



P.O. Box 211231  
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April, 4<sup>th</sup> 2019

RE: House Bill 98

Dear Representative Claman:

On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business/Alaska, I am writing to lend support for House Bill 98. The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) is the largest small-business advocacy group in Alaska. NFIB encourages the legislature to consider and act to close the loopholes identified in HB 98 this year.

Recent passage of comprehensive criminal justice reform or SB 91(2016) relaxed penalties for property crimes. NFIB expressed concern and opposition for many of these changes while SB 91 was being vetted by the legislature and we have been vocal in our support for subsequent efforts to strengthen property crimes penalties such as those housed within Senate Bill 54 (2018). Section 1 of HB 98 addresses a serious legal deficiency by aggregating property theft values over a 180 day period for purposes of meeting the threshold of second degree theft. NFIB believes section 1 will close a loop hole currently being exploited by organized theft rings.

Alaskan small businesses currently incur significant costs to deter or defeat efforts to steal property from their businesses. HB 98 closes loopholes while taking positive steps to more appropriately treat what has become an epidemic of theft statewide. NFIB encourages swift action and final passage this year of the reforms proposed in HB 98.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Stacey', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John "Thor" Stacey  
Alaska State Director

**National Federation of Independent Business – ALASKA**

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