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February 23, 2009

The Honorable Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 518
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

The Honorable Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 516
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: SB45 (Therriault and Huggins)--Support

Dear Co-Chairs Hoffman and Stedman:

On behalf of the AARP members of Alaska, we urge you and your colleagues on the Senate Finance Committee to support SB 45, authored by Senators Gene Therriault and Charlie Huggins.

SB 45 would establish a fund for the maintenance of and development of future veterans' cemeteries in Alaska. As you know, the only veterans' cemeteries are in Anchorage and Sitka yet the Fairbanks area alone has over 11,000 veterans, many of whom are AARP members. Certainly veterans and their families would like to have a cemetery closer to where they live.

Burial in a veterans' cemetery is one of the last honors we can offer our fellow citizens who have served in the Armed Forces. We think it is a well-deserved tribute to these men and women who served our country. It is a proper thank-you to the veterans and their families.

Undoubtedly there may be some costs associated with a new cemetery. SB 45 does provide some provisions for partial funding although additional funding might be required. Our veterans didn't weigh the costs when they joined the armed services. Surely we can bear the costs of this final thank-you to them.

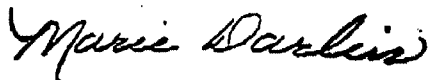
SB 45 also has provisions for state employment preferences. AARP has no official position on this.

AARP recommends an "AYE" vote on SB 45.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Marie Darlin, Coordinator
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CC: Senator Charlie Huggins
Senator Kim Elton
Senator Donald Olson
Senator Joe Thomas
Senator Johnny Ellis
Senator Gene Therriault