 60 | Box 252D  
Copper Center Alaska 99573

My name is Jennie Tschappat and I am a principal owner of Copper Caboodle, LLC doing business as Wenger's Country Store in Kenny Lake, Alaska. On behalf of our owner group, I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save bill.

Our store has been an essential business for the people who live on the edge of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve in Eastern Interior Alaska for over 20 years. My partners and I bought the store from the original owners in 2022. Located on the Edgerton Highway in the Copper River Basin, Wenger's Country Store has a variety of things to make living on the edge of the wilderness a little bit easier. We carry groceries, farm and garden supplies, animal feeds, hardware, and automotive supplies. Many of our customers travel 40 to 100+ miles just to shop with us, and that still saves them an additional 180+ miles they'd have to drive to get to Palmer and Anchorage.

As a business with up to 18 employees in the summers, we want to give them as many benefits as possible, but it's difficult to do that. The costs and the time to get a retirement plan set up for my business is too much. It should be easier. Not offering retirement benefits hurts our chances to recruit and retain employees, and makes hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits. This makes it hard for my business to find and retain top talent that would help my business grow.

Alaska Work and Save is exactly the type of retirement savings option that would work for our business. It would not only help me compete in an already tight labor market, but it would also allow my employees to save for their futures. Small businesses are like families, we take care of our employees in ways that larger businesses don't always do.

I urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses like mine can level the playing field and grow our businesses.

Thank you,

Jennie Tschappat  
Principal Owner  
Copper Caboodle, LLC



Winfluence Strategies, LLC  
821 N Street Suite 103  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

To whom it may concern:

My name is Cherie Curry, and I am the owner of two small businesses in Anchorage. I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save bill.

Through my companies, I am proud of the work we do to facilitate businesses and groups on public policy, community events, housing and energy initiatives, business development and more. I am honored to work on issues that make a difference for our communities and the future of our State.

Although I currently do not have salaried employees, I have previously owned and managed small businesses with up to 60 employees. I understand firsthand the challenges of offering employee benefits and how difficult it can be. The costs and the time to get a plan set up for small businesses is too much. Not being able to afford retirement benefits hurts chances of growing a small business and makes it hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits.

Alaska Work and Save is exactly the type of retirement savings option that would work for many small businesses. It would not only help them compete in an already tight labor market, but it would also allow the opportunity to hire employees that could be able to save for their futures.

I urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses can level the playing field and grow our businesses.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cherie Curry".

Cherie L. Curry  
President, Winfluence Strategies, LLC

Dear Alaska Legislature;

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We urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses can level the playing field and grow small businesses while helping workers save for their own retirement.

Sincerely,

Signature Lisa M Miles  
Print name Lisa M Miles  
Biz/Organization Z Architects  
City/community Girdwood



# Headwaters

## Wellness & Counseling

250 Cushman, Suite 5A  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
907-456-2256  
headwatersfairbanks.com

To the Alaska State Legislature

My name is Liz Pawelko and I am the owner of Headwaters Wellness and Counseling in Fairbanks. I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save proposed legislation.

Headwaters Wellness and Counseling is a private mental health practice that provides individual and family counseling to people struggling in Fairbanks for more than 10 years. The benefit of being in private practice is that a broader swath of people can be served—lower and upper income, all ethnicities, veterans and active duty, and insured or noninsured. A significant downside of working in a solo private mental health practice is no or limited capacity for a workplace retirement savings option.

A secure retirement is out of reach for thousands of Alaskans today, especially those who work for themselves and for small businesses. More than half of Alaskan employees do not have access to a workplace retirement savings option, and the majority of small businesses do not have the financial means or administrative capacity to provide one. While Social Security is critical for retirement, it is not enough to depend on. The average Social Security benefits for a 65+ Alaska family are about \$19,368 per year, while average spending totals \$21,000 per year for food, utilities, and health care alone. This discrepancy shows that many future retirees won't be able to meet the costs of basic needs and healthcare.

Workplace retirement savings accounts are needed to fill the gap, but many small businesses are unable to offer retirement plans because of the time and costs to set up and administer them. That's why I support Alaska Work and Save, to help more small businesses be able to offer a retirement savings program to more Alaskans to save for their futures. Please introduce and support the Alaska Work and Save legislation into committee.

Sincerely,

Liz Pawelko  
Licensed Professional Counselor

To the Alaska Legislature

My name is Alyssa Quintyne, owner of AQ Creates here in Fairbanks. I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save legislation.

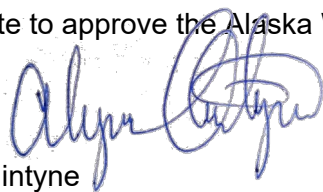
AQ Creates is a creative business that supports community arts programming, events, commission services in the Interior and statewide. As a business owner, I believe that supporting employees is a top priority. If they are going to give up their time and labor help me run my business in ways that I can't alone, than the very least I can do is support that time and labor by improving their well being and livelihoods. Conducting business in my view, is supposed to be a relationship rather than a transaction. And I believe that supporting and improving any employee's quality of live is the price of running a business. This includes full inclusive healthcare, PTO and sick leave, 401Ks and retirement. If I cannot afford to support my employees with those full benefits, then I simply cannot afford to have employees. I believe this is something the majority of small business owners and employers strive to do. At the same time, our systems really do not allot services and education specifically for small businesses and employers to learn about and implement most employee benefits. So it's understandable why many of us can't. Not because we don't want to – because we don't know how, can't figure it out without help, can't afford it, and if we can we don't have the capacity or staff to implement and manage those systems to provide that benefit.

