



Press Release

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COURT ESTABLISHES ELDER TASK FORCE

Anchorage, Alaska (September 10, 2014) – Alaska Supreme Court Chief Justice Dana Fabe has appointed an eleven-member Elder Task Force to work on improving the justice system’s response to elders and other vulnerable adults, and to examine how to more effectively address issues of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of Alaska’s elder population. The task force will be chaired by Alaska Supreme Court Justice Daniel Winfree. The task force includes judicial officers and members of the legal and social services community who have substantial expertise in elder law issues.

- Alaska Supreme Court Justice Daniel Winfree, Chair
- Anchorage Superior Court Judge Eric Aarseth
- Fairbanks Superior Court Judge Bethany Harbison
- Juneau Superior Court Judge Philip Pallenberg
- Anchorage Magistrate Judge Jack Duggan
- Anchorage Magistrate Judge Una Gandbhir
- Alaska Court System Deputy Director Doug Wooliver
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Executive Director Jeff Jessee
- Office of Public Advocacy Director Richard Allen
- Chair of the Elder Section of the Alaska Bar Association Ilona Besseney
- Court Visitor Marieann Vassar

Chief Justice Fabe remarked: *“My purpose in creating the Elder Task Force is to improve the court system’s response to elders and other vulnerable adults and to address more effectively the issues of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of Alaska’s elder population. As our society ages, the court must be prepared to respond to the functional limitations and changes in capacity associated with longevity. I am hopeful that the Elder Task Force will be able to make specific recommendations for reforms in the way the court handles these cases, in particular addressing improvements to the adult guardianship and conservatorship system and the training we provide to guardians.”* The task force will work collaboratively with stakeholders to identify potential solutions and make recommendations for improvements to the justice system’s response to Alaska’s elder population.

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