

HB

77

<TARGET><BILL>HB 77</BILL><SUBJECT>HB
77</SUBJECT><COMM>HSTA29</COMM></TARGET>

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 77(STA)
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES THOMPSON, Gara, Kawasaki, Kito, Saddler, Vazquez, Lynn, Stutes, Wilson, Wool

A BILL
FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to guidelines for drivers when encountering or being stopped by a**
2 **peace officer; relating to driver's license examinations; and relating to a voluntary**
3 **disability designation on a state identification card and a driver's license."**

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

5 *** Section 1.** AS 18.65.310 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

6 (m) The department shall provide a method for a person to designate
7 voluntarily on an identification card that the person has a disability, including a
8 cognitive, mental, neurological, or physical disability, or a combination of them. The
9 department shall create a discreet symbol to place on the identification card of a
10 person requesting the designation. The method must provide a means by which the
11 person may cancel the designation. The department may not charge a fee solely for the
12 designation. To receive the designation, the person shall provide proof of the disability
13 from a person licensed as a physician or physician assistant under AS 08.64, as an
14 advanced nurse practitioner under AS 08.68, or as a licensed psychologist under

1 AS 08.86. Notwithstanding (a) of this section, the department may charge a fee of \$5
2 for replacement of a valid identification card with a new identification card with a
3 disability designation and may charge a fee of \$5 for replacement of an identification
4 card with a disability designation with a new identification card without a disability
5 designation.

6 * **Sec. 2.** AS 28.05.011 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

7 (c) If the department publishes a manual related to the safe and lawful
8 operation of a motor vehicle, the manual must include the duties and responsibilities
9 of drivers when encountering or being stopped by a peace officer.

10 * **Sec. 3.** AS 28.15.081(a) is amended to read:

11 (a) The department shall examine every applicant for a driver's license. The
12 examination must include a test of the applicant's (1) eyesight, (2) ability to read and
13 understand official traffic control devices, (3) knowledge of safe driving practices, (4)
14 knowledge of the effects of alcohol and drugs on drivers and the dangers of driving
15 under the influence of alcohol or drugs, (5) knowledge of the laws on driving while
16 under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, inhalant, or controlled substance, (6)
17 knowledge of the laws on financial responsibility and mandatory motor vehicle
18 liability insurance, [AND] (7) knowledge of the traffic laws and regulations of the
19 state, and (8) knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of drivers when
20 encountering or being stopped by a peace officer. The examination may include a
21 demonstration of ability to exercise ordinary and reasonable control in the driving of a
22 motor vehicle of the type and general class of vehicles for which the applicant seeks a
23 license. However, an applicant who has not been previously issued a driver's license
24 by this or another jurisdiction shall demonstrate ability and shall present medical
25 information that the department reasonably requires to determine fitness to safely
26 drive a motor vehicle of the type and general class of vehicles for which the applicant
27 seeks a license.

28 * **Sec. 4.** AS 28.15.111 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

29 (d) The department shall provide a method, at the time that a driver's license is
30 issued, by which the owner of a license may voluntarily designate on the license that
31 the owner has a disability, including a cognitive, mental, neurological, or physical

1 disability, or a combination of them. The department shall create a discreet symbol to
2 place on the driver's license of a person requesting the designation. The method must
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6 assistant under AS 08.64, as an advanced nurse practitioner under AS 08.68, or as a
7 licensed psychologist under AS 08.86. The department may charge a fee of \$5 for
8 replacement of a valid driver's license with a new driver's license with a disability
9 designation and may charge a fee of \$5 for replacement of a driver's license with a
10 disability designation with a new driver's license without a disability designation.

Nancy Manly

From: Laughlin, Wilda J (HSS) <wilda.laughlin@alaska.gov>
Sent: Monday, April 06, 2015 3:24 PM
To: Nancy Manly; Jane Pierson
Cc: Salerno, Angela M (HSS)
Subject: House STA 4/7/15

Please be advised of the following HSS representation at the House Judiciary Committee hearing 4/7:

- HB 77, disability ID license and training rqmnts: Angela Salerno, Division of Senior & Disabilities Services Policy & Program Development Manager, available for questions

Wilda J. Laughlin
Program Coordinator, Office of the Commissioner
Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
Phone (907) 465-1613
Fax (907) 465-3068
Cell (907) 723-3802

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29-LS0072/H
Martin
3/26/15

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 77()

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY

**Offered:
Referred:**

**Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES THOMPSON, Gara, Kawasaki, Kito, Saddler, Vazquez, Lynn, Stutes,
Wilson, Wool**

A BILL

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2 **peace officer; relating to driver's license examinations; and relating to a voluntary**
3 **disability designation on a state identification card and a driver's license."**

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10 person requesting the designation. The method must provide a means by which the
11 person may cancel the designation. The department may not charge a fee solely for the
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2 for replacement of a valid identification card with a new identification card with a
3 disability designation and may charge a fee of \$5 for replacement of an identification
4 card with a disability designation with a new identification card without a disability
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8 operation of a motor vehicle, the manual must include the duties and responsibilities
9 of drivers when encountering or being stopped by a peace officer.

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12 examination must include a test of the applicant's (1) eyesight, (2) ability to read and
13 understand official traffic control devices, (3) knowledge of safe driving practices, (4)
14 knowledge of the effects of alcohol and drugs on drivers and the dangers of driving
15 under the influence of alcohol or drugs, (5) knowledge of the laws on driving while
16 under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, inhalant, or controlled substance, (6)
17 knowledge of the laws on financial responsibility and mandatory motor vehicle
18 liability insurance, [AND] (7) knowledge of the traffic laws and regulations of the
19 state, and (8) knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of drivers when
20 encountering or being stopped by a peace officer. The examination may include a
21 demonstration of ability to exercise ordinary and reasonable control in the driving of a
22 motor vehicle of the type and general class of vehicles for which the applicant seeks a
23 license. However, an applicant who has not been previously issued a driver's license
24 by this or another jurisdiction shall demonstrate ability and shall present medical
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1 disability, or a combination of them. The department shall create a discreet symbol to
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6 assistant under AS 08.64, as an advanced nurse practitioner under AS 08.68, or as a
7 licensed psychologist under AS 08.86. The department may charge a fee of \$5 for
8 replacement of a valid driver's license with a new driver's license with a disability
9 designation and may charge a fee of \$5 for replacement of a driver's license with a
10 disability designation with a new driver's license without a disability designation.

