



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senator Löki Gale Tobin
Education Committee Chair

EDUCATION
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
JUDICIARY
TRANSPORTATION

Senate Bill 169 – Welcoming Alaska Office

Sponsor Statement – Version G

Senate Bill 169 seeks to help those who come to Alaska to live, work, and build new lives. The legislation would replace the underused Office of Citizenship Assistance, which had been dormant for many years, with the Welcoming Alaska Office. This new office would lead statewide efforts to help newcomers and new Americans arriving in and resettling in Alaska.

The Welcoming Alaska Office would be overseen by an Executive Director appointed by the Governor. The work of the office would be guided by a nine-member advisory council made up of representatives from the Alaska Legislature, the criminal justice system, school districts, tribal nonprofit organizations, and entities that provide employment or language services to new immigrants to Alaska.

SB 169 requires the new Welcoming Alaska Office to support Alaska businesses in recruiting new Alaskans and new Americans to fill unfilled jobs. The bill would also authorize the creation of a Welcoming Alaska Center to serve as a comprehensive service center for migrants, immigrants, and refugees to Alaska. Funding for the center would be subject to appropriation from the Alaska State Legislature.

SB 169 requires each department in the state government to designate liaisons to work with the Welcoming Alaska Office on issues impacting newcomers and new Americans. SB 169 also requires the new Welcoming Alaska Office to conduct a study to determine immigration opportunities in the state. This report will be submitted to the Alaska State Legislature for review.

Alaska is a vast state with ample room and economic opportunities for newcomers and new Americans. The Welcoming Alaska Office envisioned in SB 169 would help these potential new Alaskans integrate into the state economy and our way of life.