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Senator Lesil McGuire

SPONSOR STATEMENT for Senate Bill 62

“An Act allowing appropriations to the civil legal services fund from court filing fees.”

This bill is designed to help fund civil legal services for low-income Alaskans. Senate Bill 62 will provide a mechanism for funding the Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC), by allowing the legislature to appropriate up to 25 percent of filing fees paid to the Alaska Court System during the previous fiscal year into the Civil Legal Services Fund.

The Alaska Legal Services Corporation was established in 1966 to address the civil legal aid needs of low-income Alaskans. ALSC is not a state agency, but is instead a nonprofit charitable 501(c)(3) whose funding comes from a variety of state, federal, and private sources. Over the last several years ALSC funding has dwindled, from \$4.2 million as of 1987 to less than \$3.1 million as of 2010, while it struggles to serve a growing number of poverty-level applicants. Appropriations from the State of Alaska that were once as high as \$1.2 million in FY84 are currently at \$350,000. Senate Bill 62 aims to correct this lack of funding and helps ensure civil legal representation for Alaska’s most needy population.