



# REPRESENTATIVE MIKE HAWKER

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ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE ♦ DISTRICT 28

Anchorage ♦ Glen Alps ♦ Rainbow ♦ Indian ♦ Bird ♦ Girdwood ♦ Portage

## House Bill 226 Index of Support Letters

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PUBLISHED: 3/11/16

SESSION: State Capitol, Juneau, Alaska 99801 ♦ (907) 465-4949  
INTERIM: 716 W. 4th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 ♦ (907) 269-0244  
Rep.Mike.Hawker@akleg.gov ♦ www.housemajority.org/hawker

December 14, 2015

Rep. Mike Hawker  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 502  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: Alaska Commission on Aging - ReAuthorization

Dear Rep. Hawker,

Thank you for your leadership in sponsoring legislation to reauthorize the Alaska Commission on Aging. On behalf of AARP Alaska's nearly 90,000 members, we are pleased to offer our support for statutory reauthorization and to recognize the important function the Commission serves for older Alaskans.

AARP Alaska has been privileged to work with both staff and appointed members of the Alaska Commission on Aging for many years on many worthwhile projects. The partnership with the Commission and other relevant agencies has produced comprehensive and measurable plans for the strategic delivery of services and supports that address the independence, dignity, health, engagement, and economic value of Alaska's older adult population. As our state has one of our nation's fastest growing 65+ demographics, the contributions of the Commission are increasingly vital to our collective wellbeing.

Particularly laudable are the openness and inclusion on the part of the Commission for input by all older Alaskans. Through sponsorship of statewide convenings, regular educational teleconferences, participation in statewide work groups, and informative and regular communications, the opportunities for broad citizen involvement are diligently nurtured. The appointed commissioners well represent the varied geographical, cultural, and socio-economic makeup of our state's seniors. They are effective advocates for an Alaska in which we can all have confidence as we grow older.

AARP Alaska, without reservation, supports the reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging. The needs, interests and concerns of our membership are well-served by the work of the Commission. Again, many thanks for your sponsorship of the reauthorization.

Sincerely,



Ken Helander  
Advocacy Director



Terry Snyder  
AARP Alaska State President



1217 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
248-4777 (phone); 263-1942 (fax)

Opening Doors to Independence

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Representative Mike Hawker  
Alaska Capitol, Room 502  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

December 11, 2015

Dear Representative Hawker,

As the Executive Director of Access Alaska, it is my pleasure to offer our support for the reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACOA). Since their early days, ACOA has partnered with Access Alaska to advocate for the needs of older Alaskans, ensuring them dignity, health, safety and independence.

ACOA serves as a statutory advisory board to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA) and advises the AMHTA on the needs of older Alaskans with cognitive impairments, including Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The Commission, in partnership with the AMHTA and other agencies, published *Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (2015)*. The Commission also makes recommendations to the AMHTA Board of Trustees regarding mental health programs for Senior Trust Beneficiaries (older people with dementia and other cognitive impairments) and the use of funds that benefit this vulnerable population.

ACOA and Access Alaska have worked collaboratively on a number of projects over the years, including the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) project, senior and accessible/affordable housing, coordinated transportation, the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) Roadmap mentioned above, and many others. As we have supported each other and combined our efforts, these projects have reached fruition, allowing older Alaskans to continue living in their home communities, among loved ones that appreciate and include them in community activities.

We very much appreciate your proposal of legislation for ACOA's reauthorization. Access Alaska will be happy to offer any information or any other means of support for ACOA during this process. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any assistance. .

Sincerely,



James C. Beck  
Executive Director



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of Labor and  
Workforce Development**

Office of the Commissioner

Post Office Box 111149  
Juneau, Alaska 99811  
Main: 907.465.2700  
Fax: 907.465.2784

February 8, 2016

The Honorable Mike Hawker  
Alaska Capitol, Room 502  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Hawker,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 226, which extends the Alaska Commission on Aging until June 30, 2024. The Alaska Commission on Aging assists the Department of Labor's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) by formulating and approving the comprehensive State Plan for Senior Services. The best way for any State to provide services to its citizens is by working closely with relevant partners to produce positive outcomes for employment and training and thus improve the comprehensive well-being of seniors.

Alaska's senior population continues to expand at the fastest rate in the nation. Together, the Alaska Commission on Aging and the Alaska Workforce Investment Board develop strategies to keep pace with workforce needs through planning, advocacy, public awareness efforts, and collaboration with other organizations focused on the well-being of older Alaskans.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heidi Drygas".

