

PRESS RELEASE

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NEW STATE IMMIGRATION OFFICE ESTABLISHED

(JUNEAU) -- Senator Alan Austerman (R-Kodiak/SE Islands) is pleased to announce the creation of a new state immigration office under the Legislative Affairs Agency.

The concept for this office was cultivated over several years. Over that ensuing time, Senator Austerman's office in Kodiak and Juneau handled hundreds of requests for assistance from individuals within the Filipino community along with scores of other Asian countries. It was well documented from talking with these folks that there were many more people out there that were afraid to ask for aid because of language, social and cultural differences.

Austerman acted last year by helping to craft [Senate Bill 90](#) that would establish an Office of Citizenship Assistance, which he co-sponsored. There was quite a bit of heart-felt testimony in support of the bill, but no consensus could be reached on the appropriate funding levels. This year a small amount of additional funds were found that had not been spent within this agency, so an individual was hired to staff this new office immediately.

"I think the legislature took the right action by the creation of this office," said Austerman. He went on to say, "As a society, we have an obligation to help our fellow man by making services accessible that most Alaskan's take for granted. I believe this new office will bridge that valley to a citizenry that has been left behind."

The new office, which is based in Juneau, will act as a liaison between individuals and the various state agencies, the federal government and private entities. The person in charge will provide links and support for immigration services, job placement services, affordable legal services, medical and housing services, educational opportunities and interactions with law enforcement agencies and the court system.

To reach the new state immigration office please call (907) 465-3819. Mr. Mario Lim, a long time Filipino activist is the new immigration specialist.

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