



Crisis Intervention | Advocacy | Education | Prevention

February 7, 2012

Alaska Legislature  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: House Bill 293, Continuances in Criminal Cases

Dear Members of the Alaska State Legislature:

Standing Together Against Rape (STAR) strongly supports any bill that affords a victim of crime the opportunity to have their voice and concerns heard by the justice system. House Bill 293 appears to strengthen “the right to a timely disposition of the case following the arrest of the accused” as stated in the Alaska Constitution.

Crime victims, in particular, victims of sexual assault feel a tremendous amount of anxiety when contemplating facing the person who assaulted them in court. The anxiety builds, creating sleepless nights and increased reliance on coping skills. The day arrives, and the trial is continued. This pattern can be repeated over and over and over again. If the offender is incarcerated the victim is afraid they will be released. If the offender is not incarcerated the victim feels they must continue watching over their shoulder at the market, the department store, the movies, etc. The ability of the victim to move about freely may be inhibited.

While I believe it is not the intent of prosecution to re-victimize crime victims, repeated continuances often do. At the same time STAR recognizes the need for the prosecution to put forth a strong case, to increase the possibility of conviction, to hear defense requests and to lessen the likelihood of appeal. Hopefully this bill will allow for a balance to be struck between the two.

Respectfully submitted,

Standing Together Against Rape  
Nancy A Haag, MSW  
Executive Director

STAR's mission is to provide quality crisis intervention, education and advocacy services to victims of sexual assault, sexual abuse, their families and our community.

1057 W. Fireweed Lane  
Suite 230  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Office Line 907.276.7279  
Fax 907.278.9983  
Web [www.staralaska.com](http://www.staralaska.com)

24-Hour Crisis Line 907.276.7273  
Relay Friendly  
Toll Free 800.478.8999