

SB

59



SENATOR FRED DYSON

MEMORANDUM

January 24, 2005

To: Senator Gene Therriault, Chair
Senate State Affairs Committee

From: Senator Dyson *Fred Dyson*

RE: Request to Hear SB 59, PFD for Foreign Service Diplomats

I request that the Senate State Affairs Committee schedule for hearing Senate Bill 59 proposing service as a foreign service diplomat as an allowable excuse for purposes of filing for and receiving a permanent fund dividend.

I have enclosed a basic package, plus one proposed amendment. Should you wish additional information, please contact me or my aide, Lucky Shultz, at extension 2199.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Enclosures



Alaska State Legislature

Senate Majority Web: <http://www.akrepublicans.org>

Sponsor: Senator Fred Dyson
Current Version: SB 59
Contact: Lucky Shultz, 465-2199

Fact Sheet for: Senate Bill 59

Short Title: PFD ALLOWABLE ABSENCE FOR DIPLOMATS

Summary:

- Adds service as a diplomat in the U.S. Foreign Service as an allowable absence for the purpose of receiving an Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend.

Benefits:

- Entitles individuals serving overseas—who are often sacrificing comfort, security and proximity to family and friends—to the same share of the state's wealth afforded other eligible residents.

Background:

Foreign service diplomats play a critical role building relations and preserving the peace in our ally countries around the world. These well-educated, highly trained and multilingual professionals represent the American people and promote U.S. interests and values through embassies, consulates and missions to international organizations. The Foreign Service promotes free market economies; helps develop democratic institutions; enlists support in the fight against narcotics and terrorism; and ensures international cooperation on air traffic control, food and drug inspections and the use of cyberspace. Working with international institutions, diplomats seek progress in meeting global concerns about the environment, refugees, poverty, the status of women and children, education and disease control.



SENATOR FRED DYSON

Sponsor Statement

“An act relating to service as a diplomat in the United States Foreign Service as an allowable absence from the state for purposes of eligibility for permanent fund dividends; and providing for an effective date.”

Dated: January 10, 2005

Contact: Lucky Shultz (Senator Fred Dyson at 907-465-2199)

There are a few Alaskans who serve their country far away from home as diplomats with the United States Foreign Service. These individuals serve separated from the friendly, safe environs of their home for long period of time, sacrificing time with parents and other relatives, often living in less comfortable conditions than at home, and even placing themselves – and sometimes their spouses and children – in harms way in service to their country. We should not cause them to sacrifice further by requiring them to forfeit their permanent fund dividends while serving their country overseas. This bill will add service as a diplomat in the U.S. Foreign Service as an allowable absence for the purposes of filing and receiving an Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend.

History of the U. S. Foreign Service

The United States Foreign Service is often the first long-term American presence overseas. Every President and Secretary of State since the end of World War II has relied upon the critical role our diplomats play in building relational bridges to our allies and in preserving the peace. The Service's 9,500 well-educated, highly trained and multilingual professionals, represent the American people, and promote US interests and values around the world through embassies, consulates and missions to international organizations.

Today's diplomats follow in the footsteps of Americans such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams. From these first American diplomats, the diplomatic service evolved into a corps of distinguished professionals who manage America's relations with other countries around world. Eventually a separate consular service was formed to promote American business, particularly shipping, and protect sailors and Americans in others countries.

In 1790 there were only two diplomatic missions -- London and Paris -- and 10 consular posts. By 1800 the number had tripled, and in 1900 there were 41 diplomatic missions and 318 consular posts. In 1924 the two systems were merged. Today there are approximately 250 posts abroad, staffed by Foreign Service officers and specialists representing four US government agencies; The Department of State, the Agency for International Development, the Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Foreign Commercial Service.

