
From: Nick Waldo [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2026 9:08 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Rep. Sara Hannan
Subject: Support for HB 193

Dear House Finance Committee and Juneau Delegation,

I am writing to you once again to voice my strong support of HB 193 for a state parental leave program. My wife and I are expecting our first child in October so I can speak from personal experience: the challenges of having a child in Alaska are impacting young families today. Every legislative session that passes is another year that Alaska loses workers to places that are easier to start a family. In my own family, my wife changed jobs this year so may not qualify for her company's maternity leave. My employer does not offer any parental leave at all. We had a serious talk about relocating her to Washington State just to qualify for the state-sponsored program there so that at least one of us could keep drawing an income while we focus on raising a newborn. For now we are staying in Juneau, but if our situation was slightly different we might not have been able to make this choice.

I know you are being lobbied to water down the bill, but every time you decrease the benefit, shorten the duration, or delay the effective date you're simply making the bill less effective. Alaska has a growing demographic problem as young workers leave and are not replaced. Making it easier to live here and raise a family here is not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do to secure our state's future.

Senator Kiehl, I know the bill is currently in the House, but as things can move quickly at the end of session I hope you are keeping an eye on this important issue.

Sincerely,
Nick Waldo

From: Julie Fix [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 04, 2026 12:01 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Rep. Carolyn Hall; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Sara Hannan; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Alyse Galvin; Rep. Nellie Jimmie; Rep. Will Stapp; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski; Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Jeremy Bynum; Rep. Elexie Moore; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Ted Eischeid; Rep. Zack Fields
Subject: Support for HB 193 and Amendment Comments

Dear House Finance Committee and my Juneau Representatives,

I was pleased to listen in on the House Finance Committee meeting last Thursday and hear that the bill is making progress towards the next step. I have reviewed the list of policy recommendations that were suggested by various stakeholders. I would like to offer my comments on these policy recommendations as a working mother and constituent.

- **Reduction of benefit duration:** From what I understand, depending on base wages, a person is eligible for unemployment benefits for up to 26 weeks; I support paid parental leave benefits for up to 26 weeks. If the duration of benefit must be cut, please consider reducing to 18 weeks which is the entitled amount of unpaid leave under AFLA. Expecting a new parent, especially the birthing parent, to come back at 8-12 weeks is not reasonable for four reasons: it is not developmentally appropriate to be separated from the parent for an extended period of time at 8-weeks (some infants refuse to take a bottle or formula and will refuse to nap with another caregiver or in a group care setting), it is not safe for an 8-12 week old infant to be in group care due to the vaccine schedule, most child care centers do not accept 8-week old infants...if you can even find a spot (infant care is extremely hard to come by due to smaller staff ratios and how much individualized care an infant needs), most new parents are still physically recovering from childbirth at 8-weeks postpartum and are not getting adequate sleep. Most 8-week old infants are not old enough to have had their second round of immunizations leaving them particularly vulnerable to serious illness. Around 4-months a second round of immunizations is available and at 6-months, infants are eligible to receive their third round of immunizations giving them a wider range of protection from illness.
- **Reduction in weekly benefit:** Working parents will take any financial help when taking unpaid extended family leave to recover from childbirth and care for their infant but I urge you to not reduce the benefit amount. For example: I have a family of three (husband and toddler) and my fixed monthly expenses are \$5,621 (this ONLY includes daycare for toddler, mortgage/utilities/insurance; this does not include groceries, transportation, or other miscellaneous expenses). While the current proposed maximum weekly benefit of \$525/week would greatly help families like mine, we would still have a big financial gap to fill.
- **Employee threshold for employer:** I appreciate that you have provided the opt-in option for small businesses. I have several friends and acquaintances that are small business owners and they would love to opt-in to a program like this "because it is the right thing to do" and will "improve long term staff retention." They are already mandated to contribute to UI so it makes sense for them to be able to opt-in to this benefit. If there must be an employee threshold number, I suggest keeping the number consistent with AFLA which is 21 employees.

- **Effective date:** Young Alaskans are leaving the state to start their families elsewhere NOW. I urge you to reconsider delaying the effective date to 2029.

This issue is deeply personal to me. I am expecting my second child this fall. As I begin to plan, my family is faced with an impossible situation. We do not have family here in Juneau, I have been significantly ill in the first trimester and used what little PTO I have accrued, and infant care is extremely hard to find (I do not expect to secure a spot at our current daycare until the new baby is 5-6 months old). Even if my husband only takes the first few weeks off, I expect us to lose a minimum of \$15-20,000 in income. We will also be facing some significant medical bills from childbirth. We do not have \$15-20,000 saved up to cover our monthly expenses for when this baby comes. Like many generations before us (and as we did in 2023 with the birth of our daughter) we are creative and resilient and will figure it out and life will go on. However, it will not be without great financial strain, stress, and sacrifice.

I will be completely honest, these national and statewide issues compounded with local city issues, have me beginning to ponder if living here is worth it....all of the amazing things about Alaska...my reasons for choosing to put roots down here are starting to feel like not enough to keep me here far away from family.

I am tired. I am tired of seeing my friends and co-workers struggle in early parenthood. I am tired of forcing infants to go to daycare when they are too young. I am tired of trying to find a reliable and quality daycare in the first place. I am tired of seeing my female co-workers leave the workforce due to lack of support. I am tired of watching our education system crumble and This bill will not fix all of these problems. And to be honest, it is not going to be enough to keep some prospective families in the state. But for the families that do stay, this is going to be lifechanging and have a huge impact...and you get to be a part of that! I would say more about this but I fear I may be wearing out my welcome in your inboxes :)

It is clear that each person included in this email truly cares about young families in Alaska and their constituents. I appreciate all of the hard work that you have put into this bill and hope that someday in the future we will have a statewide paid parental leave program.

Sincerely,

Julie Fix
Juneau, AK