The Alaskan workforce as a whole, struggles to be competitive and equitable. Many of industries either don't or chooses not to prioritize employees over profit. It's all too common to here people leave our state because they can't find work that will pay them enough and provide the benefits needed for someone to be able to be stable and thrive. And that is really hard to here and feel; like the reality of me staying the place that raised me is getting harder and harder we can't afford to work here and plan for our futures here. Too many people are leaving our state because of this. If Alaska is to stop that cycle, then the Alaskan legislature needs to do something to fix it. I think the Alaska Work and Save program provides a simple solution that was consulted by Alaskan business owners. It doesn't cost the state or employers much, if anything at all, to implement this program. Plus, the program can help me run my businesses that supports my values of supporting my employees better.

Please vote to approve the Alaska Work and Save legislation.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Quintyne



To the Office of Senator Bill Wielechowski,

My name is Michael Miller. I run an Alaska technology company called Out of a Jam Solutions. We help schools and businesses manage their Apple fleets, and we're also building a SaaS product called Spruce. I hire ex Amazon and Apple employees, and they really like their benefits.

Running a small business teaches you a lot about how things actually work in the real world. One of those lessons is that retirement plans are great in theory and a giant administrative pain in practice. Most small businesses simply don't have the time, staff, or expertise to set one up properly, even when they want to do right by their employees.

That's why I support Alaska Work and Save (SB21). Programs like this give workers a simple way to save through payroll without turning small businesses into accidental financial services companies. From what I've seen running a small tech firm in Alaska, anything that makes it easier for people to save for retirement without adding another compliance nightmare for employers is a good thing.

Please support SB21 and move it forward.

Sincerely,

Michael Miller

Owner, Out of a Jam Solutions [www.outofajam.net](http://www.outofajam.net)

Creator, Spruce - [www.sprucetools.com](http://www.sprucetools.com)

Palmer, Alaska

To the Alaska Legislature,

My name is Savannah Fletcher and I am the Owner of Solstice Books, an independent bookstore in downtown Fairbanks. I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save legislation.

Our bookstore is new: we just opened in the summer of 2025. And since then we've seen an outpouring of support from the community, a growing enthusiasm over literature, and the opportunity to employ 5 women part-time from high school age to their forties. It's been such a delight to discuss books with readers of all ages and interests and I hope you stop in the next time you're in Fairbanks.

But for my employees, and for many Alaskans, secure retirement is out of reach. This is especially those who work for themselves and for small employers like my team. More than half of Alaskan employees do not have access to a workplace retirement savings option, and places like my bookstore do not have the financial means or administrative capacity to provide one. I'm a one-woman show who still isn't even paying myself while I get my business up and running. While Social Security is critical for retirement, it is not enough to depend on. The average Social Security benefits for a 65+ Alaska family are about \$19,368 per year, while average spending totals \$21,000 per year for food, utilities, and health care alone. This discrepancy shows that many future retirees won't be able to meet the costs of basic needs and healthcare.

A perfect example of someone falling into this conundrum is my employee and friend, H. She is a working mother of two boys, with a husband who is currently deployed. She cannot work a full time job due to her parenting responsibilities, but piece-mealing work through multiple small businesses in town means she is left with no retirement plan from any of them. This puts her in the scary territory of someone who will work hard for decades of her life, but still have insufficient retirement funds in older age.

Workplace retirement savings accounts can fill that gap, but many small businesses are unable to offer retirement plans because of the time and costs to set up and administer them. That's why I support Alaska Work and Save, to help more small businesses like mine be able to offer a retirement savings program to more Alaskans to save for their futures. I want my hard-working employees, like H., to be able to save up and know that they'll be secure in older age.

Please vote to approve the Alaska Work and Save legislation.



Sincerely,

Savannah Fletcher  
Owner  
Solstice Books

**SOLSTICE**  
♦ **BOOKS** ♦



To the Alaska State Legislature,

My name is Allan Lee Mesina, and I am the owner of Technology Group of the North, LLC, based in Fairbanks, Alaska. I am writing to express my support for the proposed Alaska Work and Save legislation..

I have operated my business since 2006, providing secure IT services to organizations across our community. As a small business owner, I understand firsthand the challenges small employers face in offering meaningful retirement benefits to their employees. Many small businesses simply do not have the financial resources or administrative capacity to establish and manage traditional retirement plans.

A secure retirement is increasingly out of reach for many Alaskans. In Alaska's private sector, about 105,000 workers, approximately 47 percent of the workforce, do not have access to a retirement savings plan through their jobs. While Social Security remains an essential foundation for retirement income, it is not sufficient on its own. Without additional savings options, many future retirees will struggle to meet even their most basic needs in retirement.

Workplace retirement savings accounts are critical to closing this gap. However, many small businesses are unable to offer such plans due to cost and administrative complexity. Alaska Work and Save would provide a practical and accessible solution, enabling more small businesses to offer retirement savings opportunities and helping more Alaskans build long-term financial security.

