House Bill 127
Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to a permanent fund dividend for an individual whose conviction has been vacated, reversed, or dismissed; and relating to the calculation of the value of the permanent fund dividend by including payment to individuals eligible for a permanent fund dividend because of a conviction that has been vacated, reversed, or dismissed."

The State of Alaska Department of Law Criminal Division's mission is to "assure safe and healthy communities by prosecuting and convicting criminal offenders throughout Alaska." Likewise, the State has a responsibility to ensure those convicted of crimes are prosecuted fairly and with due justice, and in the event of wrongful convictions, compensate those who have faced such an injustice.

Incarcerated Alaskans forgo their Permanent Fund Dividends to the State. HB 127 seeks to pay Permanent Fund Dividends to Alaskans whose convictions were vacated, reversed or dismissed. If passed, those eligible must apply for the PFD within 120 days following the new judgment or within 120 days of the effective date of the bill. Currently, this bill would help 4 Alaskans who were victims of wrongful conviction at a total cost of $103,450.96 in owed PFDs.

The PFD is a defining characteristic of what it means to be an Alaskan. Providing the PFD to those Alaskans who have wrongfully had their liberties taken away from them is one of the few things the State of Alaska can do to help them reestablish a normal life in providing means to find housing, food and education.

A wrongful conviction is a true tragedy. The transition back to civilian life for these individuals can be difficult due to the loss of time with loved ones, let alone the loss of income otherwise earned. I ask your support for this bill that would help victims of injustice with their transition back into society as the State looks to ensure that the criminal justice system is ever more thorough and fair.

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