

Senator Robert Myers  
*Alaska State Legislature*

**Session Address:**

Alaska State Capitol, Rm. 7  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
Phone: (907) 465-3719



**Interim Address:**

1292 Sadler Way, Ste. 340  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-3172  
Phone: (907) 451-2157

*Senate District Q*

## SB 123 – Sponsor Statement

### Citizens’ Review Panels

**“An Act relating to citizen review panels for certain children in state custody; reestablishing the Citizens’ Review Panel for Permanency Planning; and providing for an effective date.”**

Alaska’s child protection system carries one of the most serious responsibilities entrusted to government, protecting vulnerable children while working toward safe permanent homes. When a child enters state custody under a Child in Need of Aid proceeding, the goal is permanency through reunification, guardianship, or adoption. Permanency planning ensures that children do not remain in foster care without meaningful progress toward stability.

SB 123 restores a structured oversight process to ensure that permanency planning is more than a requirement of paper. Alaska originally established local citizen review panels in 1990 to provide independent review of children’s cases and ensure that placements remained necessary, appropriate, and timely. Over time, that local review function was reduced in scope. Today, Alaska maintains a State Citizen Review Panel in compliance with federal CAPTA requirements; however individual case review at the local level no longer occurs.

This bill reestablishes both a state oversight panel and local judicial-district panels to review the case plans of children placed out of the home. These panels are advisory and do not replace the courts or the Office of Children’s Services. Instead, they provide an additional layer of accountability by reviewing whether case plans are progressing, whether placements remain appropriate, and whether federal and state requirements, including the Indian Child Welfare Act are followed.

Children in state custody should not drift in temporary placements without progress toward a permanent outcome. SB 123 strengthens transparency, reinforces accountability, and supports the shared goal of ensuring children achieve safe and stable homes as quickly as possible. By restoring this citizen review process, the bill promotes public confidence in Alaska’s child welfare system while keeping the focus on the health, safety and future of Alaska’s children.

Staff Contact: Aaron Rayhbuck (907) 465-6858