I respectfully urge you to support Alaska Work and Save, and move it forward through committee.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

Allan Lee Mesina  
Owner, Technology Group of the North, LLC  
PO Box 81621  
Fairbanks, AK 99708



betsy@coraxuas.com  
PO Box 407  
Sutton, AK 99674

To the Alaska Legislature,

I submit this letter in support of the Alaska Work and Save program and legislation.

A secure retirement is out of reach for thousands of Alaskans today, especially small those who are self employed and work for small businesses like mine. More than half of Alaskan employees do not have access to a workplace retirement savings option, but financial and administrative costs of providing one is a significant barrier for a business like mine. While Social Security is critical for retirement, it is not enough to depend on. The average Social Security benefits for a 65+ Alaska family are about \$19,368 per year, while average spending totals \$21,000 per year for food, utilities, and health care alone. This discrepancy shows that many future retirees won't be able to meet the costs of basic needs and healthcare.

Workplace retirement savings accounts are needed to fill the gap, but many small businesses are unable to offer retirement plans because of the time and costs to set up and administer them. That's why I support Alaska Work and Save, to help more small businesses be able to offer a retirement savings program to more Alaskans to save for their futures.

Please vote to approve the Alaska Work and Save legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Betsy Young".

Betsy Young  
Managing Director  
Corax Ilc, Glacierview, Alaska

To the Alaska Legislature,

My name is Elvie Mapote and I am the Loan officer of Guild Mortgage in The Filipino American Chamber of commerce -Alaska . I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save legislation.

Helping community pre qualify for home loans

A secure retirement is out of reach for thousands of Alaskans today, especially those who work for themselves and for small employers. More than half of Alaskan employees do not have access to a workplace retirement savings option, and the majority of small employers do not have the financial means or administrative capacity to provide one. While Social Security is critical for retirement, it is not enough to depend on. The average Social Security benefits for a 65+ Alaska family are about \$19,368 per year, while average spending totals \$21,000 per year for food, utilities, and health care alone. This discrepancy shows that many future retirees won't be able to meet the costs of basic needs and healthcare.

Workplace retirement savings accounts are needed to fill the gap, but many small businesses are unable to offer retirement plans because of the time and costs to set up and administer them. That's why I support Alaska Work and Save, to help more small businesses be able to offer a retirement savings program to more Alaskans to save for their futures.

Please vote to approve the Alaska Work and Save legislation.

Sincerely,

Elvie Mapote  
Loan officer  
Guild Mortgage  
205 E Benson Blvd Ste 101, Anchorage AK 99503

To the Alaska Legislature,

My name is Josh Horst and I am the President of Horst Expediting & Remote Operations in Fairbanks. I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save legislation.

I started my company in 2008 out of a tent in the back yard of my rental cabin as a "guy and his truck". The company has grown to employ about 15 people +/- seasonal help. We provide remote logistics services to companies engaged in minerals exploration, mining, construction, telecommunications, alternative energy, research, village governance and more. I have worked very hard over the years to commit to higher and higher wages and I see the results of these efforts. I see employees upgrading their cars, purchasing their first homes, and starting families. They're putting down roots in Alaska. However, comparative to large employers and government agencies, our benefits offerings are minimal, which hurts our employee retention.

Small businesses suffer greatly from employee turnover. We don't have the depth in our teams to keep work on track when one or two people leave. Onboarding and training is hard when everyone who you have is already fully utilized. This is why I think the Alaska Work and Save program is a big step in the right direction for employers and employees of small businesses. We need to retain our employees, and our employees need to know they have a bright future here in Alaska.

A secure retirement is out of reach for thousands of Alaskans today, especially those who work for themselves and for small employers. More than half of Alaskan employees do not have access to a workplace retirement savings option, and the majority of small employers do not have the financial means or administrative capacity to provide one. While Social Security is critical for retirement, it is not enough to depend on. The average Social Security benefits for a 65+ Alaska family are about \$19,368 per year, while average spending totals \$21,000 per year for food, utilities, and health care alone. This discrepancy shows that many future retirees won't be able to meet the costs of basic needs and healthcare.

Workplace retirement savings accounts are needed to fill the gap, but many small businesses are unable to offer retirement plans because of the time and costs to set up and administer them. That's why I support Alaska Work and Save, to help more small businesses be able to offer a retirement savings program to more Alaskans to save for their futures.

Please vote to approve the Alaska Work and Save legislation.

Sincerely,

Josh Horst  
President  
Horst Expediting & Remote Operations

To the Alaska Legislature,

My name is Mary Douglas and I am the Owner/Managing Director of Vertex Solutions AK in Anchorage community. I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save legislation.

I started my business in 2025 and I am in the process of building up my clientele. However, my experience as a pension supervisor at a private employer made me realize how much of a retirement gap we have. This is one of the biggest elephants in the room that only a few people care to address and talk about. For over a year now, I have been helping the community help protect their assets and wealth and even their family's resources for when life happens by securing a life insurance policy while they are still working. Some get a policy for retirement purposes which I help them get educated about. I helped secure 99 families in total in the year of 2025 and I am aggressively aiming to help more in the coming years.

