

Alaska State Legislature
House of Representatives
Minority Leader



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Representative Ethan Berkowitz
District 13

House Bill 215

“An Act making an appropriation to the Department of Community and Regional Affairs for renters’ tax equivalency payments; and providing for an effective date.”

Sponsor Statement

The Renter’s Equivalency Rebate Program (usually referred to as “Renter’s Rebate”) was established in 1976 to aid low-income seniors with housing costs. In 1985, disabled veterans were added to the program. Renter’s Rebate typically provides a small housing stipend averaging \$277 a year to individuals who are elderly and/or disabled with incomes in the neighborhood of \$1,000 per month. Specifically 993 seniors and 112 disabled veterans benefited from this program in Fiscal Year 1999.

Since 1991, funding for the program has dropped from roughly \$820,000 to \$300,000. Adjusting for inflation and population growth, fully funding the Renter’s Rebate program would require \$1,133,000 in Fiscal Year 2000. House Bill 215 appropriates a modest level of support for the Renter’s Rebate program – just \$300,000.

Some have suggested that all Alaskans should share the pain of budget cuts. Failure to pass this legislation means that seniors and disabled veterans – people who have served our country and communities – will assume all the pain of budget cuts.

I would appreciate your support of this legislation.