



Public Safety Employees Association, Inc.
"Representing Alaska's Finest"
A.F.S.C.M.E. Local 803



Representative Charisse Millett
State Capitol, Room 204
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Letter of Support for HB 66

Dear Representative Millett:

The paraphrased statement below explains why we need HB 66 to become law in Alaska.

As a state, and as an employer, we have a duty to the men and women we hire to serve and protect our citizens and to enforce our laws. If we, as a state, are asking these public servants to protect all of our citizens from danger, we owe them the full measure of our support – they deserve to be well paid, well equipped, well trained and well led. They need to know that if they are injured, we will nurse them back to health, and that if they are killed, we will comfort and assist their families.

Paraphrased from "Worthy Fights" by former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta

The Public Safety Employees Association, Local 803 proudly represents approximately 800 law enforcement employees located throughout Alaska. Our members include the Alaska State Troopers, Court Services Officers, Deputy Fire Marshals, Airport Police and Fire Officers, and municipal police employees in Ketchikan, Sitka, Juneau, Fairbanks, Soldotna, Dillingham and Unalaska. The men and women members of PSEA put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve Alaska citizens.

That was the situation on May 1, 2014, when Alaska State Troopers and PSEA members Scott Johnson and Gabe Rich were tragically murdered in Tanana while responding to a call for assistance. Both men left spouses and surviving children. Within days of this senseless tragedy, Scott and Gabe's spouses and survivors' learned that their medical insurance coverage would lapse unless the families opted for COBRA coverage. This meant their survivors would lose medical coverage unless they could afford a monthly COBRA expense of \$1800.00. For a family that just lost a husband, a dad and the main bread winner to a senseless death, this amounted to an unaffordable expense, but also unneeded stress during a time of unimaginable upheaval and grief.

PSEA supports HB 66 because it provides spouses and survivors of Alaska public employees killed in the line of duty continuing medical insurance coverage until the spouse or survivors age out of medical insurance coverage. Plain and simple, this bill carries out a duty the State of Alaska has to families of its employee, when an employee has made the ultimate sacrifice. HB 66 also lessens a family's tragic loss and burden of

being thrown into unexpected and unaffordable situations and comforts a family when a family member of a public employee is tragically killed in the line of duty.

PSEA respectfully requests that the Alaska Legislature pass HB 66.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jake Metcalfe", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jake Metcalfe
Executive Director
PSEA/AFSCME Local 803
907-337-1979