I support Alaska Work and Save because of its vision to help provide retirees with a more comfortable retirement by encouraging individuals to prepare and save beyond what current public programs may provide. This initiative helps open the eyes of working-class individuals to the financial realities they may face after reaching retirement age. I have personally met many people who are realizing that their retirement funds are not enough to cover their living expenses during retirement. Therefore, programs that focus on education and support—such as Alaska Work and Save—can significantly improve financial preparedness and overall well-being in retirement.

A secure retirement is out of reach for thousands of Alaskans today, especially those who work for themselves and for small employers. More than half of Alaskan employees do not have access to a workplace retirement savings option, and the majority of small employers do not have the financial means or administrative capacity to provide one. While Social Security is critical for retirement, it is not enough to depend on. The average Social Security benefits for a 65+ Alaska family are about \$19,368 per year, while average spending totals \$21,000 per year for food, utilities, and health care alone. This discrepancy shows that many future retirees won't be able to meet the costs of basic needs and healthcare.

Workplace retirement savings accounts are needed to fill the gap, but many small businesses are unable to offer retirement plans because of the time and costs to set up and administer them. That's why I support Alaska Work and Save, to help more small businesses be able to offer a retirement savings program to more Alaskans to save for their futures.

Please vote to approve the Alaska Work and Save legislation.

Sincerely,

Mary Douglas  
Owner/Managing Director  
Vertex Solutions AK



3601 C Street, 1420 | Anchorage, AK 99503  
1-866-227-7447 | Fax: 907-341-2270  
aarp.org/ak | alaska@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpalaska  
facebook.com/aarpak

March 4, 2026

Rep Mia Costello  
Alaska Legislature  
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HB338 Support

Dear Rep Costello:

AARP supports the creation of a public-private retirement savings option that allows Alaska workers to save their own money for the future. Today, nearly half of Alaska private-sector workers, especially those employed by small businesses, don't have access to a retirement savings account at work —leaving them unprepared for the future. We know that Americans are 15 times more likely to save for the future if they can do so out of their regular paycheck. Only 5% of people save for retirement on their own without a workplace savings option. Work and Save will give all Alaska workers the opportunity to save their own money for retirement.

Without retirement accounts, Alaskans rely even more on Social Security for financial security. However, Social Security alone is not enough for them to depend on as a sole source of retirement income: The average Social Security benefits for a 65+ Alaska family are about \$17,800 per year, while average spending totals \$21,000 per year for food, utilities, and health care alone. Offering employees a simple way to save means fewer Alaskans will need to rely on public assistance programs in retirement.

Alaska small business owners want this. More than 7 in 10 AK small businesses AARP surveyed support a public-private retirement savings option ([aarp.org/AKWorkandSave](http://aarp.org/AKWorkandSave)). Work & Save will help small businesses compete with larger employers' benefits packages, enabling them to hire and keep valuable employees.

**AARP Alaska supports HB338 to give all Alaskan workers the opportunity to save for retirement at work.**

On behalf of the fastest growing senior population per capita in the nation and our 77,000 AARP Alaska members, and for the benefit of all Alaskans, we thank you for your leadership on this important issue for all Alaskans.

Respectfully, Marge Stoneking  
Advocacy Director, AARP Alaska



Tammy Anderson  
Homer Art and Frame  
4001 Lake St. #3, Homer, AK 99603

My name is Tammy Anderson and I am the owner of Homer Art and Frame in Homer. I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save bill.

Homer Art and Frame has been serving the Kenai Peninsula with a wide selection of fine art and craft supplies, as well as premier custom framing services, since 2011. We are incredibly fortunate that our artistically diverse community can support a business like ours, but the size of the communities we serve does mean that we are operating on a thin margin most of the time.

As a business owner with four part time employees, I want to give them as many benefits as possible, but it's difficult to do that. The costs and the time to get a plan set up for my business is too much. It should be easier. Not offering retirement benefits hurts my chances to recruit and retain employees and makes it hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits. This makes it hard for my business to find and retain top talent that would help my business grow.

I urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses like mine can level the playing field and grow our businesses.

Thank you,

Tammy Anderson  
Owner  
Homer Art and Frame

Melissa Ford  
MK Property LLC  
PO Box 1052  
Nome AK 99762

My name is Melissa Ford and I am the owner of MK Property, dba Nome Sweet Homes in Nome Alaska. I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save bill.

We have been in business since 2007. We support our community with financial input and volunteer hours. All our employees vote.

As a business with 4 employees, I want to give them as many benefits as possible, but it's difficult to do that. The costs and the time to get a plan set up for my business is too much. It should be easier. Not offering retirement benefits hurts my chances to recruit and retain employees and makes hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits. This makes it hard for my business to find and retain top talent that would help my business grow.

Alaska Work and Save is exactly the type of retirement savings option that would work for our business. It would not only help me compete in an already tight labor market but it would also allow my employees to save for their futures. Small businesses are like families, we take care of our employees in ways that larger businesses don't always do.

I urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses like mine can level the playing field and grow our businesses. I would love to hire more people, but it's hard to compete with the larger companies who can offer better retirement plans.

Thank you,

Melissa Ford  
PO Box 1052  
Nome AK 99762

Stefan Zijlstra  
Scooper Trooper, LLC  
PO Box 113221  
Anchorage, AK 99511-3221

My name is Stefan Zijlstra and I am the owner of Scooper Trooper, LLC. I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save bill.

