

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## SESSION

State Capitol, Rm. 30  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
(907) 465-3873 Phone  
(907) 465-3922 Fax  
(877) 463-3873 Toll Free  
Senator.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov



## INTERIM

1900 1<sup>st</sup> Ave.  
Suite 310  
Ketchikan, AK 99901-6442  
Phone (907) 225-8088  
Fax (907) 225-0713  
www.BertStedman.com

## SENATOR BERT K. STEDMAN

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (February 28, 2014)**

### **Senate Bill 159 by Senator Stedman Passes the Senate**

#### **A Bill to Keep the AirCare Medevac Service Program Available to Residents of Southeast Alaska**

(Juneau) – Today, the Senate unanimously passed Senate Bill 159 sponsored by Senator Bert Stedman, R-Sitka.

Since January 2009, Airlift Northwest, the provider of lifesaving air medical transport services, has offered the popular AirCare membership program to residents of Southeast Alaska. Approximately 2,000 Southeast households are enrolled in the program which covers the cost of any out-of-pocket expenses related to Airlift Northwest's medevac services. Air medical transportation is expensive and insurance may not cover all the costs. The AirCare program directly helps fund Airlift Northwest so they can transport critically ill or injured patients to hospitals with levels of care not locally available.

Since its inception, the AirCare program was offered to Alaskans under a regulatory exemption it received from the Alaska Division of Insurance. However, after an organizational restructuring, the Division of Insurance deemed the program no longer exempt and ordered Airlift Northwest to cease enrolling new members. Airlift Northwest is allowed to honor their existing memberships but is not allowed to renew expired memberships.

Senate Bill 159 will exempt air ambulance services from the state's insurance code, thereby allowing Airlift Northwest to continue offering the AirCare program to Alaskans. The bill now moves to the House of Representatives.

For more information, contact Senator Stedman's office at 907-465-3873.

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