

For the record my Name is Kelly Nicoello, I am the Director of the Department of Public Safety Division of Fire and Life Safety and commonly referred to as the Alaska State Fire Marshal.

Mr. Chair, It is my pleasure to testify on behalf of this bill. There are approximately 1,500 firefighters across this state made up of career municipal, borough, wildland and airport firefighters and then there are approximately 6,000 volunteer municipal, borough, village, and wildland firefighters; all are considered professionals who serve their communities with their heart, soul, pocketbooks and sometimes their lives. The vast majority of firefighters are volunteers who have other fulltime careers. All firefighters dedicate many extra hours to learn, train, equip and respond to local emergency situations. Little or nothing is asked for in material return for their community services nor does the general public understand the sacrifice of time and commitment it takes for their service.

Firefighters have a deep pride in what they do; their self-respect and satisfaction comes from knowing they make an immediate and impactful difference when someone is having one of their worse moments. They make things right, they console, they save lives and property and if you ask anyone of them, that's good enough for them. But I have to tell you Mr. Chair, respect and appreciation for their service is a currency they truly appreciate. When that appreciation is raised to a state level by their elected officials it becomes an investment in their future work and provides a huge return on the

investment for your recognition for the people they serve and duties they perform.

The recognition of Alaska Firefighter Day is a great way to demonstrate that their personal involvement means more than what happens locally. The service they perform has a direct impact on the quality of life of those around them and is recognized as a positive contribution to Alaska as a whole.

I think it is appropriate to recognize Alaska Firefighter's Day during Fire Prevention Week. It is a week we remember those firefighters who have lost their lives in the performance of their duties. We concentrate on the education of children in the principals of fire safety throughout schools and community organizations and what's a better day than a Sunday to thank God for what they do and show them the appreciation they deserve. I would ask you to move HB 56 forward.

Thank You