

January 27, 2025

Dear Senate Members on the Committee of State Affairs,

Alaska Community Action on Toxics is writing to express our strong support for SB 64 -- Elections. Alaska Community Action on Toxics is a statewide environmental health and justice nonprofit organization dedicated to research and advocacy to protect public health in Alaska and the world. After reviewing HR 6805, we firmly asked each of you to support this critical piece of legislation.

SB 64 is a necessary legislation that would reform several key parts of our Alaska election system. People need a system that ensures all votes are in the final tally, and SB 64 would create a ballot-curing process to ensure this. Including a ballot-curing process will allow voters to correct honest mistakes on their mail-in ballots. In the first year of being able to vote by mail (2022), 4.5% of ballots were rejected by election officials, and nearly 14% of all those ballots were in four House districts, predominantly Alaska communities and off the state's road system.

Another feature of the bill is that it will allow same-day voter registration. Currently, 23 states and the District of Columbia allow voter registration up to and including election day. One of the benefits of this provision is an increase in voter turnout among the ages of 18 to 24 by 4%. One of the reasons for this provision is that it benefits people who move residences ahead of an election, which occurs more frequently among younger and low-income individuals. The final bill must include this provision, increasing the overall voter turnout.

Lastly, the bill removes an unnecessary feature of voting by mail, the witness signature provision. Since the state currently does not verify signatures and eliminated 7,500 ballots due to this provision, we are depriving every American of the fundamental right to have their voice heard at the ballot box.

In conclusion, ACAT strongly supports SB-64 for all the above reasons. We strongly encourage you to support this bill. Our information is at the bottom of this letter if you want to discuss it further, and we welcome further dialogue with you about this act.

Thank you for your careful consideration.

Sincerely,

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