Nancy Manly

From: Jane Pierson
Sent: Thursday, April 02, 2015 11:22 AM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: HB 77 CS version 29_LS0072\H
Attachments: Scanned from Capitol 5th Floor Room 523 Xerox ColorQube001.pdf

Nancy,

The only change is that section 1 was removed from the bill and will be resolved in regulation.

Thank you,

Jane

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Session:

State Capitol Building,
Room 511
Juneau, Alaska 99801-2186
Phone (907) 465-3004
Toll Free: (877) 465-3004



Interim:

1292 Sadler Way
State Capitol Building
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
Phone: (907) 452-1088

REPRESENTATIVE STEVE THOMPSON DISTRICT 2

Explanation of Changes HB 77 version W to version H

“An Act relating to training regarding disabilities for police officers, probation officers, parole officers, correctional officers, and village public safety officers; relating to guidelines for drivers when encountering or being stopped by a peace officer; relating to drivers’ license examinations; and relating to voluntary disability designation on a state identification card and driver’s license.”

Section 1 from HB 77 version W has been removed.

The Alaska Police Standards Council is currently working on the training component and the regulations should be adopted by July 1, 2016. This disability training component will be part of the required curriculum for Alaska police officers, correctional officers, and parole officers. The curriculum will focus on training the officers to recognize and interact appropriately with persons with disabilities, as well as familiarize the officers with resources that are available to those with hidden disabilities.

Section 2 from HB 77 original version W now becomes the new Section 1.

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Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
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REPRESENTATIVE STEVE THOMPSON DISTRICT 2

Sectional Summary HB 77 version H

“An Act relating to training regarding disabilities for police officers, probation officers, parole officers, correctional officers, and village public safety officers; relating to guidelines for drivers when encountering or being stopped by a peace officer; relating to drivers’ license examinations; and relating to voluntary disability designation on a state identification card and driver’s license.”

Section 1. Adds a new subsection to AS 18.65.310. Providing that a person may voluntarily designate on their state identification card that the person has a disability and the proof required for the designation.

Section 2. Amends AS 18.65.670(c) to include disability training to village public safety officers.

Section 3. Amends AS 28.05.011 by adding a new subsection to include the duties and responsibilities of drivers when encountering or being stopped by a peace officer be included in the driver’s manual.

Section 4. Amends AS 28.15.081(a) to include the duties and responsibilities of drivers when encountering or being stopped by a peace officer on the driver’s test examination.

Section 5. AS 28.15.111 is amended by adding a new subsection (d), providing that a person may voluntarily designate on their Alaska Driver’s License a disability designation, proof required for the designation and fees that may be charged.

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2015 Legislative Session

Bill Version: HB 77
Fiscal Note Number: _____
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier: HB077-DPS-PSC-4-3-15
Title: DISABILITY:ID/LICENSE AND TRAINING RQMTS.
Sponsor: THOMPSON
Requester: House State Affairs

Department: Department of Public Safety
Appropriation: Alaska Police Standards Council
Allocation: Alaska Police Standards Council
OMB Component Number: 519

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2016	Included in	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
	Appropriation Requested	Governor's FY2016 Request	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2016	FY 2016					
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues							
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Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2015) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2016) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? Yes
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed? 07/01/16

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Not applicable, initial version.

Prepared By:	Dean Williams, Special Assistant	Phone:	(907)269-7661
Division:	Office of the Commissioner	Date:	04/03/2015 11:00 AM
Approved By:	Gary Folger, Commissioner	Date:	04/03/15
Agency:	Public Safety		

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 77

Analysis

This bill requires the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC) to amend its training curriculum requirements for Alaska police officers, correctional officers, probation officers, and parole officers to include training in recognizing people with disabilities, appropriate interactions with persons with disabilities, and resources available to those interacting with persons with disabilities.

This bill will result in the need for APSC to amend its regulations to incorporate the additional training requirements. It is expected that regulations would be adopted no later than July 1, 2016.

No fiscal impact to APSC is anticipated.



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of
Health and Social Services

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

P.O. Box 110693
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0693
Main: 907.465.3250
Fax: 907.465.1398

March 20, 2015

Representative Steve Thompson
Alaska Capitol, Room 515
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Regarding: Support HB 77, Training Regarding Non-Apparent Disabilities & Voluntary Disability Designations on State Identification Cards and Driver's License

Dear Representative Thompson:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is pleased to express our support for HB 77, as authored by you and co-sponsored by Representatives Gara, Kawasaki, Kito, Saddler, and Vazquez to (1) establish a training program for public safety officers to know how to recognize and interact appropriately with a person who has a non-apparent disability, and (2) implement a voluntary identification system for persons with such disabilities on their state identification cards and driver's license. Although this legislation addresses the needs of all Alaskans with non-apparent disabilities, the ACoA will focus on the "safety" benefits we perceive for older Alaskans from this legislation.

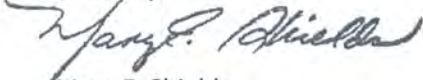
Older people who experience concealed disabilities are often impacted by the manner in which they respond to sensory stimuli and process information. This behavior can sometimes be misunderstood as resulting from being under the influence of an intoxicant or as purposefully disruptive. For example, hearing loss can result in problems understanding the spoken language and performing complex tasks. Those with anxiety disorders have a tendency to selectively focus and interpret even ambiguous events in a highly threatening way – which can be observed as disruptive behavior. Wandering outside unattended and unprotected is a significant personal safety risk for persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia. Not only can these disabling conditions affect an individual's personal safety, they may impact the outcome of an encounter with a public safety officer.

