

3/8/2016

The Honorable Peter Micciche
Senator
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 514
Juneau, Alaska 99801



Dear Senator Micciche:

I am a member of the Seward Prevention Coalition working to reduce underage drinking and drug use in our community. I am also the Director of Seward Parks & Recreation for the City of Seward, but I am writing this personally.

I am asking you to support Senate Bill 165 (SB165) to revise portions of Title 4, the Alaska Statutes regulating alcoholic beverages. This Bill is the first product of a four-year process initiated by the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board to engage a diverse group of more than 70 stakeholders to determine how to improve the structure, organization, specific policies and associated implementation issues in Title 4, Alaska's statutes regarding regulation and control of alcoholic beverages in the state.

The proposed revisions are some of the high-priority recommendations to emerge from this stakeholder effort to improve the overall system of alcohol regulation in Alaska. Specifically, the provisions in this bill will:

- Ensure that the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (AS 04.06.020) fairly represents the interests of all Alaskans by designating seats for public safety and public health, and retaining designated seats for industry representatives and a rural member;
- Reduce and streamline penalties for Minor on Licensed Premises (AS 04.16.049) and Minor Consuming Alcohol (AS 04.16.050), to promote consistent enforcement of these laws while ensuring that underage youth are not criminalized for one mistake;
- Provide an incentive, through a fine reduction from \$500 to \$50, for a young person convicted of either of these offenses to attend an alcohol education program; and
- Prevent any information about a young person's charge or conviction of either offense from being published on CourtView, which otherwise follows that person into adulthood.

Changes to Minor Consuming Alcohol (MCA) and Minor on Premises will have significant benefits for Alaska's youth and for the criminal justice system: in the last five years, over 75% of Title 4 related charges were MCAs, and the vast majority of youth do not return to court with a second charge. I urge you to support the significant multi-year effort of this statewide stakeholder group, and specifically the priority items brought forward for consideration this year, by voting in support of SB 165 and making these important changes to Title 4.

Thank you for tackling this important leadership. Please keep our voices in mind as the SB moves through the various committees. Please alert us when significant changes are proposed, so we can unite to maintain the integrity of these revisions.

Sincerely,
Karin Sturdy, Member, Seward Prevention Coalition