

March 31, 2017

To the editor:

On behalf of Alaskan workers and the companies that employ them, the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce urges our Interior Delegation and our community to rally support of REAL ID compliance options by passing HB74/SB34, legislation related to Driver's Licenses & ID Cards issued by the State of Alaska. Our current State issued ID and Driver's Licenses are not compliant with federal mandates related to the REAL ID act. Effective June 6th, Alaska's current waiver for non-compliance will expire requiring something more than an Alaska issued ID or driver's license at the gate of any federal installation such as Eielson AFB, Clear AFB, Ft. Greely, and Ft. Wainwright. Additionally, any Alaskan that visits the base for any reason, including golf, hockey, snowboarding, tubing, military appreciation events on military installations, children's plays or events at the schools on Wainwright or Eielson will ALL have to have their passport or other accepted alternatives such as a passport card, Global Entry Card, NEXUS, Airline or Airport issued ID or federally recognized tribal-issued photo ID.

Our legislature has the opportunity to pass legislation and provide an option for Alaskans to opt-in and obtain a REAL ID Act compliant license or ID card, but have stalled in the process. All indications to date lead us to believe Alaska will not receive any additional waivers unless action is taken by the State to show progress toward a compliance option. We understand some people have reservations related to data privacy and the federal government having access to our personal information, and we believe this concern is immediately addressed by making REAL ID's an option for anyone to obtain, not a mandate.

We also would like to point out that while our primary concern is related to Alaskans maintaining their ability to get to work on military installations, Alaskans have a couple of other reasons to pay attention to this legislation. Without it, we'll have to have passports or alternative IDs in order to travel on any federally regulated flights effective January 2018. That means in-state, domestic, and international travel will ALL require a passport or alternative ID if REAL ID's are not an option for Alaskans.

Please contact your legislative representatives, especially Representative Kawasaki, and encourage them to pass legislation that gives Alaskans options to be compliant and protect their ability to work this summer.

Thank you,

Marisa Sharrah
President/CEO
Fairbanks Chamber