We've been cleaning dog waste out of Anchorage yards in both private and commercial areas for more than 20 years. We work on a year-round basis, providing this invaluable service to the community. And we are proud to have one of the highest customer satisfaction ratings in our sector!

As a business with 6-15 employees, I want to give them as many benefits as possible, but it's difficult to do that. The costs and the time to get a plan set up for my business is too much. It should be easier. Not offering retirement benefits hurts my chances to recruit and retain employees and makes hard to compete with bigger companies who can offer benefits. This makes it hard for my business to find and retain top talent that would help my business grow.

Alaska Work and Save is exactly the type of retirement savings option that would work for our business. It would not only help me compete in an already tight labor market but it would also allow my employees to save for their futures. Small businesses are like families, we take care of our employees in ways that larger businesses don't always do.

I urge you to pass Alaska Work and Save so that small businesses like mine can level the playing field and grow our businesses.

Thank you,

Stefan Zijlstra  
  
Owner  
Scooper Trooper, LLC



April 7, 2025

Alaska Senate Labor and  
Commerce Committee  
Submitted Electronically

RE: Senate Bill 21 - Support

Dear Chair Bishop and members of the Senate Labor & Commerce Committee:

I am writing on behalf of TIAA, a leading provider of secure retirements that manages more than \$1.2 trillion in assets for more than for 5 million clients. We were founded more than 100 years ago, have paid more than \$500 billion in lifetime income to our retired clients, and believe that all Americans deserve a well-structured, reasonably priced retirement plan. That's why we support the Alaska Work & Save Program (SB 21).

TIAA was created to provide retirement solutions for a group of people – educators – who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to retire without facing serious hardship and poverty. We are proud of our engagement with the University of Alaska, where we provide employees with a retirement plan that allows them to save and provides them an option to convert their savings into a paycheck in retirement. Today, we manage more than \$470 million in retirement assets for more than 2,500 Alaskans.

Unfortunately, almost half of all private sector workers do not have access to a workplace retirement saving program today. TIAA recently released a "Retirement Bill of Rights" that starts with the basic principle that every American worker has the right to save for a financially secure retirement. The Retirement Bill of Rights is designed to address the retirement insecurity which affects millions of Americans, including the 40% of U.S. households that risk running short of money in retirement.

The program outlined in this legislation is well-designed, incorporates industry best practices, such as including automatic employee enrollment with the opportunity for opt-out, a default contribution rate, and the ability for a participant to direct their Alaska permanent fund dividends into their Alaska Work & Save account. We also strongly believe that participants should be provided an opportunity to convert those savings into guaranteed lifetime income in retirement. This would allow participants with a pathway to turn their savings into a paycheck for life.

TIAA has engaged with state officials from across the country on these important retirement initiatives and has offered input on how to design best-in-class retirement plans. We applaud states, like Alaska, that are looking at ways to help close the retirement savings gap, and support the consideration and passage of SB 21, which creates the Alaska Work & Save Program. This bill would help thousands of Alaskans workers look forward to a financially secure retirement.

For the above reasons, we strongly encourage passage of SB 21. I am available to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Zeny Agullana".

Zeny Agullana

# John Weddleton

9836 Reliance Drive  
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

March 20, 2025

Dear Alaska Legislator,

I like the Work & Save program.

BOSCO'S celebrates 40 years in 2024! We've done a lot of things right, but I've missed some things, too.

I never expected to have staff stick around for decades. Now that many have, they are closer to retirement than to the beginning of their careers. I worry they don't have money stashed away to get them through their golden years. I see now that I missed setting up some kind of retirement savings program.

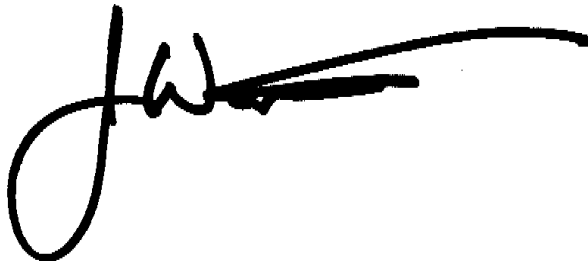
Like most small business owners, I want to provide benefits to my staff, but it's difficult to do that with all the claims to my attention in the barely controlled chaos. The costs and time to set up a retirement plan left it low on the to-do list. If it were easier, my business would have a plan and my staff would be better off for it.

The Work & Save program puts a retirement plan on a platter making it super easy for me to implement and for my staff to take advantage. It's a little late for my older staff but all the new folks coming up will really appreciate this benefit.

Implementing the business side of the program looks straight forward. The proposal keeps things simple. That is really important. We use Quick Books for payroll and it can handle benefit programs like Work & Save. If there is a drawback, it is not allowing an employer match.