Heidi Drygas  
Commissioner



December 8, 2015

Representative Mike Hawker  
Alaska Capitol, Room 502  
Juneau, AK 99811-1182

Mailed to Alaska Commission on Aging

Dear Representative Hawker,

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,

Karl Garber  
Executive Director

**Anchorage**

1750 Abbott Rd.  
Anchorage, AK 99507  
Phone (907) 561-3313  
Fax (907) 561-3315

**Fairbanks**

565 University Ave, Suite 2  
Fairbanks, AK 99709  
Phone (907) 452-2277  
Fax (907) 457-3376

**Juneau**

3225 Hospital Dr, Suite 101  
Juneau, AK, 99801  
Phone (907) 586-6044  
Fax (907) 586-6084

**Mat-Su Valley**

10355 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy.  
Suite 110, Palmer, AK 99645  
Phone (907) 746-3413  
Fax (907) 746-3412

House Bill 226 - Testimony



A Unit of the National Council on Aging

**NISC**

ACCREDITED BY  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
SENIOR CENTERS

**Anchorage Senior Activity Center**

[www.anchoragecenter.org](http://www.anchoragecenter.org)

1300 East 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Phone 907-770-2000 Fax 907-278-2454

December 5, 2015

The Honorable Mike Hawker  
House of Representatives  
State of Alaska  
Alaska Capitol, Room 502  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Hawker,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and members of the Anchorage Senior Activity Center (ASAC), we thank you for sponsoring the bill in support of continuing the Commission on Aging. We would like to go on record that we support the reauthorization of the Commission on Aging for another eight years. We also support the funding that is necessary to maintain the Commission and advance its valuable work.

The Commission on Aging serves as educators and advocates on various issues affecting seniors, our fastest growing population in Alaska. Further, the Commission helps ensure the dignity, health, safety, and independence of Alaska's seniors and assists them in leading useful and meaningful lives.

Alaska receives nearly \$11 million in federal OAA funding in FY2016 thanks to its compliance with the Older American Act. The Commission also meets the federal requirement for each state to establish an advisory council to guide the state on matters related to aging. The Commission released a comprehensive plan on Senior Services, and, in partnership with the Alaska Mental Health Trust and other agencies, recently published "Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (2015).

Again, thank you for taking the leadership role in sponsoring the continuation of the Commission on Aging.

Sincerely,

  
Rebecca Parker, General Manager  
Anchorage Senior Activity Center

*The Anchor-Age Center, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit organization that manages the Anchorage Senior Activity Center on behalf of the Municipality of Anchorage  
Tax ID 92-0086821*

# Coalition of Mat-Su Senior Centers

September 16, 2015

Alaska Commission on Aging  
PO Box 110693  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

**Re: Support for Continuation of the Alaska Commission on Aging**

The Coalition of Mat Su Senior Centers supports continuation of the Department of Health and Social Services Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA), as recommended by the Division of Legislative Audit (Audit Control # 06-20090-15, dated April 10, 2015).

We concur with the findings of the audit, namely that the ACoA serves the public interest by helping older Alaskans lead dignified, independent, and useful lives through advocacy, outreach, and education. The ACoA was key to formulating Alaska's comprehensive State Plan for Senior Services, which identifies concerns and needs of older Alaskans, and fulfills a federal prerequisite to Alaska's receipt of grant funds through the Administration on Aging.

The ACoA is an effective advocate for older Alaskans – a role that takes on heightened importance given the state's rapidly rising population of seniors. Through efforts such as the Power of Aging Conference, Senior Housing Summit, and through their on-going efforts to monitor legislative, regulatory, and industry changes important to Seniors, the ACoA serves as a center of excellence for senior issues.

As Alaskans age and remain in the Alaskan community of their choosing, and as Americans choose to make Alaska their home in retirement, the "Senior industry" – now representing about \$3 billion to Alaska's economy – will grow. With this growth, the importance of the ACoA's work, in collaboration with agencies across the state, will also grow.

The members of the Coalition of Mat Su Senior Centers are dedicated to optimum outcomes for seniors in the Mat Su. Like the ACoA, we work to ensure seniors in the Mat Su will be able to remain in the community of their choosing, living as independently as possible for as long as possible, secure in their dignity and respected as valued elders.

