

Introduced: 4/8/76
Referred: Community &
Regional Affairs and Finance

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY THE COMMUNITY AND
REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

2 HOUSE BILL NO. 903

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 NINTH LEGISLATURE -- SECOND SESSION

5 A BILL

6 For an Act entitled: "An Act establishing the division of senior citizens."

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

8 * Section 1. FINDINGS OF FACT; PURPOSE. The legislature finds that the
9 rapid pace of modern life, inflation, the often debilitating infirmities of
10 advancing years, and the change in family life combine to place many senior
11 citizens of the state in a position of poverty and dependency that endangers
12 their health, safety, and welfare. These senior citizens in particular, and
13 all senior citizens in general, aged 60 years and over, deserve the assis-
14 tance and protection of the state. The purpose of this Act is to establish
15 in the Department of Community and Regional Affairs the division of senior
16 citizens, to fulfill the responsibility of the state to serve senior citizens
17 effectively on a statewide basis.

18 * Sec. 2. AS 44.47 is amended by adding new sections to read:

19 ARTICLE 8. DIVISION OF SENIOR CITIZENS.

20 Sec. 44.47.350. DIVISION OF SENIOR CITIZENS. There is established
21 within the Department of Community and Regional Affairs the division of
22 senior citizens, which shall be headed by the director of senior citi-
23 zens. The director is in the classified service appointed by the commis-
24 sioner and with the advice of the Governor's Advisory Committee on
25 Senior Citizens. The director shall have education and experience in
26 dealing with the problems of senior citizens. The director may employ,
27 within the funds appropriated to the division, staff necessary to assist
28 him in the performance of his duties.

29 Sec. 44.47.360. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE DIVISION. (a) The

1 division shall

2 (1) annually formulate a coordinated comprehensive statewide
3 plan which identifies the needs of the senior citizens in this state;

4 (2) develop and strengthen at the local level services which
5 will enable senior citizens of the state to remain independent and live
6 in their own homes or other places of residence as long as possible;

7 (3) be the main advocate of the rights and needs of senior
8 citizens in the state;

9 (4) implement programs to assist senior citizens abused,
10 neglected or destitute, living in conditions hazardous to their physical
11 health, or unable to cope with their daily affairs or provide themselves
12 with minimal subsistence and living comforts;

13 (5) provide assistance to the agencies of the political sub-
14 divisions of the state concerned with senior citizens;

15 (6) suggest methods to coordinate the services provided to
16 senior citizens by departments and agencies of the state and by the
17 political subdivisions of the state;

18 (7) provide technical assistance to private nonprofit cor-
19 porations which provide services or programs to senior citizens;

20 (8) submit a report of its activities to the governor and
21 legislature within 10 days after the first session of each legislature;

22 (9) conduct public hearings, at least annually, to receive
23 input from senior citizens in the state;

24 (10) cooperate with the division of pioneers' benefits, divi-
25 sion of retirement and benefits, Alaska State Housing Authority, divi-
26 sion of veterans' affairs, division of community services, local govern-
27 ment assistance division, state tax assessor, division of vocational
28 rehabilitation, divisions of medical assistance, mental health, public
29 health, social services, employment security, Human Rights Commission,

1 and consumer protection section of the Department of Law, to aid these
2 agencies in serving senior citizens in the state;

3 (11) obtain from any department, division or other agency of
4 the state or a political subdivision assistance and data as is necessary
5 to enable the division to carry out its responsibilities under secs.
6 350 - 360 of this chapter;

7 (12) prepare and submit a state plan in accordance with pro-
8 visions of P.L. 89-73 (July 14, 1965) as amended, and submit it for
9 approval to the United States Department of Health, Education, and
10 Welfare; the plan shall designate that the Department of Community and
11 Regional Affairs is the agency of the state which shall administer this
12 plan and the division is the single organizational unit to prepare the
13 plan.

14 (b) The division may adopt regulations necessary for carrying out
15 the provisions of secs. 350 - 360 of this chapter.

16 * Sec. 3. AS 44.19 is amended by adding new sections to read:

17 ARTICLE 10A. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SENIOR CITIZENS.

18 Sec. 44.19.860. GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF SENIOR CITIZENS.

19 (a) There is established in the Office of the Governor the Advisory
20 Committee on Senior Citizens, consisting of 13 members.

21 (b) Eleven members are appointed by the governor and serve at the
22 pleasure of the governor. These members serve a term of four years or
23 until their successors are appointed. They shall be selected from among
24 the citizens of the state who have demonstrated interest in the problems
25 of senior citizens. At least six shall be senior citizens who receive
26 aid from the state, including low income and minority persons. The
27 remaining five shall be broadly representative of the entire state.

28 (c) The two remaining members shall be ex officio members, one
29 appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and one ap-

1 pointed by the president of the senate.

2 (d) The director of the division of senior citizens shall be an ex
3 officio nonvoting member of the committee.

4 (e) A chairperson and other officers of the committee shall be
5 elected from among the members appointed by the governor.

6 Sec. 44.19.861. COMMITTEE MEETINGS; QUORUM; BYLAWS. The committee
7 shall meet at least twice annually. The chairperson working in con-
8 junction with the director of the division of senior citizens shall
9 schedule the meetings and may call additional meetings when necessary.
10 Special meetings may be called by the chairperson with at least 10 days
11 written notice to each member. Six voting members constitute a quorum.
12 The committee may adopt bylaws for the conduct of its affairs.

13 Sec. 44.19.862. COMPENSATION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS. Committee mem-
14 bers receive no compensation for service on the committee; however,
15 members are entitled to travel expenses and per diem authorized by law.

16 Sec. 44.19.863. DUTIES OF COMMITTEE. The committee shall

17 (1) advise and assist the governor and the division of senior
18 citizens on all matters relating to the special needs of older Alaskans;

19 (2) assist the director of the division of senior citizens in
20 making an appraisal of existing and future personnel needs of the
21 aging, and the adequacy of the state's efforts to meet these needs;

22 (3) review and evaluate state policies and programs affecting
23 senior citizens;

24 (4) serve as a spokesman on behalf of older Alaskans;

25 (5) inform the public about the problems and needs of the
26 aging;

27 (6) provide public forums for discussing and publicizing the
28 problems and needs of the aging, including public hearings on the state
29 plan, conferences, workshops, and other meetings;

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(7) study the interrelationships of benefit programs for the elderly operated by federal, state and local government agencies.

* Sec. 4. All powers and duties of the office of aging shall be assumed by the division of senior citizens.

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