



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Department of Health
ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

P.O. Box 110693
Juneau, AK 99811-0693
Main: 907.465.3250
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January 19, 2024

To the Honorable Members of the Alaska Legislature,

As the Chair of the Alaska Commission on Aging, I am writing to endorse Senate Bill No. 189, which seeks to extend the Commission's operation until June 30, 2032. This extension is not merely administrative; it is fundamental to our mission of ensuring the dignity and independence of all older Alaskans, and assisting them in leading meaningful lives through planning, advocacy, education, and interagency cooperation.

Our commission's work, particularly in developing the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, is a statutory requirement. This plan is a testament to our commitment and a guiding framework for senior services across the state. Moreover, our collaboration with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority as a joint advocacy advisor amplifies our impact, especially in addressing the mental health aspects of senior well-being.

The continuation of our commission as proposed in Senate Bill No. 189 is crucial for sustaining our ability to serve Alaska's senior population effectively. We appreciate your support in passing this bill, ensuring that our seniors continue to receive the focused attention and care they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this essential bill.

Warm regards,

Bob Sivertsen

Bob Sivertsen
Chair of the Board
Alaska Commission on Aging



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January 29, 2024

To the Honorable Members of the Alaska Legislature,

Re-Authorizing the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA), SB-189, is an essential step in meeting the needs of Alaska's rapidly growing Senior population. Alaska's Senior population has the highest per capita growth rate for those over 60 and particularly those over 80. As our Senior population increases, the need for services also increases. These services, whether with health, housing, nutrition, or transportation, become increasingly more important as our Seniors age. Through ACoA, the following activities are ongoing and will continue with re-authorizing for the specified 8 year term.

Alaska Commission on Aging :

- Serves the state of Alaska in meeting the objectives and requirements of the Older Americans Act;
- Provides a mechanism for receiving financial support for Alaska Senior Programs, including Home-based Services, Congregate Meals, and Housing Assistance;
- Assess trends in Alaska's rapidly growing Senior Population, including demography and regional needs;
- Prepares an annual Senior-Snapshot educating public and private interests in the who, what, where of Alaska's over 60 population
- Prepares a 4-year plan in compliance with the Older Americans Act. The newly approved State Plan for Senior Services identifies the efforts needed for the period 2024-2027.
- Through quarterly meetings, works with partners across the state addressing senior needs, including AARP, AgeNet, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, and local Senior Centers.
- Works in conjunction with state programs, including Alaska Senior and Disability Services, Alaska Pioneer Homes, the State Ombudsmen Office, and Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.

Warm regards,

Paula Pawlowski

Paula Pawlowski

Vice-Chair of the Board

Alaska Commission on Aging

February 16, 2024

Support for SB 189 – Re-authorizing of the Alaska Commission on Aging

Captain Bob Pawlowski, NOAA (/Ret)
3300 Balchen Drive
Anchorage, AK 99517

Committee Members:

I am Captain Bob Pawlowski, NOAA (Ret), a resident of Alaska since 1985 and proud to call Alaska the home for Paula and myself. I am writing to support SB 189 to extend the sunset date for the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA). Extending the date will allow to meet its mission and vision as required by Alaska Statute and the Older Americans Act. As a Senior, I appreciate the opportunities that Alaska offers in staying active in the community and volunteering. Currently, I serve as Chair, Alaska Pioneer Homes Advisory Board, a statutory member of ACoA, and volunteer with Alaska's AARP.

As I enjoy the rewards that my active duty service and time in both the public and private sector has provided Paula and I, I also know that many of Alaska's Seniors are not having their needs met. Whether from limited lifetime income, hardships in life, health challenges, or any other of a myriad of reasons, they have chosen Alaska their lifetime home and continued to reside in our local communities and contribute to the state. But they need help to live day-to-day, given the costs of housing, the burden of inflation, the high costs of medication, local transportation options, and limits in senior services. This is where ACoA plays a critical role. This role includes:

- Collecting and analyzing year-to-year data on changes in Alaska's Senior population, trends are identified on the needs of the population versus the levels of services available. An annual Senior Snapshot is compiled by ACoA and distributed amongst Senior Services organizations and advocates.
- As the designated State Commission for the Older Americans Act (OAA), ACoA provides the conduit for identifying the steps Alaska is taking in meeting the mandates of the OAA and looking to the future on what federal resources are needed. By preparing the Alaska State Plan for Seniors every four (4) years, the Commission and its partners are able to provide a roadmap for addressing the issues facing Seniors. The current approved plan addresses needs and services for the Fiscal Years 2024-2027. Goals and Objectives are detailed to the Administration for Community Living that show how federal and state resources are working together to meet the needs of Alaska's Seniors and the direction of the OAA.
- Through quarterly meetings, ACoA facilitates dialog with partners in Senior Services. The Commissioners, each with their own diverse background, are able to highlight needs and pursue solutions with state and federal agencies and public and private partners. ACoA works with DHS Senior Disability Services, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, and other state organizations to maximize the options for addressing these needs.

I will conclude by stating that the benefit ACoA brings to Alaska in advising federal, state and local senior programs continues to be significant. I ask you to support SB 189 and extend the tenure of ACoA.

Captain Bob Pawlowski, NOAA (Ret)



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February 5, 2023

Sen Scott Kawasaki
Alaska Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for Alaska Commission on Aging Reauthorization SB189

Dear Sen Kawasaki:

Thank you for introducing legislation to reauthorize the *Alaska Commission on Aging*. Without passage of this legislation, the *Alaska Commission on Aging* will end in June 2025.

