

# Retired Folks

State Senator Joe Josephson told a meeting in Juneau of the Governor's Advisory Committee on the Aging that it is the retired person who bears the brunt of retirement policies.

"We live in an economy which mandatorily retires everyone at age 65 and makes all the opportunities readily available for younger persons," the Senator said.

To counteract this inequity, Josephson said that the public costs of mandatory retirement should be spread more evenly. He suggested that programs such as the supplemental income for the elderly, now before the Legislature, and the federal Medicaid program would help accomplish this.

Speaking before the 14 member committee, the minority leader observed that approval of these programs would not result in additional state expenditures, rather an influx of unused federal funds.

Josephson noted that qualifications for persons applying for medical assistance under Medicaid would be expanded considerably so that even those on moderate incomes may qualify when illness occurs.

Another aspect concerns persons residing in nursing homes who are not eligible for Medicare assistance which Josephson said may become eligible under the Medicaid plan.

The Democrat said that he believed that a correlation exists between family disruption and the absence of an older generation in Alaska.

"The lack of family relationships stretching from grandparents to grandchildren has placed a very heavy strain on the family structure as we know it in Alaska," he explained, "and that has often resulted in divorce."

"It's not at all surprising to me that this state has one of the nation's highest divorce rates as well as the lowest proportions of older persons," he said.