



STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF VICTIMS' RIGHTS

February 20, 2018

Members of the Committee
House State Affairs
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HB 310 – Marriage and Minimum Age for Marriage

Dear Members of the Committee,

As the Chief Victims' Rights Advocate of the Alaska Office of Victims' Rights (OVR), I write this letter in support of HB 310, Marriage and Minimum Age for Marriage, which was introduced on January 26, 2018.

The amended language offered in HB 310, which OVR supports, reads as follows:

"An Act relating to the minimum age of eligibility for marriage."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

* Section 1. AS 25.05.011(a) is amended to read:

(a) Marriage is a civil contract entered into by two natural persons that requires both a license and solemnization. Each person shall be at least one of the following:

- (1) 18 years of age or older and otherwise capable;
- (2) emancipated under AS 09.55.590; or
- (3) a member of the armed forces of the United States while on active duty.

* Sec. 2. AS 25.20.020 is amended to read:

Sec. 25.20.020. Arrival at majority upon marriage. A person arrives at the age of majority upon being married according to law.

*Sec. 3. AS 25.05.171 is repealed.

* Sec. 4. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:

APPLICABILITY. This act applies to a person married on or after the effective date of this Act.

Although the number of children who may be positively affected by passage of the bill may not be large, OVR is concerned about any child falling victim to sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and/or human trafficking. The legislation offered by HB 310 helps provide an additional protection to Alaska's children by eliminating one method perpetrators could use to victimize children through grooming, manipulative, coercive or exploitive acts. The age group affected by this bill is a particularly vulnerable age group for such victimization. The bill provides an additional safeguard against the aforementioned harms and the language is consistent with other Alaska statutes regarding this age group and is consistent with public policy to protect our youth. Therefore, OVR supports HB 310.

Sincerely,



Taylor Winston
Executive Director
Alaska Office of Victims' Rights