Since 1981 the *Alaska Commission on Aging* (ACoA) has advocated for the needs and concerns of older Alaskans to the Governor, Legislature, Congressional delegation, and the public. They also advised the Governor, Legislature, Congressional delegation and the public on current and potential programs and services for older Alaskans and their caregivers. They work closely with and make recommendations to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority on programs and services to improve the lives of senior Trust beneficiaries.

The Commission has been a strong partner to AARP Alaska in our advocacy work to make Alaska a better place to be able to choose how we live as we age. Their annual Senior Snapshot and comprehensive State Plan for Senior Services reflect the data and the stories they've gathered through surveys and listening sessions with older Alaskans and senior providers across our vast state. These products are invaluable to AARP Alaska and other organizations serving seniors. The ACoA uses the information they gather to create the federally required State Plan for Alaska as required under the Older Americans Act. They create a four-year comprehensive plan for senior services including meals, transportation, family caregiver, adult day services, senior housing, vocational training, legal assistance, and more.

AARP Alaska supports the reauthorization for the *Alaska Commission on Aging* older Alaskans without reservation. On behalf of the fastest growing senior population per capita in the nation and our 77,000 AARP Alaska members, and for the benefit of all Alaskans, we thank you for your leadership on this important issue for older Alaskans.

Respectfully, Marge Stoneking
Advocacy Director, AARP Alaska





North Star Council on Aging/Fairbanks Senior Center
Meals on Wheels
1424 Moore Street, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
Phone: 907-452-1735 / Fax: 451-9974
nscoa.manager@alaska.net

January 30, 2024

Senator Kawasaki
State Capital Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801

Ref: SB189

To Whom It May Concern:

North Star Council on Aging, aka the Fairbanks Senior Center, supports the SB189 to extend the termination date for the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) to 2032. The ACoA is a vital voice in our state for a rapidly growing senior population. In fact, Alaska has the fastest growing senior population of all the states at a current rate of 68% with an alarming growth rate of 57% in the 85-and-older population.

ACoA is a necessary agency for the State to receive funding from the Older Americans Act, which supports in home services for seniors. All the programs housed within the Older Americans Act aid in creating safety nets for our communities that are facing the largest aging population in 3 centuries.

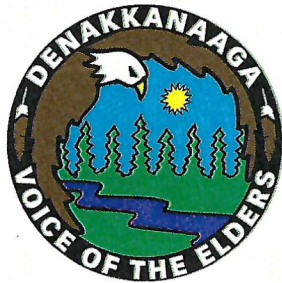
The power of ACoA is its single-minded focus that gathers senior data, development of the State Plan on Aging which is a necessary component in receiving federal Older American Act funding. It is also a connective link for the network of senior providers throughout the state. This singular focus approach on aging allows a unique perspective on the impacts of the "Silver Tsunami" as it gains momentum in Alaska.

The commitment of ACoA's attention to senior issues strengthens the state's ability to care for one of our most vulnerable populations. Supporting SB189 is a smart, cost-effective way to strategize solutions for Alaska. ACoA honors the pioneers who built our state, the very same strong-willed, brave pioneers who continue to have a dramatic impact into their retirement years.

Thank you!

Darlene Supplee

Darlene Supplee
Executive Director



DENA K KANAAGA

101 Dunkel Street, Suite 135, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

February 15, 2024

Re: SB 189

To the Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature:

I am writing on behalf of Denakkanaaga in support of SB 189, regarding the reauthorization of the Alaska Commission on Aging.

The integral work that the commission undertakes has been fundamental to our older Alaskan's well-being since the program was created in 1981. This includes organizing and developing the Alaska Plan for Senior Services, gathering data on Alaska's growing senior population, and advocating for the needs of one of the state's most vulnerable populations. Additionally, the commission helps Alaska meet the needs of the Older Americans Act, bringing Alaskans millions of dollars in federal funding to help assist those who need it the most.

Denakkanaaga is a regional Native non-profit organization that advocates on behalf of and for Native elders of Interior Alaska. Denakkanaaga is a Koyukon-Athabascan word that means 'our people speak'. It has been our honor to work with the commission in the past on these important issues facing our seniors. Denakkanaaga's former First Chief, Rev. Dr. Anna Frank, also served on the commission, providing valuable insight on the needs of elders in rural Alaska.

Denakkanaaga respectfully asks the legislature to allow the important work of the Alaska Commission on Aging to continue. We fully support the reauthorization of the commission so they may continue to assist elders for a subsequent eight years.

Sincerely,

Sharon McConnell
Executive Director

March 13, 2024

RE: SB 189 Letter of Support

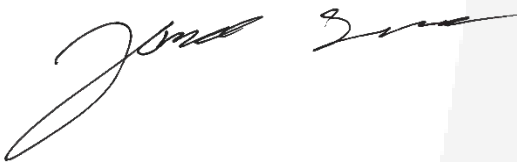
Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

The joint mission of the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ABADA) and the Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB) is to advocate for programs and services that promote healthy, independent, productive Alaskans. AMHB/ABADA are statutorily charged with advising, planning, and coordinating behavioral health services and programs funded by the State of Alaska.

The Boards work in partnership with the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACOA) to advocate for the needs of Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiaries, including those with mental illness, intellectual and developmental disabilities, substance use disorders, Alzheimer's disease and related dementia and traumatic brain injuries. In addition to the work ACOA does to assess trends and needs of Alaska's rapidly growing Senior Population, the Commission is a requirement for the State of Alaska to receive funds under the Older Americans Act, which supports home-based services, congregate meals and housing assistance. This bill ensures that these critical programs continue to have funding to support the needs of our elders.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and for your support for the Alaska Commission on Aging.

Sincerely,



James Savage, Chair
Alaska Mental Health Board



Renee Schofield, Chair
Advisory Board on Alcoholism and
Drug Abuse