

HB

287

<TARGET><BILL>HB 287</BILL><SUBJECT>HB
287</SUBJECT><COMM>HJUD27</COMM></TARGET>

Member

Standing Committees:
Judiciary
Rules
State Affairs
Transportation

Alaska State Legislature

House of Representatives



Representative Max F. Gruenberg, Jr.
House District 20
Anchorage (Mountain View, Russian Jack, East Anchorage)
House Minority Floor Leader

Interim:
716 W 4th Avenue, Rm 350
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2133
Phone: (907) 269-0123
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Session:
Alaska State Capitol, Rm 110
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-4940
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Email:
Rep.Max.Gruenberg@legis.state.ak.us



TO: Representative Carl Gatto, Chair
House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Representative Max F. Gruenberg, Jr. *MFG*

DATE: February 7, 2012

RE: HB 287: Absentee Voting

Please consider this memorandum as a request for the House Judiciary Committee to schedule a hearing on House Bill 287. Accompanying this memo are the following documents:

- Sponsor Statement
- Sectional Analysis
- Explanation of Changes
- CS for House Bill 287(STA) (27-LS1211\E)
- Letters of Support from
 - Alaska Commission on Aging
 - AARP
- Expected witnesses include:
 - Gail Fenumiai, Director, Division of Elections
 - Libby Bakalar, Department of Law Elections specialist
 - Pat Luby, AARP
- Teleconference sites:
 - Anchorage LIO

Thank you for considering my request for a hearing on House Bill 287. Please contact my legislative aide, Ted Madsen, at 465-2840 with any questions.

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CS for House Bill 287 (27-LS1211\E):

"An Act providing that an absentee ballot application submitted by a voter or on behalf of a voter is valid through the following two general elections; providing that an absentee ballot application for a voter who submits an absentee ballot application and then votes an absentee ballot is valid through the two general elections following the election at which the ballot is cast; and providing for an effective date."

Sponsor Statement

Currently, most voters must request a ballot each time they vote by mail. Under AS 15.20.081(i) uniformed service members and qualified overseas voters receive a ballot for the following two general elections after they apply for a by mail ballot. This bill will extend the same right to all Alaskans. Under the bill, a vote by mail ballot application from a qualified voter will be valid through the next two general elections. Furthermore, each time the voter casts a ballot by mail, the application will continue to be valid through the next two general elections. If the voter casts a ballot in a manner other than by mail, the vote by mail application will no longer be valid. Additionally, if the by mail ballot is returned to the Division of Elections as "undeliverable," the division need no longer send a ballot to that voter at that address.

(i) An absentee ballot application submitted by an absent uniformed services voter or by an absent overseas voter qualifying under AS 15.05.011 is valid through the next two regularly scheduled general elections for federal office after the date the application is submitted. In this subsection, "absent uniformed services voter" has the meaning given in 42 U.S.C. 1973ff-6.

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Sectional Analysis

- **Section 1:**
 - Repeals and reenacts AS 15.20.081(i) to allow all voters to receive mail ballots for two general election cycles. Should the voter cast a mail ballot, he/she will receive mail ballots through the next two general elections.
- **Section 2:**
 - Provides an effective date of January 1, 2013

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CS for House Bill 287 (27-LS-1211\E):

"An Act providing that an absentee ballot application submitted by a voter or on behalf of a voter is valid through the following two general elections; providing that an absentee ballot application for a voter who submits an absentee ballot application and then votes an absentee ballot is valid through the two general elections following the election at which the ballot is cast; and providing for an effective date."

Explanation of Changes from "B" version to "E" version

Section 1 of the "B" version was deleted on the recommendation of the Department of Revenue.

Section 2 of the "B" version (now section 1 of the "E" version) has been modified to allow for the repeal and reenactment of that subsection to remove language that would otherwise be redundant.

Section 2 of the "E" version has been added to provide an effective date of January 1, 2013. This was done on the recommendation of the Division of Elections, so as not to place an undue burden upon the division during the 2012 election cycle.

Additionally, the bill title was made more specific.

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

SEAN PARNELL, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 110693
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0693
PHONE: (907) 465-3250
FAX: (907) 465-1398

Alaska Commission on Aging

February 6, 2012

The Honorable Carl Gatto, Chair
The Honorable Steve Thompson, Vice Chair
House Judiciary Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Rooms 118 & 428
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Subject: Support for HB 287, Absentee Voting

Dear Chair Gatto & Vice Chair Thompson:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is pleased to offer our support for HB 287 that would allow qualified citizens to have absentee voting status for a period of two elections. Representative Max Gruenberg authored the bill and it is co-sponsored by Representative Petersen.

The right to vote and have a voice is an undeniable right for every United States citizen. Getting to the polls to vote can be a problem for elderly individuals with physical disabilities, the homebound, rural elders with limited access to transportation, or disabled Alaskan adults of any age. HB 287 will help make voting easier by allowing them to qualify for absentee voting status for a period of two elections.

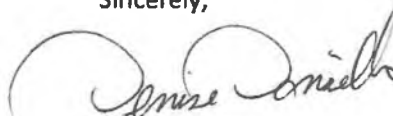
The ACoA supports HB 287 to give absentee voting rights to individuals who have disabilities that prevent them from going to the polls to vote. Thank you for your support of this important legislation. Please feel free to contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's executive director, by phone (465-4879) or email (denise.daniello@alaska.gov) should you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Sharon Howerton-Clark
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,



Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director

Cc: Representative Keller
Representative Lynn
Representative Pruitt
Representative Holmes

Representative Chenault
Representative Gruenberg
Representative Petersen



AARP Alaska
3601 C Street
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January 31, 2012

Honorable Bob Lynn, Chair
House State Affairs Committee
Alaska Capitol, Room 108
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Chair Lynn:

RE: HB 287 (Gruenberg)--Support

On behalf of the AARP members in Alaska, we encourage you and your colleagues on the House State Affairs Committee to support HB 287, authored by your Committee colleague Representative Max Gruenberg.

HB 287 would allow qualified citizens to have absentee voting status for a period of two elections. AARP believes the right to vote is the most basic of all political rights.

Normal aging and disabilities often interfere with a citizen's ability to exercise his or her right to vote. If someone has a physical problem that prevents their ability to vote on a regular basis and they qualify for an absentee ballot, it will be much easier if they can be given absentee voting rights for two more elections, if they so choose.

AARP recommends an "AYE" vote on HB 287.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marie Darlin, Coordinator
AARP Capital City Task Force
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506
Juneau, AK 99801
586-3637 (voice)
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Vice-Chair Wes Keller
Representative Peggy Wilson
Representative Paul Seaton
Representative Max Gruenberg
Representative Pete Peterson
Representative Kyle Johansen

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House Bill 287¹: **An Act Relating to Absentee Voting** **Sponsor Statement**

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¹ On the recommendation of the Department of Revenue, Section 1 of the bill has been removed in a blank CS.