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March 24, 2023

Senator David Wilson
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: SB74 and 75 Support

Dear Senator Wilson,

Our nation faces pressing health care challenges not the least of which is an aging population driving both higher healthcare need and a shrinking healthcare workforce.

Alaska has the fastest growing senior population in the country and seniors are staying in Alaska, which is good for our state. However, the need for healthcare workforce growth to care for us all as we age is predicted to continue through the current decade in a state already facing a significant healthcare provider shortage. That growing demand includes physical therapy, audiology, and speech pathology services.

We can help address the access to care challenges of an aging population and healthcare workforce shortage by embracing healthcare multi-state licensing compacts to diminish barriers to recruiting licensed providers from other states. To that end, AARP supports SB74 and 75 enabling Alaska to join the Physical Therapy Compact and Audiology and Speech Pathology Compact. Thank you for bringing this legislation forward and to continue to streamline our healthcare licensing systems to support improved access to care.

Respectfully,
Marge Stoneking
Advocacy Director, AARP Alaska



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

March 8, 2023

The Honorable David Wilson
Alaska State Senate

RE: Support for Senate Bills 74 and 75

Dear Senator Wilson,

I am writing on behalf of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District's support for Senate Bills 74 and 75. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District employs physical therapists, speech pathologists and audiologists to provide therapy to students whose Individual Education Plans call for these services. The State of Alaska has a shortage of practitioners and candidates for both physical therapy, speech language pathology and audiologists for the level of services needed both in the medical and educational settings. Most of our recruitment efforts for these positions are out of state as there is little to no preparation or licensure programs within the State of Alaska. However, despite our recruitment efforts, each year the District has great difficulty in filling these positions. Subsequently, these therapy areas make up a good portion of our "hard to fill positions" category.

In the past the District has been able to hire independent contractors to support our needs when employees were not available but that has become increasingly difficult recently. The support provided by these bills to assist applicants in being able to practice in Alaska more expediently would be of benefit to any employer who provides this service, including school districts. Specifically, the provisions of Senate Bills 74 and 75 will serve to streamline the process for licensure, which in turn will assist in our recruiting activities.

On behalf of the Mat-Su Borough School District, I thank you for sponsoring Senate Bills 74 and 75 and for your overall commitment to education. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Respectfully,

Randy Trani, Ed.D.
Superintendent