



# Representative Andi Story

## Alaska State Legislature

### House District 3

Mendenhall Valley

Haines

Klukwan

Gustavus

Skagway

Member

House Education

Member

House State Affairs

### Contact

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### Sponsor Statement CS House Bill 25

*“An Act allowing certain members of the uniformed services, spouses and dependents of certain members of the uniformed services, and individuals attending certain merchant marine vocational programs to remain eligible for the permanent fund dividend during absences from the state; allowing, in certain cases, an otherwise eligible individual to file for an unclaimed permanent fund dividend if the parent, guardian, or authorized representative failed to claim a dividend on behalf of the individual during the application period; and providing for an effective date”*

CSHB 25 came about when I was contacted by a constituent who let me know that they had been denied their PFD because they were absent from the state while serving our country as a member of the Commissioned Officers Corps of the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The uniformed services consist of the armed services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard), and the Commissioned Officers Corps of NOAA and the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). Members of the uniformed services are treated similarly in pay, benefits, and rank. Officers in the NOAA and USPHS Commissioned Officer Corps are eligible for Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, can be members of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), and can enroll in higher learning institutions using the GI Bill.

CSHB25 would also establish allowable absences for Alaskans participating in a qualifying merchant mariner apprenticeship program. Some of these individuals have been left out of these provisions as regulations have been interpreted to exclude them from allowable absence provisions relating to education because they do not pay tuition for apprenticeship programs. It also extends a grace period to dependents of Alaskans who fail to file permanent fund dividend applications for their dependents by the statutory deadline because of a medical emergency. These are Alaskans who, through no fault of their own, are being disqualified for receiving a dividend because their parent or guardian was medically incapacitated and missed the March 31<sup>st</sup> filing deadline.

Currently there are 16 subsections of statute that allow Alaskans to maintain eligibility for the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) if they are absent from the state for different reasons. Reasons like post-secondary education, dealing with medical emergencies, serving in the Peace Corps, and participating on a U.S. Olympic Team. Remaining eligible for the PFD while serving our country, being enrolled in school out of state, or dealing with medical emergencies has been a long-time policy of Alaska. However, the Alaskans this bill seeks to help are not permitted allowable absences for purposes of PFD eligibility. CSHB 25 would extend allowable absences for these Alaskans.

CSHB 25 does not change other eligibility requirements for the PFD. It allows Alaskans serving their country in the NOAA and USPHS Commissioned Officers Corps, merchant marine apprentices, and those whose parents or guardian were unable to file because of a medical emergency to remain eligible for the PFD.