The Commission agrees that personal safety and dignity of persons with concealed disabilities could be greatly improved by having trained public safety officers able to recognize the signs of their disabilities and appropriately, respectfully interact with these individuals. The Commission also recommends that disability awareness training be offered to all first responders, including fire fighters and paramedics, who are typically the first to arrive on the scene of an emergency and provide help to vulnerable persons. Finally, we recommend that disability awareness training would help to further implement the "silver alert" system by promoting greater awareness among public safety officers about the needs of Alaskans with Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive impairments who have a tendency to wander and become lost, sometimes finding themselves in life-threatening situations. Public safety officers trained

in disability awareness would be better able to recognize the signs of a person with dementia in the community and respond appropriately to bring that person to safety.

Thank you for your leadership on HB 77 to enhance public safety awareness, improve communication, and increase protection for vulnerable Alaskans with hidden disabilities.

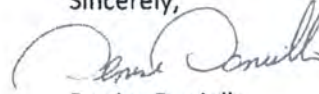
Sincerely,



Mary E. Shields
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Cc: Representative Les Gara
Representative Scott Kawasaki
Representative Sam Kito
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Liz Vazquez

Sincerely,



Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director

Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Louise Stutes
Representative Tammie Wilson
Representative Adam Wool

Nancy Manly

From: Rep. Bob Lynn
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 10:57 AM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: FW: HB77

Esther Mielke

Office of Representative Bob Lynn
Session Office Phone: 907-465-4931
Toll-Free: 800-870-4931
*State Capitol Room 108
Juneau AK, 99801*

From: Art Delaune [mailto:adelaune@AccessAlaska.net]
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2015 9:58 AM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB77

Good Morning Representative Lynn,

Thank you for hearing HB77 in your committee last Thursday and, more importantly, thank you for co-sponsoring the bill. I facilitate the advocacy group, WallBusters, here in Fairbanks. Our group is the creator and the driving force behind HB77. We are very thankful for your support and co-sponsorship of HB77. The WallBusters is a grassroots organization comprised of people with various disabilities, caregivers and friends and your support of this bill means a great deal to all of us.

Thanks Again,

Art Delaune

Art Delaune

Independent Living Services Supervisor

Access Alaska

526 Gaffney Road, Suite 100

Fairbanks, AK 99701

(907) 479-7940

(907) 474-4052 Fax

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REPRESENTATIVE STEVE THOMPSON

Sponsor Statement HB 77 - "An Act relating to training regarding disabilities for police officers, probation officers, parole officers, correctional officers, and village public safety officers; relating to guidelines for drivers when encountering or being stopped by a peace officer; relating to driver's license examinations; and relating to a voluntary disability designation on a state identification card and a driver's license."

When people with non-apparent disabilities interact with peace officers and corrections officers, elements of their disabilities often brush against officers' protocols and may result in serious misunderstanding or even tragedy. The goal of HB77 is to improve communications between law enforcement and corrections professionals who interact with people who have non-apparent disabilities, whether these disabled individuals encounter the "systems" as victims, witnesses, or alleged perpetrators.

The first part of the HB 77 focuses on training regarding interactions with people with non-apparent disabilities. The bill requires the implementation of a non-apparent disability awareness training component for Alaska peace officers, corrections officers and parole/probation officers. The Alaska Police Standards Council, with input from non-profit disability organizations, will establish a basic course at the academy level. The training will instruct officers in how to engage in appropriate interactions with individuals who experience a non-apparent disability. The course of instruction and the guidelines will stress understanding of the different manner in which people with non-apparent disabilities process sensory stimuli and language.

The bill also requires that the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to add a section to the Passenger Vehicle Driver Handbook that instructs drivers as to their responsibilities when interacting with a peace officer. Basic instruction will be added to the driver's manual and one or more questions will be added to the written driver's license test. Additionally, awareness training for both police officers and the public will increase the safety of most encounters.

Another component of HB 77 is to implement a statewide voluntary identification system where a discrete marker will be placed on an Alaska Driver's license or an Alaska ID card. The marker would indicate that the individual has a disability that may not be apparent. The police or corrections officer, having taken the disability awareness training, will be able to understand and more appropriately interact with the individual.

If a person's disability is not recognized during an encounter, it may affect the outcome of that encounter. This bill would push to improve communication between peace officers, corrections officers and parole/probation officers when interacting with people who have non-apparent disabilities. The hope of this bill is to reduce the potential for tragic encounters in our state.

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Juneau, Alaska 99801-2186
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Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
Phone: (907) 452-1088

REPRESENTATIVE STEVE THOMPSON DISTRICT 2

Sectional Summary HB 77

“An Act relating to training regarding disabilities for police officers, probation officers, parole officers, correctional officers, and village public safety officers; relating to guidelines for drivers when encountering or being stopped by a peace officer; relating to drivers’ license examinations; and relating to voluntary disability designation on a state identification card and driver’s license.”

Section 1. Amends AS 18.65.220 to expand the police standards council’s training program to include training in recognizing and interacting with a person with disabilities, as well as familiarization with resources that are available to those with hidden disabilities.

Section 2. Adds a new subsection to AS 18.65.310. Providing that a person may voluntarily designate on their state identification card that the person has a disability and the proof required for the designation.

Section 3. Amends AS 18.65.670(c) to include disability training to village public safety officers.

Section 4. Amends AS 28.05.011 by adding a new subsection to include the duties and responsibilities of drivers when encountering or being stopped by a peace officer be included in the driver’s manual.

Section 5. Amends AS 28.15.081(a) to include the duties and responsibilities of drivers when encountering or being stopped by a peace officer on the driver’s test examination.

Section 6. AS 28.15.111 is amended by adding a new subsection (d), providing that a person may voluntarily designate on their Alaska Driver’s License a disability designation, proof required for the designation and fees that may be charged.

Training in recognizing non-apparent disabilities.

