



REPRESENTATIVE JEREMY T. BYNUM

DISTRICT 1 | KETCHIKAN, SAXMAN, LORING, WRANGELL, MEYERS CHUCK, METLAKATLA, COFFMAN COVE, WHALE PASS, & HYDER

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Sponsor Statement **House Bill No. 75 – Version B**

The Permanent Fund Dividend is a cornerstone of economic stability for many residents, but outdated regulations create unnecessary barriers for Alaskans pursuing education, maritime careers, and medical care. House Bill 75 addresses these issues by modernizing allowable absences, enhancing program security, and improving administrative efficiency.

HB 75 ensures that time spent in a U.S. merchant marine academy is treated the same as attending college, allowing Alaskans to pursue this vital technical training without losing their PFD eligibility.

HB 75 expands allowable absences to the Uniformed Services, which already encompasses the Armed Force and adds the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the United State Public Health Service. These officers receive nearly identical benefits and obligations as members of the Armed Forces, including mandatory deployments and service under the Department of Defense during wartime and national emergencies.

The bill also provides relief for college students who cannot afford to return home for winter or spring breaks, ensuring that these short-term absences do not jeopardize their qualification. Additionally, it simplifies the rules governing out-of-state medical care, preventing Alaskans with unexpected health emergencies from being penalized.

To strengthen program security, HB 75 requires fingerprint-based background checks for PFD Division employees who handle sensitive personal data, reducing the risk of fraud and identity theft. The bill also makes the PFD applicant list confidential, further protecting Alaskans from fraudulent claims and identity theft. Additionally, it improves overall administrative efficiency by allowing residents to opt-in to electronic levy notices, cutting costs associated with printing and mailing.

By enacting these reforms, HB 75 upholds the integrity of the PFD while ensuring it remains fair, accessible, and secure for all eligible Alaskans. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and help modernize the PFD program for the benefit of our residents.