

# Senate Labor and Commerce Committee

*Senator Mia Costello, Chair*

*Senator Roger Holland, Vice Chair*

*Senator Gary Stevens*



*Senator Joshua Revak*

*Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson*

*Email: [Senate.Labor.and.Commerce@akleg.gov](mailto:Senate.Labor.and.Commerce@akleg.gov)*

## **32<sup>nd</sup> Alaska State Legislature**

### **Senate Bill 78 Sponsor Statement**

In January of 2021, Governor Dunleavy asked the Legislature to extend the public health disaster emergency through the passage of Senate Bill 56. This was a comprehensive bill with numerous provisions, one of which included an extension of the public health disaster emergency. The Legislature instead chose to pass a resolution asking the Governor to issue a new emergency disaster declaration, as there was not enough time for this bill to go through the legislative process before the expiration of the emergency disaster declaration in effect at the time.

In the meantime, the Legislature has taken individual sections from the Governor's bill and created separate legislation to address those specific provisions. Senate Bill 78 was taken directly from Section 6 of the Governor's bill to address the issue of telehealth expansion.

The purpose of introducing this bill is to give the legislative branch the opportunity to determine whether or not we need to make our statutes more COVID-19-aware, as opposed to relying on an emergency disaster declaration in order to keep our state operational. The Senate Labor and Commerce Committee intends to rely heavily on the administration to explain why certain sections in the disaster extension bill, such as the provisions now found in Senate Bill 78, are necessary.