Provide training that instructs peace officers in the recognition of a person with a non-apparent disability and appropriate interaction with a person with a non-apparent disability.

Stress positive responses to such individuals, de-escalating potentially dangerous situations, and understanding of the different manner in which such individuals' process sensory stimuli and language, and appropriate methods of interrogation. **Where appropriate, the training presenters shall include experts on non-apparent disabilities.**

Techniques for differentiating between an individual with a non-apparent disability from an individual who is belligerent, uncooperative, or otherwise displaying traits similar to the characteristics of an individual with a non-apparent disability.

Some Non Apparent disabilities:

Cognitive:

Autism, FASD, Intellectual Disability, Aspergers, etc.

Mayhave/be:

- Limited vocabulary
- Difficulty understanding/answering questions
- Mimics answers/responses
- Unable to communicate events clearly in his/her own words
- Unable to understand complicated instructions or abstract concepts
- Not understand consequences of situations
- Unaware of seriousness of situations
- Easily led or persuaded by others
- Naïve eagerness to confess or please authority figures
- Unaware of social norms and appropriate social behavior
- Acts younger than actual age, may display childlike behavior
- Displays low frustration tolerance and/or poor impulse control
- "Act out", become emotional, or try to leave if under pressure
- Difficulty performing tasks
- Inability to read or write
- Inability to tell time
- Difficulty staying focused and easily distracted
- Awkward/poor motor coordination
- Difficulty recalling facts/details
- Impulsive actions (try to run, fight, etc.)
- Over-willing to confess
- Hides disability
- Says what others want to hear
- Frustration

- Not make eye contact. Don't misinterpret limited eye contact as deceit.
- Not talk (nonverbal).
- Communicate with sign language, picture cards or gestures
- Have a delayed response to your question.
- May be prone to seizures.
- Exhibit odd behaviors such as flapping hands or pacing. Don't try to stop these behaviors which may be the person's way of calming him/her

Traumatic or Acquired Brain Injury (TABI)

- Caused by external forces or internal events that impair physical, neurological, psychological, intellectual, emotional, and behavioral functioning.
- Changes following a brain injury can affect how the person experiences life, interprets events and responds behaviorally.
- Has trouble processing or remembering information, may not follow instructions and may be perceived as belligerent or unmotivated.
- Experiences headaches and fatigue, level of frustration tolerance may be low causing them to act out in anger.
- Has difficulty perceiving how their behavior affects others, important relationships can become strained.
- Has difficulty with impulsivity, he may do or say things that are not always socially appropriate (e.g. sexual acting out).
- Experiences emotional volatility, he may have outbursts of anger, aggression, or crying.

Mental Health

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Verbal Cues

Illogical thoughts
 Sharing a combination of unrelated or abstract topics
 Expressing thoughts of greatness
 Indicating ideas of being harassed or threatened
 Exhibiting a preoccupation with death, germs, guilt, or other similar ideas
 Unusual speech patterns
 Nonsensical speech or chatter
 Word repetition
 Pressured speech
 Extremely slow speaking
 Verbal hostility or excitement
 Talking excitedly or loudly
 Being argumentative, belligerent, or unreasonably hostile
 Threatening harm to self or others

Behavioral Cues

- Physical appearance
- Inappropriate to environment
- Bizarre clothing or makeup (taking into account current trends)
- Bodily movements
- Strange postures or mannerisms
- Lethargic, sluggish movements
- Pacing, agitation
- Repetitive, ritualistic movements
- Seeing, smelling, or hearing things that cannot be confirmed
- Confusion about or unawareness of surroundings
- Lack of emotional response
- Causing injury to self
- Nonverbal expressions of sadness or grief
- Inappropriate emotional reactions
- Overreacting to situations in an overly angry or frightening way
- Reacting with the opposite of expected emotion

Environmental Cues

- Decorations-Strange trimmings, misuse of household items
- Waste matter/trash
- “Packratting” – accumulation of trash
- Presence of feces or urine on the floor or walls
- Childish objects

Posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, can occur after someone goes through, sees, or learns about a traumatic event:

- feel tense or afraid
- be agitated and jumpy
- feel on alert
- overreact to small misunderstandings
- drink, use drugs, or smoke too much
- drive aggressively
- avoid certain people or situations
- hyper vigilance, or a heightened awareness of external stimuli like police lights or sirens

Dear Representative Thompson,

Thank you for sponsoring HB77, the Disability Training and ID Bill. I strongly support HB77 because this bill will make sure that law enforcement professionals will be educated about disabilities and how a disability affects a person's everyday life. These professionals will become better equipped to interact with people who experience either an apparent or non-apparent disability.

I also support HB77 because it will enable people who experience a disability to voluntarily have a discreet marker placed on an Alaska Driver's License or ID card. This marker will help a professional recognize that the person in front of them has a disability, even though it may not be initially apparent to the professional.

I am a Wallbuster and have been working with other Wallbuster's and your office from the beginning on this legislation. I have always believed in its importance and need but in 2014 had a personal experience that really brought the reality of the changes that needed to be made to my own doorstep. It became very apparent to me the need for additional training for law enforcement and how they interact with people with disabilities, especially non apparent disabilities. Because of a domestic issues state troopers were called to our home in 2014 in the middle of the night. I told the 911 operator that my husband was legally blind and repeated the same thing to the two troopers that responded to the call and came to our home. At no time did the officers acknowledge my information or ask or act in any way to show they understood how this disability would affect the way they communicated with my husband during the event that took place. I believe the interaction had a potential to become explosive due to this lack of understanding/action.

I believe this bill legislation will go a long way toward safer encounters between people with disabilities and law enforcement. The training will help officers better understand and safeguard the right of people with disabilities. HB77 will help improve the lives of Alaskans with both apparent and non-apparent disabilities and improve the quality of law enforcement officers throughout the state.

