

**July 11, 2006**

**Assembly Members**

**My name is Dave Lowery (34715 Keystone Drive, Soldotna) and I have been an Alaskan resident for 31 years. My wife and I retired and moved to Soldotna 8 years ago. As most retirees, we live on a fixed income. We purchased our property in 1978 (when it was affordable) and built our dream home out of pocket so as not to have a mortgage in our retirement years.**

**I'm a 70% disabled vet and also over the age of 65. When we moved here from Anchorage after retirement, we assumed the tax program in place at that time would remain the same and considered that fact in our budgeting process. Now you are proposing limiting the exemption to the first \$150K. In our particular case, our property value has skyrocketed and the cost of building materials has also drastically increased. If assessed at its present day value, the taxes on our home would be out of sight. Being on a fixed income, we could be forced from our home as our funds dwindle with the extra taxes we will be paying. We've heard this happening in the Lower 40, more and more lately, but never thought it would happen to us.**

**Senior citizens took a large cut in income when the state took the longevity bonus away. Although we would never have collected it, I can certainly feel for those who did. And, to take away the present tax exemptions on their homes is another rather harsh blow.**

**In the new proposal, you suggest that residents can be out of the Borough for no longer than 90 days each year. I assume you will not consider being in Anchorage or another area of this state when counting those 90 days. Although we can understand that you are trying to get part-time residents to pay their fair share, we also believe you are punishing those of us who have spent most of our lives here, working toward the time when we can retire and start traveling for longer than a short vacation. My wife and I enjoy running to the sun and find shoveling snow more difficult as we get older, not mentioning maintaining our balance on the ice! You're asking us to sacrifice what we've worked for all these years.**

**I have trouble understanding why we cannot increase our sales tax or our bed tax so the many visitors we have each year can help support the area many return to every summer. As my wife and I have traveled around the Lower 48, we have remarked about the taxes we have paid at various places (10% sales tax in Sadona, AZ, and \$10 combined sales tax and bed tax in Orlando, FL), and I could go on and on, but we have never let that stop us from enjoying the places we have been! Visitors to the peninsula will not stop coming here either. They enjoy our scenery, fishing, and other amenities we provide. They should help contribute their share as well.**

**We understand Proposition 5 was a blow to running the Borough and neither my wife nor I voted in favor of it. However, we also cannot understand why our seniors must take the brunt of those who cannot seem to understand that it takes money from taxes to provide the services we receive.**

**I request that you not pass this resolution and, instead, go to work and request help from the public to repeal prop 5 and bring the bed tax back to the table.**

**Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion.**

**Dave Lowery**