

March 25, 2014

LETTER IN SUPPORT OF HB 336 SUBMITTED BY TASHA HOTCH

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter as I would like to express my support for HB 336 to increase the distance from those with a liquor license from a school or church by two hundred feet, increasing the overall distance to 400 feet. It's my understanding that this Bill was brought forward on the recommendation of middle school students in the Anchorage, Mt. View area.

As a resident of that area I can validate the concerns that the students have. As a community we have gathered and thought of ways to address some of the safety concerns for our students as the neighborhood has inebriates that often sit across from the school as it's a short distance for them to find someplace to sit after they have gone to the liquor store. We have wooded areas and bus stops that are short distances from the liquor store and near our schools and churches where many who have fallen victim to alcohol abuse live.

I know that I have to drive my child to school every day because of these types of problems. Schools and churches should be areas where our children should feel safe to run and play and learn, and instead they are afraid to go outside and to get some of that physical activity that contributes to them being healthy people.

I can't speak to all areas near schools or churches, but I can speak for my neighborhood that if you look at our crime map made available by the municipality of Anchorage you can see increase rates of robbery, theft, assault and disturbance in the areas surrounding establishments that sell alcohol. There are challenges in growing up in today's world of technology and we want to tell our children, stop playing video games or watching television and go outside and play. Not realizing that there might be a reason why children aren't going outside.

I used to live across the street from a liquor store and woke up many times to find people sleeping in my apartment complex hallway as they were too drunk to walk home and you can see the same in church doorways and schools. They are easy access for those that got a quick drink. This obviously can't fix all of the problems or fears that we have, but we can make it a little safer.

I am very proud of our young people for speaking up, for having elected officials who take the time to hear the concerns of all of the people. Identifying a problem exists is the first step, and having us validate the concerns brought forward by implementing these changes is the next step.

Thank you for your time,

Tasha Hotch

William Tyson Elementary School, PTA President