Again, thank you for your support,

Juanita Webb

Dear Representative Thompson,

Thank you for sponsoring HB77, the Disability Training and ID Bill. I strongly support HB77 because this bill will make sure that law enforcement professionals will be educated about disabilities and how a disability affects a person's everyday life. These professionals will become better equipped to interact with people who experience either an apparent or non-apparent disability.

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Again, thank you for your support,

I support the creation of this legislation in defense of citizens afflicted with a variety of hidden disabilities. I hope it will also increase awareness and understanding of the occasional special circumstance those with disabilities, obvious or not, must contend. Thank you for supporting HB77.

Franky Rwin 2-19-15

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2015 Legislative Session

Bill Version: HB 77
Fiscal Note Number: _____
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier: HB077-DOA-DMV-03-20-15
Title: DISABILITY:ID/LICENSE AND TRAINING RQMTS.
Sponsor: THOMPSON
Requester: House State Affairs

Department: Department of Administration
Appropriation: Motor Vehicles
Allocation: Motor Vehicles
OMB Component Number: 2348

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2016 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2016 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2016	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues							
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Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2015) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2016) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? No
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Not applicable, Initial version.

Prepared By: Amy Erickson, Director
Division: Motor Vehicles
Approved By: Sheldon Fisher, Commissioner
Agency: Department of Administration

Phone: (907)269-5574
Date: 03/20/2015 09:00 AM
Date: 03/20/15

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 77

Analysis

This bill will require DMV to add a voluntary designator to an identification card or driver's license that will signify the person has a cognitive, mental, neurological, or physical disability. DMV may charge a \$5 fee, in addition to the standard duplicate identification card or driver's license fee, to add or remove the designator.

DMV will also need to update the driver manual to include the duties and responsibilities of drivers with an identified disability when they encounter a law enforcement agent.

DMV can provide these services for little additional resources. Therefore, a zero fiscal note is submitted.

How Misunderstanding Disability Leads to Police Violence

Americans with disabilities are victims of violent crimes at nearly three times the rate of their peers.

David M. Perry and Lawrence Carter-Long May 6 2014, 11:03 AM ET

Ethan Saylor died of asphyxia on Jan. 12, 2013, after three sheriff's deputies tried to forcibly remove him from a movie theater. (Saylor Family/AP)

On April 29, the Senate Judiciary Committee met to discuss law-enforcement responses to disabled Americans. The committee, chaired by democratic Senator Dick Durbin from Illinois, met against the backdrop of the death of James Boyd, a homeless man who had been in and out of psychiatric hospitals, shot to death by police in Albuquerque, and Ethan Saylor, a man with Down syndrome who suffocated to death while handcuffed by off-duty deputies working as security guards in a Maryland movie theater. They are just two of many people with psychiatric or intellectual disabilities killed by law enforcement.

In the face of these deaths and many others, the senators and witnesses all argued that something must be done. Suggested solutions included increased funding and support for Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) training and the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act, which would improve access to mental health services for people who come into contact with the criminal justice system and provide law enforcement officers tools to identify and respond to mental-health issues.

While the hearing focused on troubling, high profile, and tragic cases such as those of Boyd and Saylor, the scope of the problem extends to virtually every kind of disability. Encounters with police have also taken an unnecessarily violent turn for people with disabilities that are not psychiatric or intellectual, including conditions that are physical or sensory:

- In 2008, Ernest Griglen was removed from his car by police who thought he was intoxicated. He was subsequently beaten. Griglen was, in fact, quite sober, but he is diabetic and was in insulin shock. Judging by media reports alone, people who are diabetic are often mistaken as threatening or drunk.
- In 2009, Antonio Love felt sick and went into a Dollar General store to use the bathroom. Time passed and he didn't come out, so the store manager called the police. The officers knocked on the bathroom door, ordered him to come out, but got no response. They sprayed pepper spray under the door, opened it with a tire iron, then tasered Love repeatedly. Love is deaf. He couldn't hear the police. Again, if news reports are any indication, deaf people are too frequently treated as non-compliant and tasered or beaten by police.
- In 2010, Garry Palmer was driving home from visiting his wife's grave when a dog darted in front of his truck and was hit. Palmer reported the accident as he should have, but because he was slurring his words and shaking, he was arrested for drunk driving. Palmer has cerebral palsy.

- In January 2014, [Robert Marzullo](#) filed a [lawsuit](#) citing battery, excessive force, false imprisonment, unlawful seizure and supervisory liability against the town of Hamden, Connecticut and its police department. News reports reveal that Marzullo was tasered by two police officers while having an epileptic seizure in his car.

While specific details vary by case, the common threads that link these stories together are often disconcerting. Law enforcement officials expect and demand compliance, but when they don't recognize a person's disability in the course of an interaction, the consequences can be tragic. Misconceptions or assumptions can lead to overreactions that culminate in unnecessary arrest, use of pepper spray, or individuals being tasered.

Sadly, while incidences of this sort aren't necessarily new, for many of us, learning about them is. The Internet, social media, and ubiquitous cell phones have helped catapult stories that were once easily restricted to local police blotters to unprecedented national prominence.

As National Council on Disability (NCD) Executive Director Rebecca Cokley wrote in her testimony to the Senate Judiciary subcommittee, "misunderstandings, fears, and stereotypes about disability have led to tragic outcomes throughout U.S. history. During the American Eugenics movement, pseudo-scientific 'evidence' gave way to popular myths linking disability and criminality, and the inheritability of both." As a result, people with disabilities were devalued, isolated from the rest of society, prevented from attending school, getting married or becoming active and engaged in their communities.

"It doesn't take an act of Congress to make you realize that relationships are everything."

Fortunately people with disabilities now enjoy far greater civil rights that have come hard fought in the least 50 years. However, harmful attitudes and assumptions, once established, can be difficult to replace even in the face of evidence to the contrary.

In the [latest data released](#) by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics, Americans with disabilities are victims of violent crimes at nearly three times the rate of their peers without disabilities. In 2012 alone, 1.3 million nonfatal violent crimes were perpetrated against people with disabilities aged 12 or older. [Statistics bear out](#) that people with disabilities are far more likely to be the victims of crimes than the perpetrators of them, and therefore are arguably in greater need of supportive relationships with and understanding from law enforcement.

