

HOUSE CS FOR CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 4(FIN)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

BY THE HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Offered: 6/26/07

Referred: Today's Calendar

Sponsor(s): SENATORS OLSON, Wielechowski, Elton, Kookesh, Ellis

REPRESENTATIVE Lynn

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to cash assistance for seniors; establishing the senior benefits payment**
2 **program; and providing for an effective date."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 * **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
5 to read:

6 LEGISLATIVE INTENT. It is the intent of the legislature that

7 (1) the Alaska senior benefits payment program established under
8 AS 47.45.301, as enacted by sec. 3 of this Act, be funded under the fiscal year 2008 public
9 assistance appropriation as a general relief assistance allocation until the Second Regular
10 Session of the Twenty-Fifth Alaska State Legislature convenes, passes an appropriation bill
11 that creates a new allocation under the public assistance appropriation, and the appropriation
12 bill becomes law; and

13 (2) during the period described in (1) of this section, the program pay the full
14 authorized benefit, notwithstanding AS 47.45.301(c) and 47.45.302(c), as enacted by sec. 3 of

1 this Act.

2 * **Sec. 2.** AS 09.38.015(a) is amended to read:

3 (a) An individual is entitled to exemption of the following property:

4 (1) a burial plot for the individual and the individual's family;

5 (2) health aids reasonably necessary to enable the individual or a
6 dependent to work or to sustain health;

7 (3) benefits paid or payable for medical, surgical, or hospital care to
8 the extent they are or will be used to pay for the care;

9 (4) an award under AS 18.67 (Violent Crimes Compensation Board) or
10 a crime victim's reparations act of another jurisdiction;

11 (5) benefits paid or payable as a longevity bonus under AS 47.45;

12 (6) compensation or benefits paid or payable and exempt under federal
13 law;

14 (7) liquor licenses granted under AS 04;

15 (8) tuition credit or savings accounts under a higher education savings
16 account established under AS 14.40.802 or an advance college tuition savings contract
17 authorized under AS 14.40.809(a);

18 (9) a permanent fund dividend to the extent allowed under
19 AS 43.23.065;

20 (10) benefits paid or payable as a senior care benefit under
21 AS 47.45.300 - 47.45.390;

22 **(11) benefits paid or payable under AS 47.45.301 - 47.45.309.**

23 * **Sec. 3.** AS 47.45 is amended by adding new sections to read:

24 **Sec. 47.45.301. Alaska senior benefits payment program.** (a) The Alaska
25 senior benefits payment program is established in the Department of Health and Social
26 Services to provide cash benefits as far as practicable under appropriations provided
27 by law.

28 (b) The department shall administer the program and adopt regulations under
29 AS 44.62 to carry out the purposes of the program.

30 (c) If the department estimates that appropriations for the program are
31 insufficient to meet the demands of the program in a fiscal year, the department may

1 reduce or eliminate the cash benefit available to recipients.

2 **Sec. 47.45.302. Cash assistance benefit.** (a) An individual is eligible for a
3 cash assistance benefit under the program if the individual

4 (1) is 65 years of age or older;

5 (2) is a resident of the state;

6 (3) has a household income that does not exceed 150 percent of the
7 annual federal poverty line for Alaska, as determined by the United States Department
8 of Health and Human Services and revised under 42 U.S.C. 9902(2);

9 (4) has not received a longevity bonus payment under AS 47.45.010 -
10 47.45.160 for the same period; and

11 (5) applies on a form provided by the department; the department may
12 use an abbreviated form for an individual who received a payment under an assistance
13 program for seniors that paid \$120 a month and was administered by the department
14 on or before the effective date of this section.

15 (b) An eligible individual shall receive a monthly cash assistance payment
16 beginning on August 1, 2007, or on the effective date of this Act, whichever is later, as
17 follows:

18 (1) \$175 if the individual's household income does not exceed 100
19 percent of the federal poverty line for Alaska;

20 (2) \$150 if the individual's household income does not exceed 135
21 percent but is above 100 percent of the federal poverty line for Alaska;

22 (3) \$100 if the individual's household income does not exceed 150
23 percent but is above 135 percent of the federal poverty line for Alaska.

