

ALASKA STATE SENATE

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Senator Mike Cronk

Sponsor Statement for SB 204 version G

“An Act relating to substitute teaching; and relating to the qualifications of school board members.”

The number one priority in education should always be our children and our families. In the conversation about how to improve our state’s education system, simple, yet meaningful, reforms need to be thoroughly examined in the Legislature.

Senate Bill 204 accomplishes two things. First, this bill allows for members of regional school boards to substitute teach in their schools under emergency circumstances for a time-limited duration. Second, it prevents anyone convicted of a felony involving moral turpitude, under both state and federal law, from serving as a member of a school board.

Our students deserve to be surrounded by the best individuals Alaska has to offer. In Alaska, it is nearly impossible for a convicted felon to be hired as a teacher – and parity should be the minimum standard for a school board member. SB 204 would deem all individuals convicted of felonies involving moral turpitude ineligible from serving on a school board, unless they have been unconditionally discharged for at least ten years prior to their term.

Secondly, schools nationwide are dealing with teacher shortages. SB 204 would provide a common-sense provision to make our schools more adaptable by allowing regional school board members to substitute teach in the schools they oversee.