Disability is varied and complex. Sometimes disability is visibly apparent, making it easier for law enforcement, to see—if not misinterpret. For others, disability is invisible. Whether it is written in the genetic code and is a companion since birth, or becomes a part of one's experience later because of age, accident, or public service during the course of our natural lifespan many of us will move in and out of states of disability, whether it is due to breaking a limb, becoming diabetic, or conditions related to aging.

The disabled community relies on law enforcement as the first line of defense and protection in countless situations of varying complexity. Strengthening this important relationship could be a step toward preventing the sort of misunderstandings that can result in tragedy.

As Patti Saylor, Ethan's mother, testified at Tuesday's hearing:

"When you know someone with a disability and have a relationship with that person, it changes your whole being and perspective. At the local level, we have a real opportunity to build relationships with our local law enforcement and public sector officials, the ones that are on the frontlines serving our communities... Local disability advocacy organizations and providers should build lasting relationships with their local law enforcement and public sector officials. It doesn't take an act of Congress, federal or state mandate, or even money to make you realize that relationships are everything."

The recent hearing by the Senate Judiciary Committee is an important first sentence in an ongoing dialogue about how law enforcement officials relate to people with psychiatric, developmental, and physical disabilities. Non-compliance isn't automatically criminal, and if more police understood that, it could minimize the violence.

At the end of the hearing, Senator Al Franken remarked, "I think we need CIT training for every law enforcement official." CIT training is one component, along with increased community support, public engagement, and funding. These are all steps we can take to try to decrease the likelihood of more mistreatment of those like Saylor and Boyd.

But as long as disability is misunderstood and criminalized, even unintentionally, nearly everyone will be at increased risk.

To: The Honorable Representative Steve Thompson

Dear Representative Thompson,

Alaskans with disabilities, especially those disabilities that cannot be easily recognized, deserve to be treated fairly and respectfully by police officers, corrections officers and parole/probation officers. Sometimes recognizing that a person has a disability can be challenging. Disability awareness training will help an officer recognize a disability and train them in ways to effectively and appropriately interact with people with non-apparent disabilities.

I support HB 77 because it requires a standardized disability awareness training for police officers, corrections officers, parole/probation officers and includes training for the public to be responsible for appropriately interacting with law enforcement. The bill also includes voluntary participation in an identification program. I feel that HB 77 will help to reduce potential conflicts between Alaskans with disabilities and public law enforcement and make these encounters safer for all parties involved.

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability in services, programs and activities provided by State and local government entities. Each time a law enforcement or corrections officer treats an individual with a disability inappropriately or unfairly, they are at risk of violating the ADA, placing the village, municipality or state in a precarious and possibly discriminatory situation.

I appreciate any support you can give to the passage of HB77, a bill whose goal is to erase law enforcement discrimination, intended or unintended, against people with disabilities.

I am grateful for your hard work and service to Alaska and support your efforts to help Alaskans with disabilities.

Sincerely,



To: The Honorable Representative Steve Thompson

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Sincerely,

"Bunnie" B. D. Boykin

To: The Honorable Representative Steve Thompson

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Sincerely,

Beverly J McGee 3570 Dale Rd
Beverly J McGee 99709
750-3435

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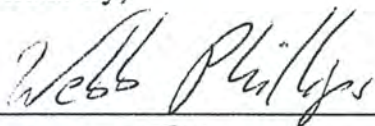
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I appreciate any support you can give to the passage of HB77, a bill whose goal is to erase law enforcement discrimination, intended or unintended, against people with disabilities. It's not only a Federal law, it's the right thing to do.

I appreciate your hard work and service and support your efforts to help Alaskans with disabilities.

Sincerely,



1989 TBI Survivor
1991 - Present Literacy Council Tutor for TBI Survivors
& English as a Second Language.
2005-2015 Denali Grade School Recess Teacher's Duty Aid, &
First Student Management Traffic Guard.

To: The Honorable Representative Steve Thompson

Dear Representative Thompson,

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I appreciate your hard work and service and support your efforts to help Alaskans with disabilities.

Sincerely,

M.K. TBI & A.T.B.E. could be you.

Most people never see it coming.
It's nice to be treated with respect no matter who you are

People with disabilities half of people killed by cops; disability rights groups protest

By [Joyce Chediak](#) January 24, 2015

Disabled-rights groups are among the most energetic advocates of solidarity with African-American victims of police murder.

Some 34 disability activist groups across the country have signed a statement protesting the police murders of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, expressing solidarity with their families and communities, and urging all to do so. (tinyurl.com/qabbdn8, Aug. 15)

This statement's signers are both national and local groups, including organizations from Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, California, New York State and New England. They include the National Council on Independent Living and four local independent living centers; several autistic groups, including Autism Women's Network; Little People of America; Queerability and other LGBTQ disability groups; several student groups; Help Educate to Advance the Rights of the Deaf; the Peoples With Disabilities Caucus of the Peoples Power Assembly; and Parents to Improve School Transportation.

The statement calls upon everyone to oppose "the criminalization and dehumanization of our citizens" especially of "communities viewed as 'other' to the American majority — young men of color, people with disabilities, LGBT individuals." For these communities, "statements such as 'they didn't comply,' they were 'bad kids,' 'they were being belligerent,' 'they looked suspicious' often warrant a death sentence."

Half of people killed by police have disabilities

People with disabilities are themselves dramatically more likely to be killed by police. According to a 2013 report by the Treatment Advocacy Center and National Sheriffs' Association, between 1980 and 2008 "at least half of the people shot and killed by police each year in this country have mental health problems." (tinyurl.com/mjs67oa)

In many cases police were responding to requests for assistance from family or neighbors to get mental health care for the person.

People who, for example, are hearing impaired, autistic, have difficulty processing verbal information, or for other reasons of disability react atypically when approached by police are much more likely to be tasered, beaten and arrested.

