



Homer Senior Citizens, Inc.

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March 1, 2016

House Finance Committee
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Honorable Co-Chair Neuman:

Homer Senior Citizens, Inc. is a non-profit organization that has been serving seniors for 43 years. We offer seniors essential services (assisted and unassisted housing, nutrition, education, and transportation) and social activities that promote independence and a healthy continuum of care.

The proposed reductions to senior programs will affect seniors greatly. The seniors who benefit from these programs have been the pioneers of our state. Without their efforts we would not enjoy the state that we live in today. Removing their financial assistance to remain in the home will change the fabric of our state.

It is always difficult to reduce budgets to make ends meet. As a non-profit we understand the difficulty you are facing. However, the programs that you are proposing to cut actually save the State of Alaska money.

- Senior benefits allow seniors to remain at home. The seniors who benefit the most from these programs are very low income. The loss of this income may shift their need to public assistance.
- Senior grants, Senior Community Based Grants, Division of Senior and Disability services reductions are the mainstay to reduce costs on the very expensive Hospital and Health System. These programs save the State significant amounts of money through providing proper nutrition, transportation and keep safe places for seniors out of long term care which is much more expensive. Nutrition is the first step to keeping seniors independent. The goal is to keep seniors independent and not become a burden on other aspects of health care systems.
- Alaska Adult Medicaid Dental Program is also a significant program which keeps costs down to the health care system. Providing preventive screening to low-income Alaskans reduces potential health risks. Reducing funding to this program will shift the cost to other health care systems.

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- Reducing General Relief for seniors to remain in assisted living will shift the burden to the long term care system. Seniors do not wish to be in long term care; however, removing this will again shift the burden to another program. If this assistance is not provided it becomes dangerous for a senior to remain at home. We have had three seniors who chose not to receive assistance and within 30 days of that decision, they were hospitalized into long-term care from a fall.
- Privatizing the Pioneer Homes may be a great solution. We encourage you to consider the option.

Respectfully submitted,


Keren L. Kelley, MPA, LNHA
Executive Director

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