



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of
Health and Social Services

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

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February 27, 2017

Representative Chris Tuck
Alaska State Capitol, Room 7
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Subject: Support for HB 1, Election Registration and Voting

Dear Representative Tuck:

The Alaska Commission on Aging is pleased to offer our support for HB 1, a bill authored by you, which is designed to increase voter participation and access to voting statewide. The right to vote is the most effective way for citizens to have a voice in the democratic process by electing officials to make decisions about government operations and policies that guide our great state and nation. Seniors are "super voters" as they are proud to exercise their right to vote in almost every election. The Commission supports many of the provisions in HB 1 to improve voter participation among all Alaskans, particularly in places such as rural and remote areas of the state, and among younger voters, where voter participation can be lower.

While we agree with most of the provisions in HB 1 to increase voter access, we are concerned about the statute change that would allow for same day registration and voting for two reasons. First, citizens who register and vote on the same day do not receive and have time to consider the brochures and political information that are sent to registered voters prior to elections. This information prepares citizens to cast their ballots responsibly as informed voters for the election of officials and consideration of ballot initiatives. Second, same day registration and voting has the potential to lead to accusations of voter fraud. Pending passage of this legislation, we recommend that the Office of the Lieutenant Governor implement safeguards, such as separating ballots casted by voters who registered and voted on the same day for greater scrutiny as is currently done with absentee ballots, to ensure that all votes are legitimately cast.

The Commission supports HB 1 and appreciates your consideration of our concerns. We thank you for your leadership of this legislation to promote greater voter participation in Alaska. Please feel free to include the Commission's letter in the bill packet for HB 1.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of David A. Blacketer in blue ink.

David A. Blacketer
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Denise Daniello in blue ink.

Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director



March 28, 2017

Sent Via Electronic Mail

Representative Chris Tuck
State Capitol Room 204
Juneau AK, 99801
Representative.Chris.Tuck@akleg.gov

Re: Support for HB 1 "Electronic Registration and Voting"

Dear Representative Tuck,

On behalf of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), I would like to express our support for H.B. 1 "Electronic Registration and Voting." AFN is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska. Our membership is comprised of 152 federally recognized Indian tribes, 152 village corporations, 12 regional corporations, and 12 nonprofit organizations and tribal consortiums that contract and compact to run federal and state programs. The mission of AFN is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community.

AFN supports House Bill 1 because the right to vote is a cornerstone of our democracy. AFN supports many of the changes in H.B. 1 that will clarify the voting process, improve access to voting, and increase voter participation. In the 2014 general election, AFN, ANCSA Regional Association, and Get Out The Native Vote coordinated with the Division of Elections to create absentee in-person voting sites in rural Alaskan communities. This collaborative effort helped create the same access to voting in many of our rural locations that urban areas of Alaska currently benefit. From these efforts and outreach at the Annual AFN Convention it was evident that there is widespread confusion among the public regarding the terminology for early voting and absentee-in person voting and how they differ. H.B. 1 would eliminate this confusion by uniformly identifying the locations as "early" voting stations.

AFN additionally supports H.B.1 because it will enhance the voter registration process by allowing for electronic signatures. Currently, applicants are required to go through a cumbersome process to print and sign an application, then scan or fax the signed application to the Division of Elections. In addition to this process many rural Alaskans lack access to a printer, scanner or a fax machine and H.B. 1 would permit applicants to complete a form in person at one of the five Alaska Division of Elections regional offices.

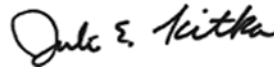
Furthermore, many rural Alaskan residents lack the means to travel to an elections office due to the high cost of airfare. By allowing electronic signatures under H.B 1, it would streamline the voter registration

process that has proven advancement with the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividends ((seems like an abrupt end, what does this mean?))

Lastly, AFN is supportive of H.B.1 due to its enhanced voter participation and access through the establishment of a permanent absentee voting option that would develop an avenue for voting by mail. Voting by mail would eliminate the pressure and rush to a polling site by offering the option to vote from home. This would be very beneficial to many Alaskan residents who are often busy fishing and hunting in August during the primary election, or during potential incimate weather in November during the general election.

H.B. 1 will be a huge step forward in Alaska's history by making voting more accessible, easier, and equitable for all Alaskans. Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions regarding this letter, please call me at 907-274-3611.

Sincerely,



Julie Kitka

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President
Alaska Federation of
Natives

February 28, 2017

Representative Chris Tuck
State Capitol Room 204
Juneau AK, 99801
Representative.Chris.Tuck@akleg.gov

Sent Via Electronic Mail

Re: Support for House Bill 1, An Act Relating to Absentee Voting, Voting and Voter Registration; Relating to Early Voting Locations and Which Persons May Vote Absentee Ballots; and Providing for an Effective Date.

Dear Representative Tuck:

On behalf of the ANCSA Regional Association (the Association), we write to express our support for House Bill 1, Electronic Registration and Voting. The ANCSA Regional Association represents the Chief Executive Officers of the twelve land-based regional Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs), as well as the President of the Alaska Federation of Natives. Our corporations are owned by over 121,000 Alaska Native people and were formed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, 43 U.S.C. § 1601, et. seq. (ANCSA). Our mission is to promote and foster the continued growth and economic strength of the Alaska Native Regional Corporations on behalf of our shareholders. When measured against the top 49 Alaska-owned companies, ANCs account for 75 percent of the revenue earned, 69 percent of Alaskan jobs, and 86 percent of the global employment. Making up 20 of the top 49 Alaska-owned companies, Alaska Native Corporations have become an economic engine of Alaska.

The Association respectfully writes in support of House Bill 1. As many of you know and appreciate, the right to vote is a cornerstone of our democracy. ANCSA Regional Association is supportive of H.B. 1 because we believe it includes important changes that will clarify the voting process, improve access to voting, and increase voter participation.

During the 2014 primary and general election, representatives from ANCSA Regional Association, Get Out The Native Vote and the Alaska Federation of Natives assisted the Division of Elections in creating absentee in-person voting sites in villages that either did not have one or needed to reestablish themselves officially with the state. In assisting with this process, it was clear there was a widespread confusion among the public regarding the terminology for early voting and absentee-in person voting. We believe H.B. 1 helps alleviate this confusion by uniformly calling the voting stations "early" voting stations.

The ANCSA Regional Association supports H.B.1 because it will enhance voter registration process by allowing for electronic signatures. Currently, applicants are required to print and sign an application, then scan or fax the signed application to the Division of Elections. Another option is for the applicant to complete a form in person at one of the five Alaska Division of Elections regional offices. Many residents in rural Alaska may lack access to a printer, scanner or a fax machine. Furthermore, rural residents may lack the means to travel to an elections office due to the high cost of airfare. We believe allowing electronic signatures will make the registration process quicker and easier.

The ANCSA Regional Association supports H.B.1 because it will enhance voter participation and access through the creation of a permanent absentee voting option. Voting by mail removes the pressure to rush through the process of picking candidates and understanding complex ballot initiatives. By voting at home, individuals have the opportunity to research the issues, vote at their convenience, and have available language assistance. Many residents in rural Alaska are often busy fishing and hunting, especially in the August primary, so by eliminating the additional step of applying for an absentee ballot each year will be an important enhancement to our voting system.

The ANCSA Regional Association believes every Alaskan resident who seeks to participate in the political process should be afforded an equal opportunity to cast a vote, and House Bill 1 helps make voting more equitable. The ANCSA Regional Association is supportive of H.B. 1.

Sincerely,
ANCSA REGIONAL ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Reitmeier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kim Reitmeier
Executive Director

cc: ANCSA Regional Association Board of Directors