The Lead On Network statement cites such several such cases:

- **Keith Vidal, 18 years old, who had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, was tasered, then shot and killed in North Carolina when his family called for the police to help calm him down.**

- **Gilberto Powell, 22, who has Down Syndrome, was severely beaten by Florida police outside his home when a cop suspected he had a weapon and tried to pat him down. Powell did not understand and ran. The “suspicious” bulge in his pants was a colostomy bag.**
- **Barry Montgomery, 29, diagnosed with schizophrenia and Tourette’s syndrome, and who is nonverbal, was beaten and tasered by California sheriff’s officers for 25 minutes when he was confronted about the smell of marijuana in his general area and did not respond. Montgomery sustained massive permanent injuries.**

In capitalist society there are many forms of bigotry. There is often an intersection of racism and discrimination against people with disabilities. Disabled activists also cite the racist strangulation of Eric Garner, who told police 11 times that he couldn’t breathe. Police supporters are now blaming Garner for his own death because he was obese, asthmatic and had a heart condition.

Disabled activists note the similarities between the police murder of Garner and of Ethan Saylor, a white man with Down Syndrome, asphyxiated by police in Frederick, Md.

On Jan. 12, 2013, Saylor, who was 26 years old, weighed 350 lbs, and was reported to have an IQ of 40, was at theatre with a caretaker watching the movie “Zero Dark Thirty.” He was so taken with the movie that he wanted to stay and watch it again. Saylor did not understand that he would have to purchase more tickets, and neither he nor the caretaker had the money to do so.

Police called to remove Saylor from the theatre were told by the caretaker of Saylor’s condition, and advised not to remove Saylor by force. The caretaker pleaded with the police to just “wait it out,” and informed them that Saylor could not handle being touched and would “freak out.”

The caretaker wrote in her statement to the Sheriff’s Department, “Next thing I know there are I think three or four cops holding Ethan, trying to put him in handcuffs.”

According to witnesses, three deputies fell on top of Saylor on an inclined ramp. They placed three sets of handcuffs on him, and he was laid face down for several minutes, then suddenly grew quiet and unresponsive. His last words before he died were, “Mommy! It hurt!”

Saylor’s throat cartilage had been fractured while his heart was still beating, and the death was ruled a homicide, as it could have been caused only by a direct blow or manual strangulation. Despite this ruling, just as with the police killings of Eric Garner and Michael Brown, local law enforcement called all the shots at the grand jury investigation, which cleared the deputies who killed Saylor of any wrongdoing.

It gets worse. With the police let off the hook, Saylor’s disability and weight are now being cited as having caused his death. The sheriff reportedly said that Saylor died because of a “medical emergency.” The coroner also blamed Down Syndrome and size for the death. (CNN, Dec. 4)

In the police murders of Saylor in 2013 and of Eric Garner in 2014, both victims were obese and were strangled by police who lay on top of them while applying pressure to their throats. Grand

juries refused to indict police in both cases. Part of the social exoneration of the police in both cases was to blame both victims for their own deaths by citing their disabilities.

Garner: Killed, then sneered at for his disabilities

Rampant racism and ableism have been especially vicious in the high-profile case of Garner, who has been ridiculed and blamed for his own death because he was obese and had asthma and a heart condition. Representative Peter King (R-New York), speaking on CNN, thanked the grand jury for not indicting policeman Daniel Pantaleo, saying, "You had a 350-pound person who was resisting arrest. The police were trying to bring him down as quickly as possible." King claimed, "If he had not had asthma and a heart condition and was so obese, almost definitely he would not have died."

Pantaleo's attorney and police union officials made the same argument.

This view was expressed more crudely on PoliceOne.com. Comments on the site about the deceased Garner include, "This guy would have died going up a flight of stairs," "He died because of his preexisting medical conditions," and "His family should sue Papa Johns, Dominos, Pizza Hut, Burger King, McDonalds."

Call issued to transform the system

The disabled community has responded in its Aug. 15 statement mentioned above by holding the system as a whole responsible, and calling for everyone to unite to fight for justice for all:

"When a system that is designed to protect and serve is fueled by fear and anger, that is not merely a surmountable problem. It is a catastrophic failure of the system, and it demands transformation. Such a failure represent a lack of leadership, a corruption of institutions, and a distressing willingness to purposely and violently silence the voices of entire communities marked as different, non-compliant, and suspicious. ...

"We have allowed problems of marginalization, exclusion, inaccessibility, dissemination, sexism and bigotry, problems that affect us all — to instead be addressed by a few, and have been content that it is a disability problem or a race problem or a gender problem or sexuality problem rather than admit that it is a problem for all of us.

"As members of a community that supports justice and inclusion, we do not have the luxury to stand by when injustice is blatantly taking place in any form, nor should we be satisfied to wait for other communities to ask for our help. Civil rights, respect and justice are due to all. We will not remain silent." (tinyurl.com/qabbdn8)

Guilty Until Proven Innocent

To the editor,

As a child I had cancer for which I had surgery, followed by radiation and chemotherapy. To this day, I have side effects which include knee and ankle problems also coordination deficits.

October 2014, Officer Merrion arrested me for a D.U.I. Initially when stopped, Merrion said I hit the curb twice and then it changed to three times. Neither was true. He accused me of drinking. I hadn't been. I was asked to perform some sobriety tests. I explained radiation and chemotherapy had left me with some physical issues and I wouldn't do very well. I was to stand on one foot, arms at my sides. No way could I do this with my knee problems. Merrion stated, "Knees don't give you bad balance." Long story short, I was unable to satisfactorily perform the physical sobriety test.

After registering a 0.000, NO ALCOHOL, on the breathalyzer test, I'm accused of "being on something." I don't use drugs. Nearly 20 years as an airline employee, I'm under United States D.O.T. mandated drug testing, and always passed.

