

SB 124 is a critical and much needed tool for dealing with folks experiencing a mental health crisis. I urge you to grease it up and get it through Judiciary with the hope that we can get it across the line this session.

Thanks for all you do and have done on behalf of those I advocate for!

Roger Branson

Dear members of the Finance Committee of the House of Representatives,

I am writing to ask you to please pass SB124 (Mental Health Facilities & Meds) expediently through committee. I know this matter is before you and request you support it.

For over 25 years I have worked with Alaskans as a pastor, social worker, chaplain, non-profit leader and community activist and it is clear to me that we are not serving the mental health needs of our State well. SB124 (Mental Health Facilities & Meds) is a huge step in the right direction for getting Alaskans in need of mental health care the services they need.

Thank you for your consideration of supporting this bill.

Dr. Joel Kiekintveld

I urge you to pass SB124 Mental Health Facilities and Meds bill and do this right away!

People in a mental health crisis should be met by a mental health professional rather than law enforcement and taken to appropriate stabilization centers rather than our hospital emergency rooms and jails. This will better serve the person in crisis and make better use of our police and emergency rooms and jails which need to focus on other issues.

The State of Alaska, the Trust, law enforcement and first responders, behavioral health organizations, hospitals, and hundreds of other community partners in Anchorage, Mat Su, Fairbanks and in communities across the state have been working to improve our response to Alaskans in crisis. This bill is the result of their work, along with national work. The data shows this approach is much more cost effective and crisis effective.

- HB172:

- Provide law enforcement with additional tools to protect public safety
 - Expand the number of facilities that can conduct a 72-hour evaluation
 - Add a new, less restrictive level of care (Crisis Stabilization Centers: 23 hour and Short Term Crisis Residential)
 - Facilitate a faster and more appropriate response to a crisis, expand the types of first responders that can transport an individual in crisis to an appropriate crisis facility
 - Create a “no wrong door” approach to providing medical care to a person in psychiatric crisis
- HB172 Does Not:
 - Interfere with an officer’s authority or ability to make an arrest
 - Change who has the current statutory authority to administer crisis medication
 - Change current statutory authority for who can order an involuntary commitment
 - Reduce the individual rights of the adult or juvenile in crisis; the parents’ rights of care for their child; or existing due process rights of the individual in crisis.

In addition, it makes sense economically!

I respectfully urge you to pass this through the committee right away.

Sincerely,

Carol Laurion

I urge you to pass the SB124 Mental Health Facilities & Meds quickly with no delay!

Passing this bill will improve crisis response in our State by allowing a mental health professional to be a first responder and allowing them to take them to a stabilization facility instead of the emergency room. This in turn frees up the police and emergency rooms to do their professions instead of mental health. It also improves the lives of those with mental illnesses to be met by someone who has more expertise in the area they need help with.

It has been proven in many other states in the USA and is the mental health model that is considered to be the best both by mental health stabilization and by cost.

Many people in our State have been working tirelessly to get this far, so please help us to get it done by passing it.

Thank you for your time

Fred Laurion

Dear Senators Holland, Shower, Hughes, Myers and Kiehl:

As a concerned resident of Alaska, I am writing to urge you to pass Senate Bill 124 (SB124) Mental Health Facilities and Meds through the Senate Judiciary Committee and to pass it this legislative session. With the recent toll that the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigation efforts took on our health care system and the physical and mental well-being of our communities, it is imperative that we continue to move towards a viable solution for mental health crises.

Under SB124, our communities will be able to ensure people receive appropriate care swiftly, keep them out of jails and emergency rooms, and reduce the impact on first responders. With emergency rooms already often close to capacity and also often an overstimulating environment for people experiencing a mental health crisis, SB124 will allow us to more efficiently and successfully assist individuals. By using short-term stabilization centers that are set up specifically to treat those experiencing a mental health crisis, we will not only be able to better serve those individuals, but will also be able to reserve hospital emergency rooms for urgent needs that the emergency departments are best equipped to manage.

If passed, SB124 will also reduce the impact and workload placed on our law enforcement officers, allowing them to focus on crime prevention efforts for which they are well trained. Furthermore, individuals experiencing a mental health crisis will be able to stabilize in a space best suited for a successful recovery, rather than finding themselves in a constant spiral that may lead to a jail cell.

For the well-being and health of our Alaskan communities, I implore you to pass SB124 through the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Katie Walter

Three years ago, my Husband had a heart attack. While we were at the hospital the Dr's put my husband back on a medication that had caused liver damage. When I expressed my opposition to the medication and why, the physicians became argumentative and aggressive. They refused to entertain any alternatives.

After three different consultations and, confrontations they put my husband in a room with a camera in it. The staff then started to ask my husband if I beat him. They kept asking my husband this question every time they entered the room. They asked him the question irregardless of when I was present or not. This was terrifying!!!! At that moment I felt that if I did not stop advocating for my Husband's health. That they would have found a way to separate us. I, at that moment knew that we had no rights.

In having had this experience , I am writing to express my extreme opposition to SB 124. If our medical rights could so easily violated and trashed three years ago by the whims of a Doctor, I am terrified to

think about the power this Bill could have in its ability to completely silence our most vulnerable. The fear it would cause, and the removal of checked and balances.

Please reject this SB 124 .

Regards
April Orth