



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of
Health and Social Services

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

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April 5, 2015

Representative Neal Foster
Alaska State Capitol, Room 518 & 516
Juneau, Alaska 99811-1182

Regarding: Support HB 142, Establishing Elders' Day

Dear Representative Foster:

The Alaska Commission on Aging is pleased to express our support for HB 142 authored by you and co-sponsored by Representatives Millett, Kawasaki, Edgmon, Tuck, Drummond, Johnson, Tarr, Josephson, and Gruenberg. The Commission firmly believes that older Alaskans should have the opportunity to meaningfully participate in communities that value their contributions. *Establishing Elders' Day* promotes a common vision that recognizes older Alaskans, regardless of their cultural or ethnic heritage, as productive, active, and influential members of our state. Every opportunity that we have to honor and appreciate these individuals is important for Alaska and the people who are recognized.

Older people have lived long and seen a lot during their lifetimes. As a result, they have learned life lessons along the way from both their successes and mistakes. For this reason, older adults are Alaska's tradition bearers, pioneers, and mentors who link the past with the present and help future generations by offering wisdom and guidance to keep life moving forward in a positive direction. "Take care of the old person you will become," as stated by Dr. Walter Soboloeff, the renowned Southeast Tlingit Elder, is inspirational wisdom for people of all ages.

Thank you for your leadership on this legislation to strengthen and reinforce recognition of Alaska's older people as they are an important renewable resource for our state.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Shields
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,

Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director

Cc: Representative Charisse Millett
Representative Scott Kawasaki
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Chris Tuck
Representative Harriet Drummond

Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Geran Tarr
Representative Andy Josephson
Representative Max Gruenberg