Respectfully,



Ingrid Ling  
Chair

Coalition of Mat-Su Senior Centers

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**OFFICERS & MEMBERS OF THE COALITION OF MAT-SU SENIOR CENTERS -2015**

CHAIR: INGRID LING, VICE-CHAIR: LARRY DEARMAN, TREASURER: HERMAN THOMPSON, SECRETARY: CHUCK FOSTER  
General Member Organizations: Mat-Su Senior Services, Meadow Lakes Seniors, Inc., Mid-Valley Seniors, Inc.,  
Upper Susitna Seniors, Inc., Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc., Willow Area Seniors, Inc.



Community Care Coalition

February 3, 2016

Representative Paul Seaton  
Chair, House Health and Social Services  
State Capitol Room 102  
Juneau, AK. 99801

The Community Care Coalition (CCC) is comprised of trade associations who provide care for elderly, disabled and at-risk Alaskans. The Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities, AgeNet, Assisted Living Association of Alaska and the Personal Care Assistant Provider's Association have banded together in a united voice to bring forward our collective message on behalf of our most vulnerable citizenry. As members of the home and community-based long term care industry, we collectively represent all of Alaska with over 50,000 consumers, family members and staff. We want to thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on HB 226 which proposes to extend the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACOA) to June 30, 2024.

The mission of ACOA is to ensure the dignity and independence of all older Alaskans, and to assist them to lead useful and meaningful lives through planning, advocacy, education, and interagency cooperation. ACOA satisfies a requirement of the federal Older Americans Act (OAA), allowing Alaska to receive almost \$11 million in federal OAA funding in FY2016. These funds help to support older Alaskans in receiving services close to home. Alaska has one of the fastest growing senior populations per capita, many of whom are dealing with or will develop Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD). ACOA was instrumental in partnering with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and a wide range of stakeholders to develop *Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (2015)*. This document will provide guidance for services and funding as our society continues to grapple with the health issues presented by ADRD.

The staff of ACOA work diligently to advocate for older Alaskans, their families and community service providers. Their voice is strong and well respected. The association members of the Community Care Coalition fully support the extension of the Alaska Commission on Aging to June 30, 2024. We encourage the House Health and Social Services committee to pass HB226.

Regards,

Sandra J Heffern  
Chair



# Denakkanaaga, Inc.

*"Our People Speak"*

December 5, 2015

Representative Mike Hawker  
Alaska Capitol, Room 502  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Hawker:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Denakkanaaga, it is our pleasure to write this letter of support for legislation to reauthorize the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) for eight years as recommended by the Division of Legislative Audit April 2015 audit report.

For over thirty years, ACoA has embarked on a mission to ensure dignity and independence for older Alaskans through planning, advocacy, education, and collaboration with other agencies. As Alaska leads the nation in per capita senior growth, and older adults are the fastest growing age demographic in our state, the value of ACoA for seniors and their family members has never been greater.

We would like to take this opportunity to share with you our reasons for supporting ACoA's extension. By statute, the ACoA is responsible for developing the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services in order to satisfy a federal requirement for all states receiving federal funds for their senior programs. This funding includes Title VI funds for services to Alaska Native Elders. To develop the State Plan, the Commission conducted listening sessions in various areas of the state, including Fairbanks. We were pleased to sponsor one of these listening session with the ACoA to focus on the needs of Alaska Native Elders. We were impressed to find that the comments provided by our Elders expressing the need for culturally appropriate and accessible services in rural Alaska was included in the State Plan's strategic objectives.

The ACoA is a resource and strong advocate for the senior community. We especially appreciate their advocacy efforts promoting greater awareness about senior needs including the importance of funding and legislation to help more Elders and seniors live safely in their homes and communities of choice. Further, the ACoA can also be counted on to provide information on a variety of topics related to aging issues, which is helpful to our agency's planning and grant writing efforts.

Thank you for sponsoring this legislation to reauthorize the Alaska Commission on Aging. The ACoA deserves recognition for their commitment to helping all older Alaskans and is fulfilling its mission. We at Denakkanaaga value the opportunity to work with the commission, as our mission is to be the "elder voice for the people" for Interior Alaska.

