

REPRESENTATIVE JULIE COULOMBE
ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SESSION
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Sponsor Statement

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CSHB 116 (STA) – Restorative Justice Account Appropriations

House Bill 116 reorganizes the percentages of the funds that pass through the Restorative Justice Account that fund nonprofit organizations through the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) for services for victims and domestic violence and sexual assault programs. This legislation changes the share of the funds that are currently set out in AS 43.22.048(b), reversing the share for CDVSA and the Department of Corrections.

In 1988, the Legislature passed a law making certain convicted criminals ineligible for a Permanent Fund Dividend. The intent was that those funds should be used for the primary purpose of helping restore victims of crime to a pre-offense condition. There is no better way to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in getting their lives back together after this type of assault and victimization, than to put our state resources into caring for those victims, as well as into prevention and intervention programs to reduce the number of these crimes from occurring in the first place. Since the fund was established, it transitioned from mainly assisting crime victims to paying for inmate healthcare. More recently, it has been used by the Department to pay for institutions, which was not the intention of the fund.

HB 116 will ensure that the intent is upheld, specifically for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, one of the worst types of victimization possible. It will reverse the percentages allowed under current statute for CDVSA (from 1-3% to 79-88%) and for the Department of Corrections (from 79-88% to 1-3%), to reinforce Alaska's commitment to reducing our abysmal rate of these crimes through prevention and intervention programs – particularly through a public safety campaign such as "Choose Respect," as well as stabilize the funding source for shelters throughout the state.

I respectfully request the support of my colleagues on HB 116.

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