

Letters to the Editor

Welfare recipients shouldn't lose PFD

Dear Editor:

The Permanent Fund Dividend is for all Alaskans and because of that we all need to be concerned with House Bill 70 and Senate Bill 37. Both of these bills suggest removing the "hold harmless" provision that allows welfare recipients to receive Permanent Fund checks without penalizing their welfare eligibility.

The "hold harmless" provision is one of the many ways we affirm the Alaskan philosophy of being open hearted and willing to go out of our way to help someone less fortunate. The funding for "hold

harmless" is not taken from the State treasury. It is taken off the total Permanent Fund earnings before it is divided out into dividend checks.

How are House Bill 70 and Senate Bill 37 supposed to save State budget money when it is the Permanent Fund earnings that funds the "hold harmless" provision? Last year \$41 of my dividend check went to this. Considering Alaska has no state sales tax or income tax, I'm not going to feel greatly about that \$41.

Every year when the Permanent Fund checks go out it's a boost to the economy that all businesses ben-

efit from. Most year-round welfare recipients spend it on very worthwhile things for their children and pay off necessary bills. To penalize welfare recipients of the temporary economic boost, the rest of us certainly enjoy, will only further separate the "haves" and the "have nots." Presently the Permanent Fund Dividend checks are garnished as a punitive action from those that owe child support, or commit a

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Kudos for *Tundra Times*

Dear Editor:

It was a pleasant surprise to meet you at Kake last month. Another pleasant surprise has been the liveliness of the *Tundra Times*. You're doing a remarkably fine

job on one of the most important activities in our state. Howard Rock would be proud.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Richard Whittaker
Ketchikan, AK

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felony crime, or for other alleged neglective matters. To withdraw the "hold harmless" clause gives the message that welfare clients are also penalized.

If the welfare rules to begin with don't seem to make sense, perhaps they really don't. And I suppose that is what is keeping Newt and other welfare reformers busy right now. Until economic development takes hold as a priority in all communities, many individuals will have no choice but to be on welfare.

The Senators and Representatives that approve these bills may feel that welfare recipients are of no real threat of benefit to them. As far as having any political pull, welfare

recipients can be registered voters and there is much unity in endorsing candidates come election and re-election time.

House Bill 70 and Senate Bill 37 affect us all, because even though it's directed to a group of people that at this time doesn't include me, the next

bill that comes along may directly affect me. And any threat to a group of people's eligibility to the Permanent Fund Dividend check is something all Alaskans need to take seriously as to themselves being next.

Susan E Taylor
Bethel, AK