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April 5, 2013

House Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature

Re: CS for Senate Bill 22

Dear Committee Members:

It is my understanding that the House Finance Committee will be hearing SB 22 in the near future. ASAA supports passage of the bill.

Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA) is the governing body of high school interscholastic sports and activities in Alaska. Over 200 high schools hold membership in ASAA and agree to follow a common set of standards for participation. ASAA sponsors a coach's education program.

There are currently more than 2,000 coaches in Alaska who work on a regular basis with school students and others in community club programs. It is not unusual for students to hold their coaches in high esteem and to confide in them. Thus, many coaches have a special relationship with their team members, frequently closer than a classroom teacher has with her/his students. Since a student may confide in a coach when he or she will not confide in other adults, it makes sense to include coaches in the list of those required to report suspected child abuse or neglect. This adds another layer of protection for our most vulnerable Alaskans without placing an undue burden on coaches or schools.

I applaud Governor Parnell for proposing this legislation.

Please feel free to contact me at 907-563-3723 if I can provide additional information.

Respectfully,

Gary Matthews
Executive Director
Alaska School Activities Association, Inc.