From: Susan A
To: House Health and Social Services
Subject: Public Testimony SB 60
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Public Testimony in Support of SB 60: "An Act establishing May 12 as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Day of Recognition"

I am here today to express my full support for Senate Bill 60, which designates May 12 as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) Day of Recognition in the State of Alaska.

Importance of ME/CFS Awareness

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is a debilitating and often misunderstood condition that affects an estimated 1 million Americans, including many residents of Alaska. Those living with ME/CFS face profound challenges—severe fatigue, cognitive dysfunction, and a range of other symptoms—that can significantly impact their daily lives. Despite its seriousness, ME/CFS remains largely under-recognized in both the medical community and public discourse.

SB 60 represents a much-needed step forward in addressing this issue. Establishing May 12 as ME/CFS Day of Recognition will raise awareness about this often-overlooked illness. This day provides an opportunity for individuals, healthcare professionals, and advocacy organizations to come together to promote a better understanding of the condition, share resources, and call attention to the needs of those affected.

Historical Precedent and Legislative Support

Days of recognition are a common and powerful tool used by lawmakers to highlight important issues and causes, from raising awareness about cancer to honoring veterans. Such days serve not only as a symbolic gesture but also as a catalyst for educational efforts, research funding, and community support. This bill follows in that tradition, offering a simple yet impactful way to recognize a condition that deeply affects many in Alaska.

By supporting SB 60, Alaska would join a growing number of states and countries around the world in acknowledging the importance of ME/CFS awareness. It is essential for us, as a community, to validate the experiences of those who suffer from this illness, support the research efforts aimed at understanding it, and provide opportunities for individuals living with ME/CFS to advocate for themselves and their needs.

Benefits to Alaskans

Alaska, with its vast geography and often limited access to healthcare services, poses unique challenges for individuals living with chronic illnesses like ME/CFS. Many Alaskans who suffer from this condition are often isolated, struggling to find proper diagnoses, treatment options, and support systems. A day dedicated to ME/CFS recognition provides an avenue for them to connect with others, share their stories, and seek support from both public and private entities.

Increased recognition can also spur necessary research into treatment options, as well as advocacy efforts aimed at improving healthcare coverage for ME/CFS patients. By establishing a day of recognition, we demonstrate a commitment to supporting those living with this illness and encourage greater public dialogue on how we can collectively improve the quality of life for affected individuals.

A Step Toward Inclusivity and Compassion

We all know that healthcare and awareness campaigns that shine a light on marginalized or lesser-known diseases can make a significant difference in the lives of those who suffer. SB 60 is more than just a symbolic gesture; it is a chance for our state to stand with individuals who have long felt forgotten or misunderstood.

By designating May 12 as ME/CFS Day of Recognition, we send a message of inclusivity and compassion to the community, demonstrating that we care about the well-being of all Alaskans—especially those living with chronic and invisible illnesses like ME/CFS. This simple but powerful action can help create a supportive, informed environment that empowers individuals to seek the help they need without fear of stigma or dismissal.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to pass SB 60 and make May 12 a day of recognition for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. This legislation is an important step toward bringing awareness, compassion, and support to those living with this challenging condition. Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time and consideration
Susan Allmeroth
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Myself