Sincerely,

Luke Titus

1 By: Karl Kassel, Mayor  
2 Introduced: 02/25/2016  
3 Adopted: 02/25/2016  
4  
5

6 FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH

7  
8 RESOLUTION NO. 2016 - 10  
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10 A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE  
11 ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING  
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13 WHEREAS, The Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Citizen's Advisory  
14 Commission has reviewed a request of support for the reauthorization of Alaska  
15 Commission on Aging and has passed a motion in support of the reauthorization; and  
16

17 WHEREAS, The Commission requests that the Fairbanks North Star  
18 Borough Mayor and Assembly approve and send a resolution of support for the  
19 reauthorization; and  
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21 WHEREAS, The Alaska Commission on Aging develops the  
22 comprehensive Alaska State Plan on Senior Services, and provides education and  
23 outreach regarding matters related to aging; and  
24

25 WHEREAS, The Alaska Commission on Aging serves as an advocate and  
26 educator regarding the needs of Alaska's older people to help ensure the dignity, health,  
27 safety, and independence of Alaska's seniors and to assist them in leading useful and  
28 meaningful lives; and  
29

30 WHEREAS, The Alaska Commission on Aging serves as a statutory  
31 advisory board to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and advises them on the  
32 needs of older Alaskans with cognitive impairments, including Alzheimer's disease and  
33 related dementias ; and  
34

35 WHEREAS, The Fairbanks North Star Borough's Senior Citizens Advisory  
36 Commission works with the Alaska Commission on Aging to disseminate information  
37 that bears upon the welfare of senior citizens in our community.  
38

39 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Assembly of the  
40 Fairbanks North Star Borough supports the Reauthorization of the Alaska Commission,  
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42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Assembly asks the Interior  
43 Delegation to support the reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging.  
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PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 25<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2016.

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John Davies  
Presiding Officer

ATTEST:

  
Nanci Ashford-Bingham, MMC  
Borough Clerk

Ayes: Sattley, Hutchison, Cooper, Golub, Roberts, Lawrence, Dodge, Quist, Davies  
Noes: None



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of  
Health and Social Services**

Senior and Disabilities Services  
Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education  
Patrick J. Reinhart, Executive Director

3601 C Street, Suite 740  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
Main: 907.269.8990  
Fax: 907.269.8995

January 19, 2016

Representative Mike Hawker  
Alaska Capitol  
Room 502  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Hawker:

We are pleased to provide this letter of support to the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) for reauthorization for another eight years.

The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE) fills a variety of federal and state roles, including serving as the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. As the state DD Council, GCDSE works with Senior and Disabilities Services and other state agencies to ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families receive the services and supports that they need, as well as participate in the planning and design of those services.

Similarly, since 1981 the Alaska Commission on Aging has played an important role in improving the lives of Alaska's senior population. They are a major advisory group on issues that impact Alaskan seniors. The Council often partners with ACoA on projects and issues that intersect our two populations, such as Aging and Disability Resource Centers, assistive technology, accessible housing, community transportation, and long-term services and supports. ACoA also satisfies a provision of the federal Older Americans Act (OAA) that requires an advisory board to in order to receive nearly \$11 million dollars in federal funds in support of state-sponsored services that impact Alaskan seniors every day, such as in-home supports, senior center programs, adult daycare, home delivered and congregate meals, and more.

The Alaska Commission on Aging develops and monitors the Alaska State Plan on Senior Services and makes recommendations to legislation and policies that benefit older Alaskans. Like the Governor's Council, the Commission on Aging serves as an advisory group to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority on issues concerning persons with Alzheimer's disease and related-dementias (ADRD). Their recent and widely touted publication of *Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias* is a great example of the level of commitment and professionalism that we get from both the staff and members of ACoA.

January 19, 2016

Page 2

A 2015 legislative audit of the Department of Health and Social Services concluded that the Commission serves the public interest by helping older Alaskans lead dignified, independent, and useful lives, satisfying the requirements of the Older Americans Act. The report recommends reauthorization of the Commission on Aging and the Council concurs wholeheartedly. Alaskan seniors depend on ACoA to be their voice in Juneau, as well as coordinate a multitude of services and programs statewide. We request that the Alaska Commission on Aging be reauthorized before the end of the 2016 legislative session.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Amy Simpson in cursive, followed by a horizontal line.

Amy Simpson, Chair

Handwritten signature of Patrick Reinhart in cursive.

Patrick Reinhart, Executive Director

# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE  
Alaska Mental Health  
Trust Authority

*BILL WALKER, GOVERNOR*

Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman

3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 200  
Anchorage AK 99508  
Phone (907) 334-4480  
Fax (907) 334-4486

December 11, 2015

Representative Mike Hawker  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 502  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Re: Reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging

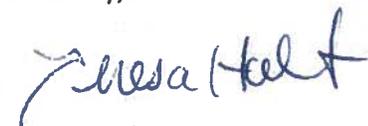
Representative Hawker,

The Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman strongly supports the reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging. Under the commission's sunset provision, legislation is needed to reauthorize the Alaska Commission on Aging for the next eight years. The Alaska Commission on Aging is required as the state's advisory council under the Older Americans Act and allows the State to receive \$11 million in federal funding.

The Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman partners with Alaska Commission on Aging on many projects related to the health and safety of Alaskan over the age of 60. The Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman worked with the Alaska Commission on Aging and other stakeholders in the senior community in the development of the *Alaska State Plan on Senior Services*. The Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman also collaborates with the Alaska Commission on Aging to resolve issues as they arise that affect the lives of Alaskan seniors including the development and implementation of *Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias* as well as legislation to improve the protection of seniors who use Power of Attorney documents.

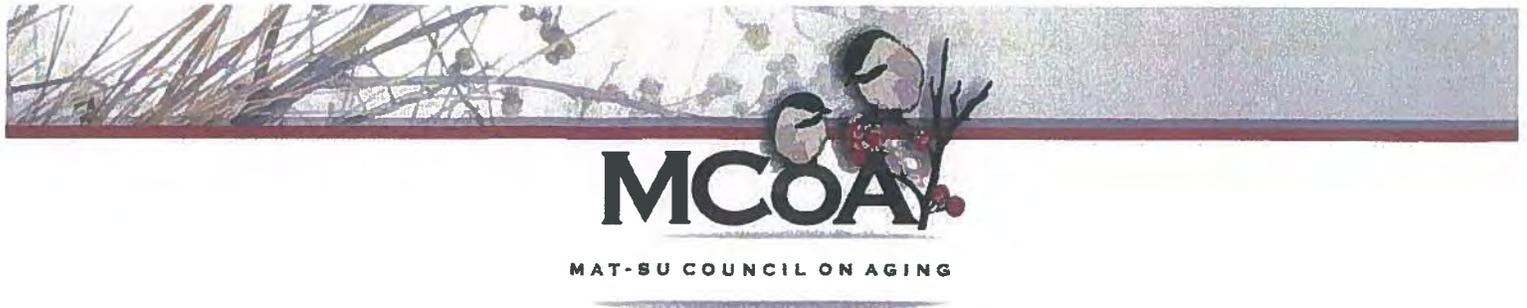
As the population of baby boomers will triple the number of seniors in Alaska in the next 20 years, it is more important than ever to have the Alaska Commission on Aging to plan for the needs of this growing population. The Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman and the Alaska Commission on Aging will continue to work together to identify and resolve issues that directly affect the lives of Alaskans over the age of 60.

Sincerely,



Teresa Holt  
State Long Term Care Ombudsman

Cc: Denise Daniello, ACoA



August 12, 2015

Alaska Commission on Aging  
Ms. Denise Daniello, Executive Director  
PO Box 110693  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0693

Ms. Daniello:

At the direction of the Mat-Su Council on Aging (MCoA), it is my pleasure to provide you with this letter of support specific to the findings of the recent Legislative Sunset Review Audit wherein they recommended the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) be extended eight years to June 30, 2024.

While MCoA concurs with the April 10, 2015 audit findings, we also believe it is imperative we take time to address some of the reasons why we support extension of ACoA and to take a moment to say thank-you. As Alaska leads the nation in per capita Senior growth, the value of ACoA for Seniors and their family members has never been greater. You, your staff and each Commissioner deserves recognition for your polite commitment and heartfelt passion in helping Seniors and Elders wherever they may reside across the Last Frontier. For that, we are extremely pleased and we express our sincere gratitude.

Since its legal inception 33 years ago, ACoA has embarked on a mission to ensure dignity and independence for older Alaskans. Over those years, individuals have enjoyed more useful and meaningful lives through the countless hours of planning, advocacy, education, policymaking and interagency partnerships developed by the Commission. Put another way, ACoA has been the eyes and ears of many Seniors in Alaska since 1982.

In recent years, the Commission has addressed several additional areas in an effort to recognize the many issues facing Alaska's aging population. They include, among others: Senior Housing Summit; Power of Aging Conference; Healthy Body/Healthy Brain campaign; Fall Prevention Coalition; Workforce Development; Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias; and, a report on the Economic Well-Being of Alaska Seniors. Through exploration of each of these very important topics—the ACoA has opened doors; initiated dialogue; and, provided much needed education to fellow Alaskans and elected officials on the vast needs of Seniors in our state. Likewise, the Commission was instrumental in calling attention to the fact that Seniors represent an approximate \$3 billion industry within Alaska

today – and for the state to retain that economic benefit – Alaska must be willing to continue to invest in programs and services that allow our elderly to remain here as they retire and enjoy their golden years.