When serving abroad, Foreign Service personnel analyze and report on political and economic developments, including humanitarian and social conditions, as well as agricultural trends. They identify export markets, negotiate international agreements, and interpret US policies and interests for foreign governments, opinion leaders and the public. They provide a wide range of services to American tourists, businessmen and residents. They issue visas to foreign nationals, provide development assistance, and arrange cultural exchanges.

The Foreign Service also addresses many of these issues through the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and in regional organizations such as NATO and the Organization of American States. Specialists include professionals in the areas of security, communications, information, and financial management, as well as medical doctors and technologists, nurse practitioners, administrative assistants, security engineers, and maintenance personnel.

Through the Foreign Service, the United States leads the world in addressing global challenges. Our Foreign Service works to promote free market economies; helps others to develop democratic institutions and enlists their support in the fight against narcotics and terrorism; and ensures international cooperation on matters such as air traffic control, food and drug inspections, and the uses of cyberspace. Working with international institutions, our diplomats seek progress in meeting global concerns about the environment, refugees, poverty, the status of women and children, education and disease control.

We're proud of the Alaskan men and women who have volunteered to temporarily leave home to serve with distinction as diplomats in the United States Foreign Service.

What Will Be the Impact on Dividends by Allowing Diplomats to Receive a PFD?

In 2003:

State population = 648,818

Number of people who filed for a dividend = 619,220 (95% of population)

Number of people who received a dividend = 594,501 (96% of filers)

Total amount disbursed = \$658,445,527.56

Dividend amount = $\$658,445,527.56 \div 594,501 = \$1,107.56$

Number of Foreign Service Diplomats = 30

Estimated number of dependents per diplomat = 3

(Assume some are single, some are married with no children, some with children)

Number eligible to file = $3 * 30 = 90$

Estimated number who will file = 95% of 90 = 85.5

Estimated number of filers qualified = 96% of 85.5 = 82

Total of number of people receiving dividend = $594,501 + 82 = 594,583$

Dividend amount = $\$658,445,527.56 \div 594,583 = \$1,107.41$

Amount of dividend reduction as result of including diplomats:

Dividend amount without diplomats = \$1,107.56

Dividend amount with diplomats = \$1,107.41

Difference = \$0.15



Applications and Payments

State of Alaska > Departments > Revenue > PFD Division > Applications and Payments

Historical Summary of Dividend Applications and Payments					
Dividend Year	State Population	Dividend Applications		Dividend Amount	Amo Disburs
		Received	Paid		
2004				\$919.84	
2003	648,818	619,220	594,501	\$1,107.56	\$658,445.52
2002	641,482	612,188	589,476	\$1,540.76	\$908,241.04
2001	633,630	608,458	586,368	\$1,850.28	\$1,084,944.98
2000	627,697	607,784	583,238	\$1,963.86	\$1,145,397.77
1999	622,000	589,738	572,877	\$1,769.84	\$1,013,900.62
1998	617,082	581,803	565,256	\$1,540.88	\$870,991.66
1997	609,655	573,057	554,769	\$1,296.54	\$719,280.19
1996	605,212	564,362	546,045	\$1,130.68	\$617,402.16
1995	601,581	563,020	541,842	\$990.30	\$536,586.13
1994	600,622	557,836	534,599	\$983.90	\$525,991.95
1993	596,906	549,066	527,946	\$949.46	\$501,263.60
1992	586,722	542,263	522,636	\$915.84	\$478,650.95
1991	569,054	533,692	512,098	\$931.34	\$476,937.35
1990	553,171	531,494	497,608	\$952.63	\$474,036.30
1989	538,900	524,272	507,547	\$873.16	\$443,169.73
1988	535,000	532,227	518,150	\$826.93	\$428,473.77
1987	541,300	535,578	529,478	\$708.19	\$374,971.02
1986	550,700	540,202	532,294	\$556.26	\$296,093.86
1985	543,900	525,145	518,479	\$404.00	\$209,465.51
1984	524,000	490,413	481,349	\$331.29	\$159,466.11
1983	499,100	465,567	457,209	\$386.15	\$176,551.25
1982	464,300	484,344	469,741	\$1000.00	\$469,741.00
Totals		12,131,729	11,743,506	\$23,009.81	\$12,570,002.58

Source
 Dividend statistics were obtained from the Permanent Fund Dividend Division's Application and Payment Status report as of January 1, 2004. Population statistics were obtained from the Alaska Department of Labor.