24 (c) Cash assistance provided under this section is subject to appropriation.

25 **Sec. 47.45.304. Continuation of benefits.** An eligible individual who leaves
26 the state may not receive a cash benefit under AS 47.45.302 during the absence unless
27 the individual's absence is temporary and is for one of the following reasons:

28 (1) to receive medical treatment for the individual;

29 (2) to accompany the individual's family member who is receiving
30 medical treatment outside the state; or

31 (3) for a vacation, business trip, or other absence of less than 30

1 consecutive days, unless the individual has applied for and received a time extension
2 from the department for special circumstances.

3 **Sec. 47.45.306. Appeal rights.** An individual who receives a determination
4 from the department that denies, limits, or modifies a cash benefit under AS 47.45.301
5 - 47.45.309, other than a determination under AS 47.45.301(c) to reduce or eliminate
6 benefits, may request a hearing before the department under regulations adopted by
7 the department.

8 **Sec. 47.45.308. Ability to recover or recoup improper assistance or**
9 **benefits.** An individual is liable to the department for the value of assistance or
10 benefits improperly paid to the individual under AS 47.45.302 or former AS 47.45.310
11 or 47.45.320 if the improper payment was based on inaccurate or incomplete
12 information provided by the individual. In a civil action brought by the state to recover
13 from the individual the value of assistance or benefits improperly paid under
14 AS 47.45.302 or former AS 47.45.310 or 47.45.320, the state may recover from the
15 individual the costs of investigation and prosecution of the civil action, including
16 attorney fees as determined under court rules.

17 **Sec. 47.45.309. Definitions.** In AS 47.45.301 - 47.45.309,

18 (1) "department" means the Department of Health and Social Services;

19 (2) "eligible individual" means an individual who meets the
20 requirements of AS 47.45.301 - 47.45.309 and regulations adopted under those
21 statutes for eligibility for the program;

22 (3) "family member" means a person who is

23 (A) legally related to an eligible individual through marriage or
24 guardianship; or

25 (B) an eligible individual's sibling, parent, grandparent, son,
26 daughter, grandson, granddaughter, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, or first cousin;

27 (4) "program" means the senior benefits payment program established
28 in AS 47.45.301 - 47.45.309;

29 (5) "resident" has the meaning given in AS 47.25.430(a).

30 * **Sec. 4.** AS 09.38.015(a)(11); AS 47.45.301, 47.45.302, 47.45.304, 47.45.306, 47.45.308,
31 and 47.45.309 are repealed June 30, 2011.

1 * **Sec. 5.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
2 read:

3 **APPLICABILITY: SENIOR BENEFITS PAYMENT PROGRAM.** In addition to
4 meeting the eligibility requirements under AS 47.45.302 and 47.45.304, a person may not
5 receive cash assistance under the senior benefits payment program enacted by sec. 3 of this
6 Act if the person is receiving cash assistance or a prescription drug benefit under a separate
7 senior benefit program established by the Department of Health and Social Services under 7
8 AAC 47.575 - 7 AAC 47.590.

9 * **Sec. 6.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
10 read:

11 **TRANSITION: SENIOR BENEFITS PAYMENTS MADE DURING FISCAL YEAR**
12 **2008.** The provisions of AS 47.45.301(c), enacted by sec. 3 of this Act, and AS 47.45.302(c),
13 enacted by sec. 3 of this Act, do not apply to payments made under AS 47.45.301 - 47.45.309,
14 enacted by sec. 3 of this Act, by the Department of Health and Social Services for the period
15 beginning August 1, 2007, and ending on the effective date of enactment by the Twenty-Fifth
16 Alaska State Legislature of an appropriation bill that makes an allocation under the public
17 assistance appropriation to fund the senior benefits payment program, but not later than
18 June 30, 2008.

19 * **Sec. 7.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).