



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Labor and Workforce Development

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
Management Services

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March 3, 2020

The Honorable Click Bishop
Chair, Senate Labor and Workforce Development
Senate Finance Sub-committee
State Capitol Room 121
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Bishop:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a departmental overview to the Senate Finance Sub-committee for the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. This letter is in response to a question raised during our hearing on Thursday, February 20, 2020.

Please provide information on the history of the Randolph-Sheppard Act. (Senator Gray-Jackson)

The Randolph-Sheppard Act is federal legislation passed in 1936 with the primary goal to provide individuals who are blind with remunerative employment and to enhance their economic well-being by receiving first priority in the operation of vending facilities on federal property. The Randolph Sheppard Act is named for its co-sponsors: Jennings Randolph (D-WV) and Morris Sheppard (D-TX).

The Randolph-Sheppard Act is intended to enhance employment opportunities for individuals who are blind through the operation of vending facilities. Facilities covered under the Randolph-Sheppard Act include cafeterias, snack bars, coffee carts, automatic vending machines, gift shops, and other food service or concessions businesses that are on federal property. The success of the federal program led to the development of the Chance Act in Alaska in 1976 (AS 23.15.100), which created a similar program for blind and significantly disabled individuals on state and other property. Under the Chance Act, blind persons receive first priority for operation of vending facilities on public property and severely disabled persons receive second priority.

In Alaska, the Randolph-Sheppard Act and the Chance Act are managed by the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) in the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). The BEP recruits, trains, licenses, and places individuals who are blind or severely disabled as operators of vending facilities to provide entrepreneurial employment opportunities for those individuals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Hannah Lager', with a stylized, cursive script.

Hannah Lager
Administrative Services Director