Now, as Baby Boomers continue to retire in earnest and our Senior population expands to record highs, we ask that you continue to abide by your guiding principles of allowing Seniors to live with dignity and respect; remain independent for as long as possible; age in place in the least restrictive setting possible; and, assure Seniors remain connected as valued members of their families and communities. As one of your partners, MCoA is equally committed to these principles and we look forward to working with you in achieving success.

Our warmest regards to you, your staff and all of the Commissioners.

Respectfully,



Jim McCall  
Chair, Mat-Su Council on Aging

PO Box 2754  
Palmer, Alaska 99645





March 4, 2016

Senator Bill Stoltze  
State Capitol Room 119  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Stoltze,

On behalf of the Mat-Su Health Foundation and its Board of Directors, I am writing to express support for reauthorization of the **Alaska Commission on Aging** (ACOA).

The Mat-Su Health Foundation (MSHF) shares ownership in Mat-Su Regional Medical Center and invests its profits from that partnership back into the community in order to improve the health and wellness of Alaskans living in the Mat-Su.

In 2011, MSHF produced the Mat-Su Regional Plan for Delivery of Senior Services. This invaluable report has been updated in 2016 as the Mat-Su Senior Services Environmental Scan. The updated scan reconfirms the rapid population growth by seniors in the Mat-Su valley, which has been 7.3 percent per year since 2003. In fact, the Mat-Su borough has the 2<sup>nd</sup>-fastest growing senior population in the nation. As stated in the recent Alaska State Plan for Senior Services FY2016 – FY2019 published by the Alaska commission on Aging:

“The population growth rate of seniors also varies across the state. While Anchorage has the largest number of seniors, the fastest rate of increase was in the Mat-Su Borough, an increase of 117% in the 60+ population from 2000 to 2010.”

The population of Mat-Su seniors is expected to grow by 41.3 percent between 2015 and 2020 to an estimated total of 14,100 by 2020. Over this same period, the U.S. senior population is expected to grow by only 17.7 percent. Clearly, adequate planning and resources to address the needs of our aging population is of vital concern to the Mat-Su valley and the MSHF. The presence of the ACOA results in Alaska receiving over \$11 million in federal Older Americans Act funding which ends up in local areas like the Mat-Su valley, supporting older Alaskans.

The MSHF works in partnership with senior services providers to build capacity and address service needs identified in the research we’ve conducted. To this end, the work of the ACOA is vital in terms of statewide and regional planning as well as leveraging the federal funding used by the providers to help older Alaskans lead safe, dignified and meaningful lives.

As you likely know, Legislative Audit has recommended the commission be extended the maximum term – eight years – based on the positive audit results. The MSHF supports this recommendation and urges you to do the same.

If you have any questions or would like copies of the reports mentioned in this letter, please don’t hesitate to contact me directly via email: [eripley@healthymatsu.org](mailto:eripley@healthymatsu.org).

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Ripley  
Executive Director



# Municipality of Anchorage

Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor

## Senior Citizens Advisory Commission

January 14, 2016

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

Dear Senator Stoltze,

As the Chair for the Senior Citizens Advisory Commission (SCAC), it is my pleasure to offer our support for the reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACOA). Since their early days, ACOA has partnered with the SCAC to advocate for the needs of older Alaskans, ensuring them dignity, health, safety and independence.

ACOA serves as a statutory advisory board to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA) and advises the AMHTA on the needs of older Alaskans with cognitive impairments, including Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The Commission, in partnership with the AMHTA and other agencies, published *Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (2015)*. The Commission also makes recommendations to the AMHTA Board of Trustees regarding mental health programs for Senior Trust Beneficiaries (older people with dementia and other cognitive impairments) and the use of funds that benefit this vulnerable population.

ACOA and SCAC have worked collaboratively on a number of projects over the years, including the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) project, senior and accessible/affordable housing, coordinated transportation, the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) Roadmap mentioned above, and many others. As we have supported each other and combined our efforts, these projects have reached fruition, allowing older Alaskans to continue living in their home communities, among loved ones that appreciate and include them in community activities.

