



February 20th, 2024

To: The Honorable Members of the Alaska Legislature

The Brewer's Guild of Alaska is a trade organization representing breweries, wineries, and distilleries from across the State of Alaska. Many of our members operate small and very small businesses, often with 5 or fewer full-time employees. For small businesses, it can be a great challenge to offer the full breadth of benefits, like those of a medium or large established corporation. While we are passionate about compensating our employees well, many of our companies are still in the start-up phase, due to the multi-year economic challenges of the pandemic.

Our Guild reviewed SB 135 and believes that it is both commonsense legislation and highly beneficial to supporting small businesses in their early years. It takes time for a business to develop a predictable picture of revenue and costs. It can be very challenging to provide retirement benefits before predictable profitability occurs. During the first few years of operation, it is critical to find and recruit talented tradespeople to secure a strong footing for any business. The inability to provide desired benefits in the early days can be a hinderance to such efforts.

Furthermore, saving for retirement should start as soon as possible for any working adult. More Alaskans saving for their future leads to stronger financial independence and reduced cost to local and state communities that may have to pick up the responsibility of our elders who do not have enough resources to provide for themselves.

The Brewer's Guild of Alaska strongly supports Senate Bill 135 and we respectfully request the legislature to move the bill forward through final passage in the 33rd legislature.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lee Ellis".

Lee Ellis
Board President, Brewer's Guild of Alaska

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

Bird Nelson
[Ascension Rock Club](#), LLC
195 Alta Way
Fairbanks, AK 99701

My name is Bird Nelson and I am the owner of Ascension Rock Club in Fairbanks. I am writing in support of the Alaska Work and Save bill.

Ascension has provided Fairbanks with an indoor rock climbing facility since 2015. We've sent members of our youth team to national level competitions, been featured in promotions with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, and introduced countless residents to the sport.

We also provide work for around a dozen employees, depending on the time of year. 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. Not offering retirement benefits hurts my chances to recruit and retain employees and makes it hard to compete with bigger companies who give back less to the community but **can** offer much those kinds of benefits. This makes it hard for my business to find and retain top talent that would help my business grow.

Alaska Work and Save could help me compete in an already tight labor market and allow my employees to save for their futures without changing industries.

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,
Bird Nelson
Owner
Ascension Rock Club

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

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