



December 14, 2015

Senator Bill Stoltze
State Capitol, Room 125
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

E-mailed to Alaska Commission on Aging

Dear Senator Stoltze,

We support the reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging for an 8-year continuation by the Alaska Legislature. The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) provides needed supports to advance the well-being of seniors in Alaska.

Working with the senior community, service providers, Department of Health and Social Services and other key stakeholders, the ACoA leads the development of studies to identify senior needs and policies to address those needs. These policies also seek to achieve accessible and affordable services for seniors. The value of services are recognized, such as Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). As research shows HCBS prevent or delay high cost institutional care and improve the quality of life for both the senior and their unpaid family caregiver. This is critical planning information as the Alaska senior population is growing at a faster rate than any other state in the nation.

Maintaining a healthy population of seniors in Alaska is very important. Seniors provide critical social and economic value to the State. Research shows that children who are nurtured and mentored by their grandparents (in addition to their parents) grow into more responsible adults (*Dr. Bill Thomas, Vision to Reality Conference, November 12, 2014*). Seniors also contribute three billion dollars to Alaska's economy annually (*Power of Aging in Alaska Symposium, May 1, 2014*). Seniors improve the quality of life for all Alaskans.

ACoA provides effective leadership to maintain a healthy senior population in Alaska and we support the reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging for an 8-year continuation by the Alaska Legislature.

Sincerely,

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