

Alaska State Legislature

Official Business



State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska
99801-1182

Commissioner Adam Crum
Director Clinton Lasley
P.O. Box 110690
Juneau, AK 99801

May 28, 2019

Dear Commissioner Crum and Director Lasley,

First and foremost, thank you for your work within our Department of Health and Social Services and our Division of Pioneer Homes. Alaska's Pioneer Homes play a vital role in our communities by creating a home for our aging population, celebrating life through the final breath, and providing individualized care. We want the department to continue to be successful in managing our Pioneer Homes and ask that House Bill 96, while still working its way through the legislative process, serve as a guideline for any proposed increase to rates.

We believe the process this legislation has gone through has brought to light many important issues related to Pioneer Home rates. From the research during the drafting process to the questions and concerns discussed during committee meetings, we believe HB 96 is an appropriate guide for the department in its decision-making process.

House Bill 96 passed the Alaska House of Representatives with broad-bipartisan support in May. Regular session ended before it was heard in the Senate, where we expect a similar level of support next session. HB 96 allows for a one time rebasing of rates for Pioneer Homes and then provides a structure for reasonable and regular rate increases to ensure that rates keep up with the cost of providing care for Pioneer Home residents by using the Social Security Cost of Living adjustment as a benchmark. This legislation does not prohibit an increase in Pioneer Home rates but encourages one that is sustainable for residents and their loved ones.


Increasing Pioneer Home rates above and beyond those proposed in HB 96 will result in an increased number of seniors going onto Medicaid and other public assistance. Our seniors may have to absorb a shock to their retirement plans while living on fixed incomes provided by Social Security. Many may choose to leave Alaska, taking their families, wisdom, and history with them. Many of these seniors helped establish our state, often through sacrifice and with the risk of dangerous occupations.

We ask that the State of Alaska stands by our historic commitment to provide for our aging population. We understand the need for increased revenue to effectively provide services but implore you to limit any increase in rates to those outlined in House Bill 96.

Respectfully,


Nineteen Members of the Alaska State House of Representatives, Undersigned



Speaker Bryce Edgmon


Rep. Zack Fields



Rep. Ivy Spohnholz



Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky

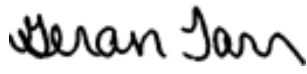

Rep. Dan Ortiz



Rep. Steve Thompson


Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins



Rep. Andy Josephson


Rep. Adam Wool


Rep. Geran Tarr


Rep. Andi Story


Rep. Bart LeBon



Rep. Harriet Drummond


Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux


Rep. Sara Hannan


Rep. Gary Knopp


Rep. Matt Claman


Rep. Chris Tuck


Rep. Grier Hopkins