

**Advisory Board on Alcoholism
and Drug Abuse**



Alaska Mental Health Board

**ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH BOARD
ADVISORY BOARD ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE**
431 NORTH FRANKLIN STREET, SUITE 200
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801
(907) 465-8920

February 7, 2011

Senator Lesil McGuire
Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building, Room 125
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: SB 62 – Civil Legal Services Fund

Dear Senator McGuire,

On behalf of the Alaska Mental Health Board and Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, I would like to express our appreciation of your support for legal services for Alaska's indigent and vulnerable citizens. For individuals experiencing mental health and substance use disorders, the non-profit public interest firms are often the only source of legal assistance. Ensuring these firms' ability to serve their clients ensures that Alaskans with disabilities and families affected by substance abuse are able to access the legal system when in need.

Alaska Legal Services, the Disability Law Center, and the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault all provide services imperative to the health and safety of vulnerable Alaskans. Without the high quality services offered by their lawyers, paralegals, advocates and staff, many seniors, victims of violence and people experiencing disabilities would be left alone and without recourse when faced with unfair or unjust treatment.

The Boards' appreciate your advocacy on behalf of these agencies, but more importantly, on behalf of their clients and the entire justice system in Alaska.

Sincerely,

J. Kate Burkhart
Executive Director