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The Honorable Ashley Carrick  
The Honorable Andi Story  
House State Affairs/ JNUCAP120  
Juneau, AK 99801

Via email: [House.State.Affairs@akleg.gov](mailto:House.State.Affairs@akleg.gov)

Dear Chair Carrick and Vice Chair Story,

**Get Out the Native Vote (GOTNV)** is a statewide non-partisan voter education program. GOTNV testified to the Senate State Affairs Committee on voter access issues during the three 2022 statewide elections, and most recently on January 30. Comparing the provisions in both **SB64** and **HB43**, we support the following:

1. Repeal of witness signature requirement
2. Ballot curing process
3. Postage Paid Return envelopes for Absentee Ballots that include USPS bar codes for tracking
4. Same day voter registration
5. Increased opportunities to register and vote 30 days (vs. 15) before election day

**Section 2:** Register to vote requirements have more hurdles than in SB64. SB64's language would lessen burdensome barriers commonly felt by registrants in rural Alaska. Alaska does not have as many voting officials or volunteer workforce to help guide through paperwork and certify registration effort compared to options on the road system; however, HB43 recognizes Tribal identification, which is important.

**Section 3:** It is important that people can register up to election day and be allowed to vote an absentee, in-person, special needs, or questioned ballot.

**Section 12:** Enhanced means of appointing willing *or reluctant* Absentee Voting Officials will combat the challenging recruitment and retention rates in many parts of Alaska. There have been instances when election workers and officials failed to engage or follow up throughout the process. This will help alleviate systemic barriers and enhance a community's ability to vote.

\*It should be noted that **Region IV** has suffered extraordinary systemic failures in the last five statewide elections. Precincts related to ANCSA (*the Native Vote*) went from a turnout rate of **66.19% in 1982's** mid-terms to **30.37% in the 2024** presidential election. In 1982, the NW Arctic Borough had the highest turnout of **78.61%** and dropped to **28.64%** in the last election. Voting operations have clearly deteriorated over time and contributed to this striking level of voter apathy.

**Sections 16 of SB64:** One critical element to improve is **recruitment and training with strong staffing in Nome**, supplemented with an educated and committed **Rural Community Liaison**. This would create a healthier election workforce to improve election experiences and turnaround lackluster turnouts. **Data shows that voters perform better when in person**; the 100% Vote-By-Mail outcome of the 2022 Special Primary resulted in a **ballot rejection rate 4X** the statewide average. Populations under 750 have a constitutional right to vote in person. The answer is to boost voting in person to support voter accessibility and intent.

**Sections 14/17:** 14 Gives the AVO the ability to accept absentee ballots from qualified voters 30 days up to and including election day to cover a symptomatic gap in services in rural precincts. 17 Gives special needs voters relief from the current limited opportunity to vote and with less chance of rejection.

Enclosed is a copy of GOTNV's letter on the merits of SB 64 and the Governor's bill, SB70. Parts of each bill can make a better effective approach to election reform for of all Alaska's eligible voters. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Quyana,

Michelle (Macuar) Sparck  
Director of Strategic Initiatives, GOTNV