Provided by Senator Fred Dyson

Alaskans Serving With The U. S. Foreign Service

	State	Full Name	Employee Id	PP	GRD	Position Title Description
1	AK	GUSTAVUS, CHRISTOPHER H	100346	FP	02	INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OFFICER
2	AK	TAYLOR, STEVEN C	100460	FE	OC	INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OFFICER
3	AK	RIPLEY, ROBERT J	100961	FP	01	SEN FINANCIAL MGMTM OFFICER
4	AK	MOSLEY, NEIL G	101634	FP	03	CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
5	AK	GREEN, CHERYL L	104501	FP	02	HEALTH PRACTITIONER
6	AK	DAVNIE III, WILLIAM F	104654	FO	01	DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION/SEP
7	AK	WILLIAMS, DOMENICA G	106270	GS	07	SECRETARY (OA)
8	AK	LIEBERMAN, PATRICIA A	106387	FP	02	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OFCR
9	AK	ROMANO, DANIEL FRANK	106534	FO	02	AREA MANAGEMENT OFFICER
10	AK	REYNOLDS, SUZANN E	106829	FP	05	OFFICE MANAGER
11	AK	MCGEVNA, HELEN, NIENSTEDT	107385	FP	04	OFFICE MANAGER
12	AK	HILL JR, JOHN J	107652	FO	03	ECONOMIC OFFICER
13	AK	SELBIN, SUSAN M	108901	GS	14	ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
14	AK	STEIN, TIMOTHY ALLEN	109369	FP	02	SECURITY ENGINEERING OFFICER
15	AK	KOLB, MELVIN THOMAS	111055	GS	11	TELECOMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST
16	AK	TAYLOR, LATIFA	111157	FP	04	LEAVE WITHOUT PAY
17	AK	BELON, VALERIE LOUISE	112972	FO	02	INTL TRANS AND COM OFFICER
18	AK	JOHANNSEN, RICHARD	113164	FO	02	PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
19	AK	HOWE, WILLIAM M	113365	FO	02	PRINCIPAL OFFICER
20	AK	DAVIS, JASON L	113581	FO	02	PRINCIPAL OFFICER
21	AK	SCARBROUGH-MALEZE, BRENDA	114089	FP	03	INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SPECIAL
22	AK	DICKEY, JAMES E	114450	FP	02	HEALTH PRACTITIONER
23	AK	WENIG, MARK L	119194	FO	03	INFORMATION OFFICER
24	AK	ANDERSON, MARY LEE	119197	GS	07	SECRETARY (OA)
25	AK	SWEEK, SONJA G	119585	GS	14	EXAMINER
26	AK	SIDES, PAULETTE J	120180	FP	05	SEC (COM)
27	AK	WHITAKER, WILLIAM W	128616	FP	04	CONSULAR OFFICER
28	AK	MOORE, MEGHAN M	129220	FP	05	POLITICAL OFFICER
29	AK	SCACCO, JOHN A	130311	FP	03	ENGLISH LANGUAGE OFFICER
30	AK	MCGOWEN, KATHERINE M	112975	FP	04	CONSULAR OFFICER VISA



SENATOR FRED DYSON

MEMORANDUM

February 3, 2005

To: Senator Gene Therriault, Chair
Senate State Affairs Committee

From: Senator Dyson *Fred Dyson*

RE: Letter of Support for Hear SB 59, PFD for Foreign Service Diplomats

Forward for members of the Senate State Affairs Committee to consider is a letter of support for referenced bill. An Alaskan since 1993, Mr. Wenig has just purchased a house in Representative Les Gara's district. He has served with the Foreign Service in Ethiopia and Romania. He and his wife are now preparing for service with the U.S. Consulate in Leipzig, Germany.