I was transported to the police station and again registered a 0.000 on the Datamaster Breathalyzer test. I consented to have my blood tested for illegal drugs. Officer Dupee (Certified Drug Recognition Expert)

concluded I was under the influence of spice (synthetic marijuana.) I didn't know what spice was. I was transported to jail.

At my expense, my lawyer obtained and sent my blood samples drawn at the time of my arrest to an out of state lab, capable of performing a more thorough toxicology report. Unsurprisingly, results showed I had NO DRUGS in my system, including spice.

The State of Alaska refuses to test for synthetic marijuana. I cannot comprehend how in Officer Dupee's opinion, I was under the influence of spice.

October 2014 the News-Miner reported my arrest. These charges were dismissed February 11, 2015. Aren't dismissed charges worthy of being reported?

I know an apology or any financial reimbursement isn't forthcoming. This was an expensive, stressful and embarrassing experience. I now question our legal system. Why was I guilty until I proved my innocence?

Lance Ostnes

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Session:
State Capitol Building
Room 511
Juneau, Alaska 99801-2186
Phone (907) 465-3004
Toll Free: (877) 465-3004



Interim:
1292 Sadler Way, Ste. 323
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
Phone: (907) 452-1088
Toll Free: (877) 465-3004

REPRESENTATIVE STEVE THOMPSON DISTRICT 2

MEMORANDUM

To: Representative Bob Lynn, Chairman
House State affairs Committee

From: Representative Steve Thompson

Date: March 9, 2015

Re: Hearing Request for HB 77 - DISABILITY: ID/LICENSE AND TRAINING RQMTS

Please accept this memorandum as a request for HB 77 to be heard in the House State Affairs Committee. Attached are the following documents:

- HB 77 – Sponsor Statement
- HB 77 – Bill version 29-LS0072\W
- HB 77 – Sectional 29-LS0072\W
- HB 77 – Supporting Document, Letter Juanita Webb
- HB 77 – Supporting Document, Letter Frank Ron
- HB 77 – Supporting Document, Wallbusters' explanation of Hidden Disabilities

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Jane Pierson at 465-6841.

E-mail Representative_Steve_Thompson@akleg.org

To: Representative Steve Thompson

From: Denise Daniello, Executive Director (DD)
Alaska Commission on Aging

Re: Support Letter for HB 77, Training Regarding Non-Apparent Disabilities & Voluntary Designations
on State Identification Cards

Date: March 21, 2015

Sent by Fax: 465-2070 ✓

Cc: Representative Les Gara (Fax 465-3518)
Representative Dan Saddler (Fax 465-2293)
Representative Liz Vazquez (Fax 465-6595)
Representative Scott Kawasaki (Fax 465-2937)
Representative Sam Kito (Fax 465-4748)

Representative Thompson:

The Alaska Commission on Aging is pleased to provide this letter of support for HB 77. We appreciate your leadership on this legislation and that provided by Representatives Gara, Saddler, Vazquez, Kawasaki, and Kito. Please feel free to include this letter in the bill packets for Committee hearings.

I am sending you this support letter by fax because we recently moved our office and do not have all of our equipment up and running at this time. I will be traveling this week and am not available to testify on HB 77 to House State Affairs. Denise

Denise Daniello

Executive Director | Alaska Commission on Aging
Department of Health and Social Services
PO Box 110680 | Juneau, AK 99811-0680
907.465.4879 | denise.daniello@alaska.gov
www.alaskaaging.org

Healthy Aging for Alaskans Across the Lifespan



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of
Health and Social Services

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

P.O. Box 110693
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0693
Main: 907.465.3250
Fax: 907.465.1398

March 20, 2015

Representative Steve Thompson
Alaska Capitol, Room 515
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Regarding: Support HB 77, Training Regarding Non-Apparent Disabilities & Voluntary Disability Designations on State Identification Cards and Driver's License

Dear Representative Thompson:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is pleased to express our support for HB 77, as authored by you and co-sponsored by Representatives Gara, Kawasaki, Kito, Saddler, and Vazquez to (1) establish a training program for public safety officers to know how to recognize and interact appropriately with a person who has a non-apparent disability, and (2) implement a voluntary identification system for persons with such disabilities on their state identification cards and driver's license. Although this legislation addresses the needs of all Alaskans with non-apparent disabilities, the ACoA will focus on the "safety" benefits we perceive for older Alaskans from this legislation.


Older people who experience concealed disabilities are often impacted by the manner in which they respond to sensory stimuli and process information. This behavior can sometimes be misunderstood as resulting from being under the influence of an intoxicant or as purposefully disruptive. For example, hearing loss can result in problems understanding the spoken language and performing complex tasks. Those with anxiety disorders have a tendency to selectively focus and interpret even ambiguous events in a highly threatening way – which can be observed as disruptive behavior. Wandering outside unattended and unprotected is a significant personal safety risk for persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia. Not only can these disabling conditions affect an individual's personal safety, they may impact the outcome of an encounter with a public safety officer.

The Commission agrees that personal safety and dignity of persons with concealed disabilities could be greatly improved by having trained public safety officers able to recognize the signs of their disabilities and appropriately, respectfully interact with these individuals. The Commission also recommends that disability awareness training be offered to all first responders, including fire fighters and paramedics, who are typically the first to arrive on the scene of an emergency and provide help to vulnerable persons. Finally, we recommend that disability awareness training would help to further implement the "silver alert" system by promoting greater awareness among public safety officers about the needs of Alaskans with Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive impairments who have a tendency to wander and become lost, sometimes finding themselves in life-threatening situations. Public safety officers trained

in disability awareness would be better able to recognize the signs of a person with dementia in the community and respond appropriately to bring that person to safety.

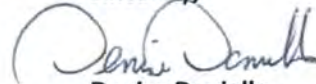
Thank you for your leadership on HB 77 to enhance public safety awareness, improve communication, and increase protection for vulnerable Alaskans with hidden disabilities.

Sincerely,



Mary E. Shields
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,



Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director

Cc: Representative Les Gara
Representative Scott Kawasaki
Representative Sam Kito
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Liz Vazquez