Work & Save will help my business and I expect thousands of other small businesses in Alaska. I ask you to support it.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JW', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

TOPICS: STRENGTHEN STATE GOVERNMENT | IMPROVE ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

PROJECTS: RETIREMENT SAVINGS

# State Automated Retirement Programs Don't Crowd Out Private Plans

New data shows state savings programs work well with private sector plans

Authors: Theron Guzoto, Mark Hines, and Alison Shelton



TOM WILLIAMS / CQ-ROLL CALL, INC VIA GETTY IMAGES

Article | November 14, 2024 | Updated: November 18, 2024 | 5 min

*Editor's note: Figures and 1 and 2 were revised on Nov. 18, 2024, to reflect the correct year that California's program was launched.*

*Note: This article updates with new data a piece published in [April 2023](#).*

Throughout 2022, businesses in California, Illinois, and Oregon—three of the first states to implement statewide automatic enrollment programs to help private sector workers save for retirement—were still creating new private sector pension plans and shedding existing plans at rates slower than or largely comparable to the national average, according to an analysis of federal data. In addition, a fourth state, Connecticut, which began rolling out its statewide program in April 2022, showed an increase in the creation of new private sector plans without an uptick in terminations of these plans.

This data suggests that the presence in these states of state-facilitated individual retirement accounts with automatic enrollment—also known as auto-IRAs—is complementing, not competing with, the private retirement plan market.

The growing number of auto-IRAs has led policymakers and analysts to examine how they are affecting employer-sponsored plans. They offer a retirement savings option to workers who lack access to one through their jobs. Seventeen states have adopted these auto-IRA programs, and according to the [Georgetown University Center for Retirement Initiatives](#), across the eight states with automated savings plans for which data was available as of the end of August 2024, more than 900,000 funded accounts had amassed about \$1.7 billion in assets.

Some have asked whether these state programs might “crowd out” the private market for plans. Could the presence of state-run retirement plans prompt businesses to forgo adopting their own 401(k)s, or could some employers terminate existing plans in favor of the state plans? Alternatively, could these

programs encourage employers to adopt new plans with higher ceilings on annual savings and the potential for employer matching contributions?

Pew conducted an initial examination of data from the annual filings by employer-sponsored plans from 2013 to 2019 to the U.S. Department of Labor. The analysis suggested that, in those states that have created auto-IRA programs, employers with plans continue to offer them, and businesses without plans are adopting new ones at rates similar to before the state options were available. With this report, updated data for 2022 shows similar results.

Workplace savings plans are one of the most important factors in helping people save for retirement. According to the Center for Retirement Research, few workers without access to a workplace plan save on their own. Yet 48% of private sector employees—almost 57 million people—work for an employer that does not offer either a traditional pension or a retirement savings plan. Pew research showed that just 30% of nontraditional workers—independent contractors, gig workers, self-employed workers, and others—had access to a workplace retirement plan.

Earlier research suggested that auto-IRAs would complement, not compete with, the private retirement plan market. In 2017, Pew published the results of a national survey of small-business owners and benefits managers that detailed their views of hypothetical auto-IRA programs. Among those whose companies had retirement plans, only 13% said they would drop theirs and enroll in such a program if one was available in their state. Among small employers without plans, 51% said they would start their own plan rather than enroll workers in the state-facilitated program.

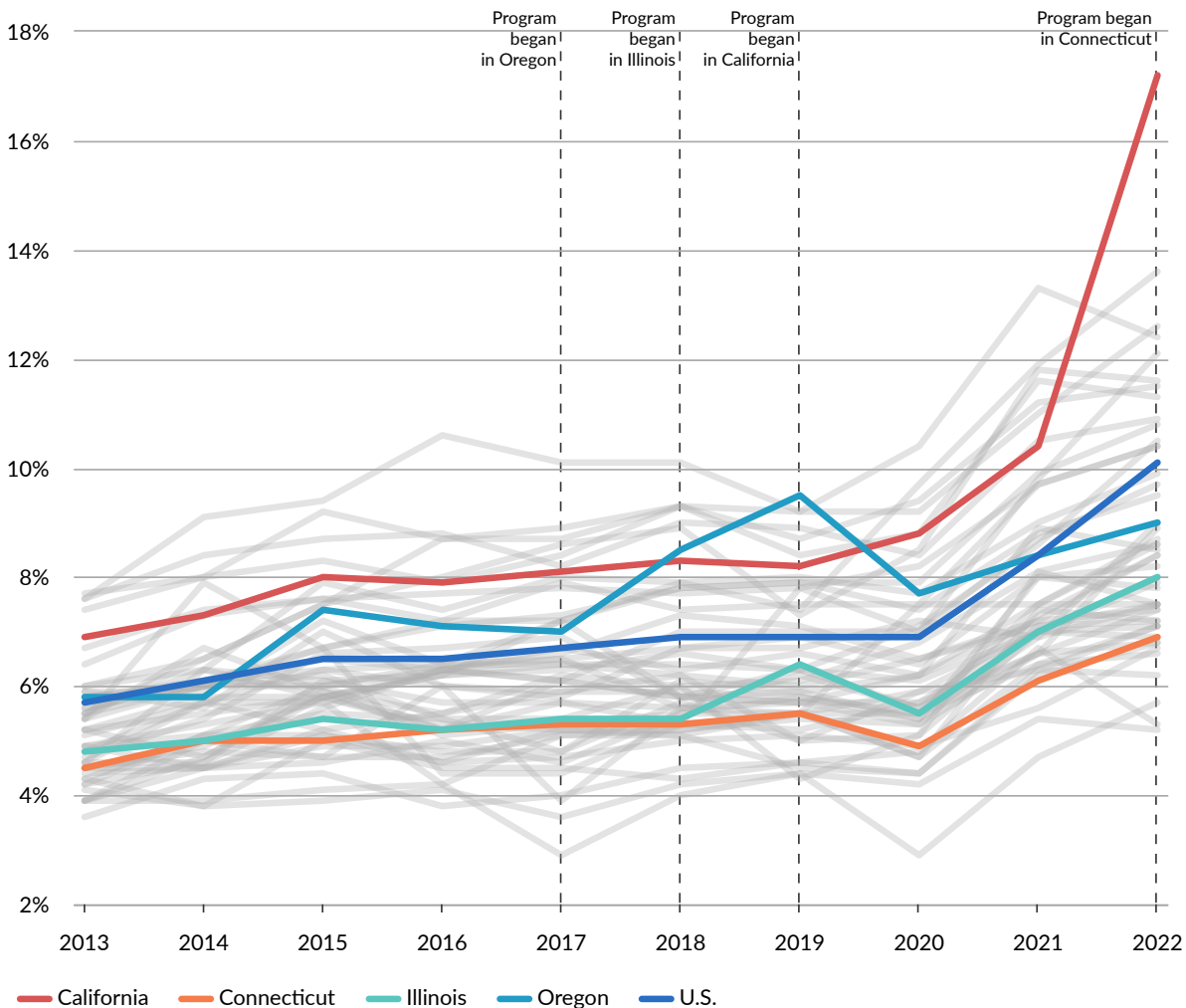
The updated analysis of employer plan annual filings is consistent with Pew's prior research. As shown in Figure 1, California's share of new plans compared with existing ones was the highest in the country in 2022, perhaps because more than 200,000 employers were required to register for auto-IRAs by June 30, 2022, if they didn't already offer a retirement plan or claim an exemption as a plan sponsor. By Dec. 31, 2022, more than 100,000 California employers covered by the 2022 deadline claimed an exemption. Illinois and Connecticut, meanwhile, have had a

