



February 19, 2014

Dear Representative Thompson,

WallBusters is an advocacy group for people with disabilities. Our mission is to educate and advocate for the removal of barriers to independence for people with disabilities. Education is important because people who do not experience a disability may not understand what barriers exist and how those barriers may prevent some people from living independent and successful lives. We also advocate for the rights of people with a disability because it is our social responsibility to ensure that a person with a disability is able to access the same social benefits as any other member of our community.

We strongly support HB232, the Training and Disability ID Bill. We support this piece of legislation because the primary goal of this bill is targeted education. This act will ensure that justice professionals, law enforcement professionals and emergency responders will be informed of what a disability looks like and what barriers a person with a disability may encounter. These professionals will become better equipped to interact with people who experience either apparent or non-apparent disabilities regardless of whether people with disabilities encounter the “systems” as victims, witnesses, or alleged perpetrators.

We also support the ID component of the bill because it will enable people who experience a disability to voluntarily disclose their disability in a discreet manner on an Alaska Driver’s License or ID card. This discreet marker will assist a professional to recognize that the person in front of them has a disability even though it may not be initially apparent to the professional.

Thank you for sponsoring HB232. This bill will ensure that professionals in Alaska are trained to respectfully and appropriately interact with people who experience a disability. This legislation will go a long way to avoid misunderstandings and protect the right of people with disabilities be treated fairly and appropriately. HB232 will help improve the lives of Alaskans with both apparent and non-apparent disabilities.

Sincerely,

Art Delaune
WallBusters