



## **SB170/HB242: Alaska's Senior Benefits Program**

This program pays cash assistance tied to the Alaska Federal Poverty Guidelines to low-income 65+ Alaskans who are not in Pioneer Homes or other institutional care. Cash payments for the past five years have been \$76, \$175, or \$250 each month depending on income, which is especially critical for the more than 10% of Alaskan elders who fall at or near the federal poverty line. In 2022, the program served 9,000 seniors at an average of 75 years old with the oldest participant aged 104.

### **Alaska Senior Benefits Factsheet**

#### **What is the issue?**

The Senior Benefits Program is set to sunset in June 2024 according to state statute, and the Governor's Budget does not fund the program at all for FY25. This would negatively affect thousands of Alaska seniors who have already demonstrated financial need and rely on these benefits to pay for basic needs and maintain their independence. Reauthorization legislation is needed to extend and fund the program.

#### **Why is this important?**

This program provides much-needed payments to Alaskan elders who have **low to moderate income**. Many seniors have a fixed income which allows little wiggle-room, which makes any decrease in income very disruptive. This is particularly true for seniors with low income who rely most heavily on the program to pay for their basic needs. If this program expires then this already vulnerable population would face increased financial hardship.

#### **What can we do about it?**

- Get to know your [local legislators](#). Introduce yourself to them and make them aware that this issue is important to their constituents. Encourage your legislators to support the continuation of this program.
- Write and [send letters or emails](#) to your legislators informing them of the issue. Many legislators see receiving a few dozen letters as an overwhelming show of support for a given issue. Most local legislators also have email addresses where constituents can reach out to them with concerns. Sending letters or emails can show that this issue is important and worthy of attention.
- Consider [testifying before the committee hearing](#) for the bill. Public input is often allowed at these hearings, and direct input from the public is a good motivator for legislators to act.
- Make sure to increase your political awareness by [tracking bills](#), showing support for bills that help Alaska seniors, and opposing any action or inaction that would harm Alaska seniors.

**To learn more about the legislative process in Alaska, [click here!](#)**