lower share of new to existing plans than the national average since 2013, which has not changed. In all four states with auto-IRAs, the rate of introduction of new plans, as a share of existing plans, is higher at program implementation than before these states introduced the savings programs. There is usually an increase in new plan formation when the state programs start or at major implementation deadline dates, as was the case with California in 2022.

Figure 1

### Employers Continue to Launch Retirement Plans in 2024 in States With Auto-IRAs

Share of new plans remains higher than before introduction of state-facilitated savings programs



Notes: Connecticut’s pilot program began in 2021 and opened to larger employers in April 2022. Gray lines represent states that did not have fully operational automated savings programs by 2022. The U.S. line represents the United States’ average of new plans.

Source: The Pew Charitable Trusts' calculations from Form 5500 data filed by employers with the U.S. Department of Labor

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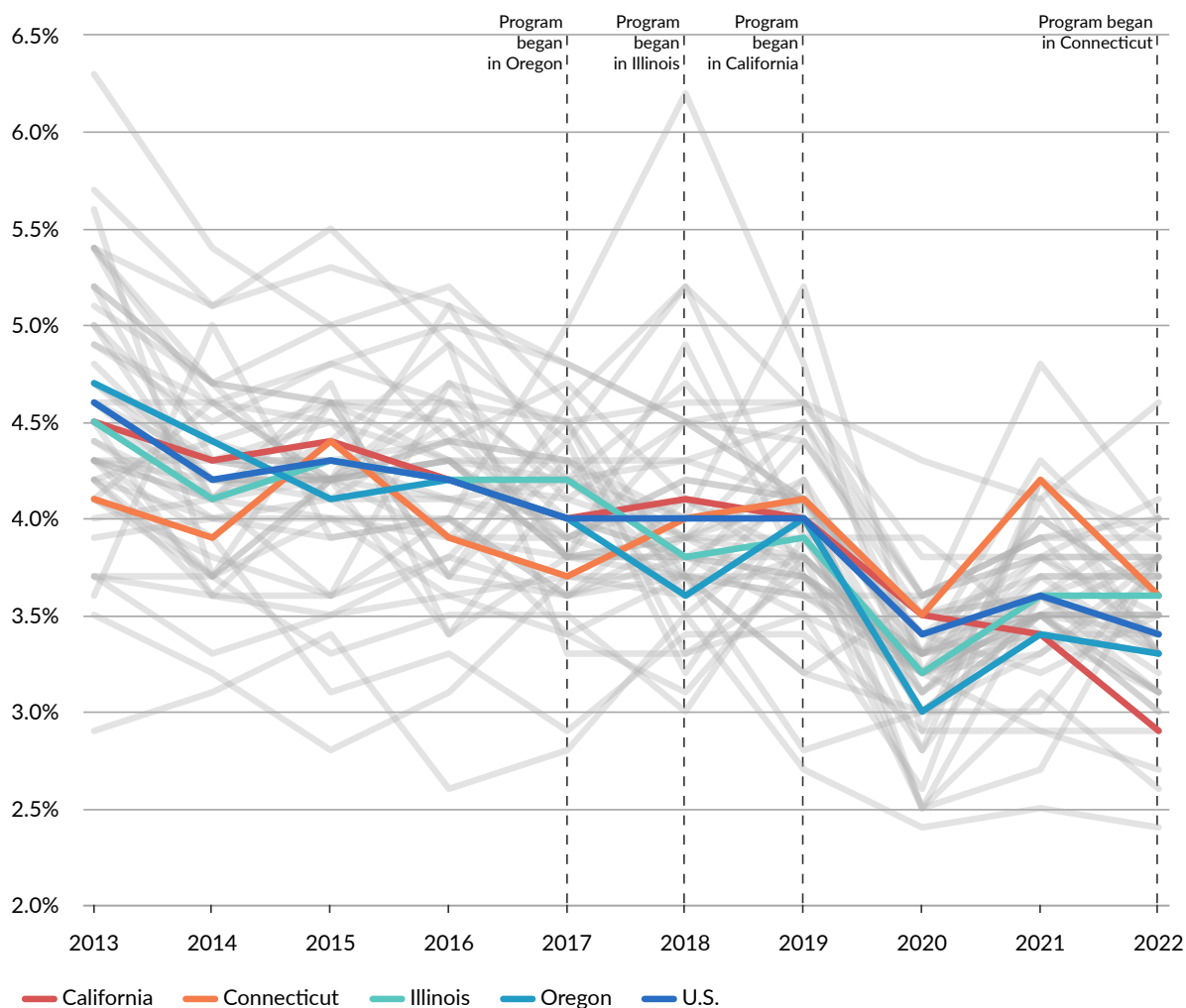
The results for state programs largely track trends across the nation, particularly showing an uptick in new plans after 2020. The state auto-IRAs may be nudging employers to adopt their own retirement plans, but other factors may be contributing to the overall trend of establishing new plans. The post-pandemic improvement in the economy may be helping as well as new incentives for employers from the 2019 passage of the SECURE 1.0 legislation, which made it easier and less expensive for small business owners to set up retirement plans for their employees.