We very much appreciate your proposal of legislation for ACOA's reauthorization. The Commission will be happy to offer any information or any other means of support for ACOA during this process. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Carol Jackson  
Chair, Senior Citizens Advisory Commission



**North Star Council on Aging  
Meals on Wheels  
1424 Moore Street, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
Phone: 907-452-1735 / Fax: 451-9974  
nscoa.manager@alaska.net**

*December 15, 2015*

*Representative Mike Hawker  
Alaska Capital, Room 502  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182*

*Dear Representative Mike Hawker,*

*North Star Council on Aging (NSCoA) completely supports the reauthorization of Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) and urges the legislature to approve an eight-year extension allowing ACoA to continue having a positive impact on our state. ACoA provides essential services to Alaska by satisfying the federal Older Americans Act requirement of having a council to receive federal OAA funding, which was almost \$11 million in FY16. It is their mission to ensure the dignity and independence of all older Alaskans, and to assist them in leading useful and meaningful lives through planning, advocacy, education, and interagency cooperation.*

*The comprehensive Alaska State Plan on Senior Services, developed by ACoA, gives beneficial educational and outreach to the senior providers in Alaska while making recommendations on legislation and appropriation benefiting the fast growing senior population of Alaska. With tremendous growth in the senior population the time to support ACoA is crucial. Every senior deserves the support of the services ACoA provides, directly or indirectly, through the senior providers throughout our state.*

*Thank you for your support of the ACoA bill allowing the valuable work to continue for another eight years. ACoA's support of NSCoA has enabled our daily efforts to serve the Fairbanks North Star Borough's seniors ensuring they never go hungry or without.*

*Respectfully,*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Darlene Supplee".

*Darlene Supplee  
Executive Director  
North Star Council on Aging  
aka Fairbanks Senior Center*



## SENIOR CITIZENS OF KODIAK, INC.

302 Erskine Avenue, Kodiak, AK 99615

Phone: (907) 486-6181

Fax: (907) 486-4503

E-mail: scokinc@ak.net

December 15, 2015

Representative Mike Hawker  
Alaska Capitol, Room 502  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Hawker:

On behalf of the Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc., (SCOK) I would like to voice support for continuing the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACOA) .

ACOA has played an important advocacy role in all senior issues across the state. They, along with other senior advocacy groups, are watchdogs for policies, regulation, fiscal notes which effect Alaskans 60 and older. ACOA works well with other state departments as well as all providers of senior services.

Please consider extending ACOA and the work it does on behalf of all Alaska seniors.

Sincerely,

Susan Brockman, President  
SCOK Board of Directors



*Soldotna Area Senior Citizens, Inc.*

197 West Park Avenue ★ Soldotna, Alaska 99669

Phone: (907) 262-2322 ★ Fax: (907) 262-2147 ★ solsrctr@alaska.net

January 11, 2016

Representative Mike Hawker  
Alaska Capitol Room 502  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Hawker:

I am writing this letter on behalf of recommending Legislation on reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging for eight more years, and support of HB224.

The Alaska Commission on Aging satisfied a requirement of the federal Older Americans Act (OAA). States receiving OAA funding are required to have an advisory council that

- ✓ Must be comprised of older individuals eligible to participate in OAA-funded programs;
- ✓ Advises the "state unit on aging" regarding matters of aging issues. In Alaska, The Department of Health & Social Services is the state unit on aging as designated by the Governor. The Alaska Commission on Aging serves as the advisory council to DHSS and satisfies this federal requirement.

Alaska is receiving almost \$11 million dollars in Federal OAA funding in FY2016 thanks to its compliance with the Older Americans Act.

The Alaska Commission on Aging develops the comprehensive Alaska State Plan on Senior Services, makes recommendations on legislation and appropriations beneficial for older Alaskans, and provides education/outreach regarding matters related to aging.

The Alaska Commission on Aging also serves as a statutory advisory board to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA) and advises the AMHTA on needs of older Alaskans with cognitive impairments, including Alzheimer's disease and related Dementias. The Commission, in partnership with the AMHTA and other agencies published Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (2015). The Commission also makes recommendations to the AMHTA Board of Trustees regarding mental health programs for Senior Trust Beneficiaries (older people

with dementia and other cognitive impairments) and the use of funds that benefit this vulnerable population.

The Alaska Commission on Aging services as an advocate and educator regarding the needs of Alaska's older people to help ensure the dignity, health, safety, and independence of Alaska's seniors and to assist them in leading useful and meaningful lives.

