



3201 C Street, Ste. 110
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 248-7676

alaskachildrenstrust.org

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24 February 2020

Senator Donny Olson
State Capitol Room 514
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: SB 101 "Act establishing March 12 of each year as Ashley Johnson-Barr Day"

Dear Members of the Senate State Affairs Committee:

Alaska Children's Trust (ACT) is writing to express support for SB 101, establishing March 12th of each year as Ashley Johnson-Barr Day. ACT is the leading organization working to prevent abuse and neglect across our state.

Senate Bill 101 works to change the social norms and structures that allow for violence against children by speaking about and saying the names of those who have been affected. ACT recommends passage of this bill as a means of supporting the people of Kotzebue in giving voice to those harmed by neglect, abuse, sexual violence, and homicide. This bill also honors and calls attention to the grief of the Johnson-Barr family and all other families experiencing grief, while supporting community led efforts for healing.

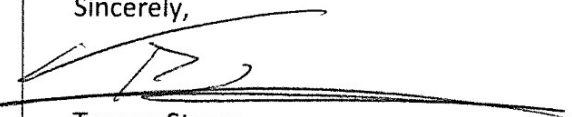
Alaska Children's Trust further supports this bill as a means of reducing the silence surrounding sexual assault and sexual violence in our state, and specifically for our neighbors in villages. This bill also reduces the stigma and shame surrounding this issue.

Alaska Children's Trust acknowledges the appropriateness of remembering Ashley Johnson-Barr on her birthday, March 12th. We recommend, however, considering designating a date in April to correspond with National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Alaska Children's Trust commends the legislature and the people of Kotzebue for taking steps to raise awareness of the unacceptably high rates of sexual assault, child abuse and neglect across our state. Finally, ACT would like to extend our condolences to the family of Ashley Johnson-Barr for their loss. We would also like to express our appreciation for Scotty Barr's advocacy during this time of grief and healing.

Only by speaking of and remembering the children who suffered from sexual violence can we uproot the causes of trauma and work towards creating safer, more nurturing communities for all our children.

Sincerely,



Trevor Storrs
President/CEO
Alaska Children's Trust



Together we can prevent child abuse and neglect