Turning to Figure 2 below, the rate of plan terminations nationwide fell by 0.3% between 2021 and 2022. In California, termination rates dipped by a larger amount (-0.55%) in 2022 and in Oregon by -0.2%; in Illinois termination rates held steady. In Connecticut, which began to implement a state-facilitated retirement savings plan in 2022, the rate of terminations dropped by 0.7% over that year. These results indicate that employers in states with auto-IRA programs are not canceling their own retirement plans at higher rates than the national average.

Figure 2

## Share of Retirement Plans Terminated by Private Sector Employers, 2013-22

Data shows little change nationwide—or in states that enacted auto-IRA plans



Notes: Connecticut's pilot program began in 2021 and opened to larger employers in April 2022. Gray lines represent states that did not have fully operational automated savings programs by 2022. The U.S. line represents the United States' average of plan terminations.

Source: The Pew Charitable Trusts' calculations from Form 5500 data filed by employers with the U.S. Department of Labor

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This evidence from California, Oregon, Illinois, and now Connecticut continues to indicate that auto-IRAs complement, instead of crowding out, private sector retirement plans such as employer-sponsored 401(k)s. Similar results are being found in industry data as well as in [academic research](#). At the same time, auto-IRAs allow businesses that cannot afford their own plans to take advantage of a no-cost, basic savings program for their workers. Further research and study in

future years will help clarify how employers and plan sponsors respond to these initiatives in states implementing auto-IRA programs.

## How the retirement plan adoption rates were calculated

The data comes from federal Form 5500 Annual Reports, a required regulatory filing to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) for sponsors of retirement and welfare benefit plans. Pew drew on data from Form 5500s and Form 5500-SFs, or short forms—typically for plans with fewer than 100 participants—from 2013 to 2022.

Using the benefit codes provided by the filers, Pew limited the review to employers offering retirement plans, including defined benefit and defined contribution plans. Plan sponsors are required to file just once per plan per year, and a plan with participants across several states would be represented only in the state where it was filed and may include workers in additional states. When employers filed multiple times for the same plan within a state or across several states, Pew used the form signature date to keep the most recent filing and drop earlier ones. When the signature date was missing, a default duplicates drop procedure was used. Cases in which a single filing was reported as both an initial filing and a plan termination were dropped.

With this report, Pew updated its methodology. Instead of relying on whether firms ticked boxes on their Form 5500s to indicate an initial or final (termination) filing for a pension plan, the new methodology reviews each plan's filings year by year to ascertain whether a given filing was indeed the first or last during the period from 2013 to 2022. For initial filings, Pew adopted a five-year look-back (to 2009 filings). For final filings, Pew adopted a two-year look-forward through 2020 and then relied on ticked Form 5500 filing-type boxes for years 2021 and 2022 (the last available year of data).

The DOL's Form 5500 data continues to be updated, typically around the beginning of each month. The data used for this report, from 2013 through 2022, was downloaded in January 2024.

*Theron Guzoto and Mark Hines are research officers and Alison Shelton is a senior research officer with The Pew Charitable Trusts' retirement savings project.*

# Explore

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# People



### Theron Guzoto

Principal Associate  
Retirement Savings



### Mark Hines

Officer  
Retirement Savings



### John Scott

Project Director  
Retirement Savings



### Kim Olson

Senior Officer  
Retirement Savings



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## Media Contact

Zach Bernstein  
Senior Associate, Communications  
202.552.2217