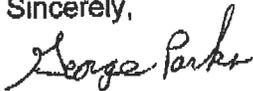
Legislative Audit conducted a sunset audit of the Commission in 2015, concluding that the Commission is serving the public's interest by helping older Alaskans lead dignified, independent and useful lives, and that the Commission meets the federal requirement or each state to establish an advisory council to advise the state on matters related to aging.

The Commission's FY2016 budget is \$542,700 (\$45.9 GF; \$348.1 Interagency Receipts that include federal pass-through funds; \$29.6 GF/MH; and \$119.1 MHTAAR). The Commission consists of eleven seats and has a staff of four full-time employees.

The Alaska Commission on Aging was established in 1981 under AS47.45.200-.290, and is scheduled to sunset June 30, 2016 under AS 44.66.010(a)(4). The proposed legislation would amend AS.66.010(a)(4) to extend the Commission's sunset date by eight years to June 30, 2024.

The Alaska Commission Aging is a vital partner of Soldotna Area Senior Citizens, Inc., in its mission in providing year-round, well-designed, programs and services that help support the health, well-being and independence of Alaska seniors. We would highly recommend that Legislation for the Alaska Commission on Aging be a top priority to extend its sunset date through June 20, 2024.

Sincerely,



George Parks  
President

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING  
COUNCIL of ALASKA



February 2, 2016

Representative Mike Hawker  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 502  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Hawker,

The Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska works closely with the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACOA) to improve the lives of Alaskans with disabilities and our Elders, and we are writing today to encourage you to support the reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging (HB226). As you know, the number of Elders in Alaska is growing. Matter of fact, the number of seniors in Alaska is expected to triple between now and 2020. Luckily for Alaska, the ACOA is there to help us navigate Alaska's growing need, as well as satisfy the requirement in the Older Americans Act to have an advisory council.

Additionally, the ACOA also serves as the statutory advisory board to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (the Trust) and works on issues surrounding those most vulnerable, older Alaskans with cognitive impairments, such as Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Recently, the ACOA created the *State Plan on Senior Services*. The process used by the ACOA was the most comprehensive and collaborative process I've seen, and guaranteeing that all persons would be heard. The state plan works to ensure that our Elders live as independently as possible and, by highlighting best practices, works to reduce the overall cost. It was advisory groups like the ACOA that explained how and why institutional care is more expensive than aging in place. That realization not only saved state dollars but also gave dignity back to seniors. And finally, a recent legislative audit concluded that the ACOA is serving the public's interest by helping older Alaskans lead independent, dignified, and useful lives while meeting the federal requirement.

The need for the ACOA has never been clearer than now. Alaska's senior population is estimated to continue to grow until 2037. This is why the Statewide Independent Living Council strongly supports the reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging.

Sincerely,

Heidi James Frost  
Executive Director

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Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
1-888-294-7452 ~ Fax 907-263-2012  
[www.alaskasilc.org](http://www.alaskasilc.org)

**Peter T. Zuyus**  
**41095 Dorothy Drive, Homer, AK 99603**  
**email: [ptzsr1@yahoo.com](mailto:ptzsr1@yahoo.com) cell: 907-299-0539**

Dec. 15, 2015

Representative Mike Hawker  
Alaska Capitol Room 502  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Support for the Alaska Commission on Aging; Re-authorization

Dear Representative Hawker,

Often we take the time to criticize, but seldom do we take to opportunity to praise good works, especially those of governmental agencies.

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) provides information and resources to everyday Seniors as well as many agencies at the borough and local level. Only a few boroughs have their own Senior agency and even those rely heavily on the ACoA to accomplish their support for the Senior community.

Personally, the ACoA has provided support and assistance with my efforts to create a Senior Commission for the Kenai Peninsula Borough. This effort should come to fruition in the near future.

In many cases, the ACoA is the only resource for Seniors to contact. The ACoA , its employees and Commissioners contribute to the enrichment of the lives of our Seniors and that enrichment , in many cases, extends both longevity and quality of life.

Please accept this letter as my request, recommendation, encouragement that you re-authorize the Commission, so that it may continue its great work on behalf of Alaska's Senior population. The ACoA advocacy and support of the Senior community is a necessity for all of us.

Thank you in advance for your support and re-authorization of such a necessary agency to the State of Alaska Senior community.

Sincerely,

Peter T. Zuyus  
Peter T. Zuyus  
Senior Citizen

cc: ACoA