As you and your committee members consider this bill, please remember that this is about individuals -- proud Americans and Alaskans, our constituents, who often voluntarily place their health and lives, as well as those of their families, at risk to serve.

Enclosure

WBS/JKSW
SB 59 File

Senator Fred Dyson
State Capitol, Room 121
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

420 7th Street N.W. Apt 712
Washington, DC 20004

RECEIVED
JAN 31 2005

January 22, 2005

Dear Senator Dyson,

I am writing to you to support your efforts, through Senate Bill 59, to create an allowable absence category for Permanent Dividend Fund (PFD) purposes for Foreign Service Officers who serve our country overseas. I was pleased to learn of your bill through my House Representative Les Gara, and wanted to lend my support, since I have been a Foreign Service Officer since 1994, and a voting Alaska resident starting from the year before, when I first arrived in Alaska.

I was a television reporter for Channel 2 News KTUU in Anchorage in 1993-94, and covered the Alaska Legislature from Juneau during the 1994 session. I was accepted into the Foreign Service in September of 1994, and joined the United States Information Agency (USIA), which became part of the U.S. Department of State in 1999. From the time I joined I have spent every Home Leave in Alaska, have voted in every major election there by absentee ballot, and have every intention of returning to the state when my Foreign Service career is completed. As evidence, I have just bought a house in Anchorage in Les Gara's district.

My service has been mainly in tough places. My wife and I lived 3 years in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 18 months on the isolated island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, and have just completed 3 years at the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest, Romania. Our next assignment will be in Leipzig, in the former East Germany, where I'll be Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Consulate. We are now both studying German full time here in Washington, until our departure this summer.

I tell you all of this because I have been very familiar with this issue since 1994, when I surprisingly learned that FSOs were not in the "allowable absence" category for the PFD. When Loren Leman was in the Senate, he tried to get us included in it the late 1990s, but that vote failed. I had written to former Gov. Knowles about it, and he turned us down, with one of his staffers telling me how good we all had it overseas. I had to tell her things weren't so easy in Ethiopia, or for my colleagues in other tough places.

The fact is there are only about 9 Foreign Service Officers who claim Alaska as their official domicile. I know this because we sent out announcements before the previous Senate vote asking for interested parties, and I did some research on the number. I believe this has been followed up upon by others more recently and 9 is the number we keep hearing. With that small number, we don't have a meaningful constituency as do

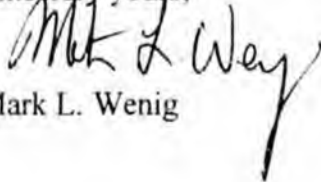
members of the military. But we also serve our country in very difficult places, countries with bad food, dangerous streets and highways, and harsh climates. And in terms of the times in which we now live and the threat of terrorism, I don't think I need to put too fine a point on how just living overseas these days carries its own risks.

None of us are looking for a free ride here. I know very well that the Legislature for years has not wanted to expand the pool of eligible PFD recipients. But I also know it's simply the right thing to do to allow Foreign Service Officers, and Peace Corps volunteers for that matter, and their families, who live in the State of Alaska when they are not in the service of our country, to be eligible for the PFD.

I would be happy to provide any additional information you may need to assure passage in the Alaska Senate, and I am hoping that someone in the House will introduce similar legislation. I am also copying Senator Stevens' office on this letter, in order to try and get his support behind this measure. Even though it's strictly a state issue, Senator Stevens knows well what Foreign Service Officers do in the field, and I think having his support would be helpful.

On behalf of my Alaska Foreign Service colleagues and me, thank you again for taking the initiative to do what is right.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark L. Wenig". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Mark L. Wenig

Cc: Senator Ted Stevens,
R-Alaska