



February 12, 2014

Dear Representative Tarr,

Child abuse in Alaska is a chronic and devastating problem. To overcome the high rates of abuse in Alaska, prevention efforts need to be deployed at multiple levels in order to break the cycle of abuse and give children in Alaska the tools they need to reach their full potential.

Unfortunately, the trauma and sustained stress associated with child abuse has been shown to undermine a child's development. Such factors damage the developing brain and adversely impact a child's learning and behavior, making academic achievement more difficult. Moreover, such factors increase susceptibility to physical and mental illness and put children at higher risk for involvement in delinquent and/or criminal activities. When children do not have equal opportunity for healthy growth and development, we are putting the future society of Alaska at risk.

The All Alaska Pediatric Partnership supports Erin's Law (House Bill No. 233) as one component of a statewide prevention system needed to help reduce child abuse and neglect. Alaska's schools need comprehensive health education standards that can compliment a statewide prevention system with funding to support improved outcomes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephanie Monahan".

Stephanie Monahan  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Matthew Hirschfeld".

Matthew Hirschfeld, MD/PhD  
Co-Chair—Executive Committee

**Emily Stevens**, RN, BSN, MSN

Emily Stevens  
Co-Chair—Executive Committee

**The All Alaska Pediatric Partnership**  
**PO Box 230567**  
**Anchorage, AK 99523**  
[www.a2p2.com](http://www.a2p2.com)

February 13, 2014

P.O. Box 4105  
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Re: HB No. 233

Representative and Senators,

I am writing to support Representative Tarr's HB 133, "Erin's Law". Unlike many Alaskans, I have first-hand experience working with students to raise awareness of sexual abuse and assault. For twelve years, I was an Assistant District Attorney for the State. For a decade I worked in the Palmer District Attorney's Office where I was the sole attorney working on all sexual abuse and sexual assault cases in the Valley. I now own a business where I routinely give internet safety education presentations to students of all ages, which includes awareness on sexual assault and abuse, and I have presented to staff and counselors on mandatory reporting issues. Finally, though this letter is my personal opinion, I do sit on the Governor's Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault as a public member.

School districts must be involved in educating our youth in these areas. Violence affects many children, which in turn affects their ability to learn. Schools need to teach not just reading, writing and arithmetic, but also issues that affect the emotional well-being and future of children.

Erin's Law is another tool for the State to use to reduce our ranking as the number one state in incidences per capita of rape and child abuse. Erin's Law is proactive not reactive, and the first step in prevention is being proactive.

I encourage and urge you to support HB 233 and help reduce sexual violence against our youth.

Sincerely,

Rachel K. Gernat



February 13, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of NEA-Alaska's 13,000 teachers and education support professionals, as well as Alaska's 130,000 public school students, I am voicing support for HB 233, "Erin's Law."

As education professionals, student safety is of the highest concern. From the moment students step onto the school bus in the morning until the time they finish their extracurricular activities in the evening, Alaska's most precious and valuable resource is in our care. It is our job to make sure their learning environment is safe, and to prepare them to protect themselves in the wider world.

Sexual assault and abuse prevention and awareness programs are a key component of keeping Alaska's children safe. Such programs allow Alaskan educators to recognize the signs of such violence more quickly, and provide an immediate and direct route of aid for students. It is important that every Alaskan child knows that he or she can speak out to find safety from sexual assault and abuse.

As educators, our students' safety always comes first. We wholeheartedly urge the passage of HB 233, which would mandate sexual assault and abuse awareness and prevention in Alaska's schools. Thank you to Rep. Lynn Gattis and the House Education Committee for taking the time to address this most important issue.

Sincerely,

Ron Fuhrer  
President, NEA-Alaska

Alaska State Legislature  
Capitol Building  
Juneau, AK 99801

February 5, 2014

Re: H.B. 233, Erin's Law

Dear Legislators,

As representatives of numerous youth groups throughout Alaska, we are writing today in support of H.B. 233, Erin's Law. Child abuse in Alaska is a chronic and devastating problem. Many of us have been subject to or know someone who has been a victim of abuse, be it physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, or neglect. As children, we suffered in silence thinking that this was just how life was. We were rarely empowered to speak up for ourselves and, even if we were, we did not know who to talk to.

This bill requires Alaska public schools to create lessons teaching kids, teachers, and staff how to recognize abuse and know who to talk to. We think that if kids and the adults they spend most of their days with had this knowledge, a lot of kids can be taken out of situations that lead to other problems later in life. Child abuse frequently leads to other major societal problems, like criminal behavior, drug use, mental illness, and emotional instability. Kids who are abused are also more likely to become abusers.

We all visited the Legislators this year and work for our organizations in order to be part of the solution to these problems. Every day, we meet youth with addiction problems, emotional trauma, and criminal tendencies. Giving these kids the power to speak up for themselves and giving adults the tools to listen could really make a difference in how they live day to day. This is why we are writing to ask for you to think about how much better Alaska could be and support H.B. 233.

Sincerely,

Nate Bennett  
Nate Bennett

Anchorage, AK

Alaska State Legislature  
Capitol Building  
Juneau, AK 99801

February 5, 2014

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Sincerely,



Roseann Agoney

My name is Roseann Agoney, I'm 20 years old, and I live in Anchorage, Alaska. I was in and out of foster care for three to four years. After my dad got my siblings and I back somewhere back in 2005/2006 we've all been struggling since. I've dealt with drug abuse and alcoholism since then, but I can say now that I no longer am.

Ever since I was little all I can really remember is being around alcoholics and drug users. Seeing my parents and other family members drink and smoke I thought it was okay that did those things too. At the age of ten I would often steal alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana from my parents. At first it was to get the approval of my friends, but later on I was stealing those things because I felt that I needed them. After my dad got us back from OCS we lived in Anchorage and for me it was such a dramatic change that I started to do poorly in school. I was in middle school when I decided to be homeschooled and after that all I was interested in was getting high, just so I could escape the reality I lived in. Because my dad was into drugs and my siblings and I couldn't be around each other for long without trying to kill one another. Since my dad is disabled he couldn't work and due to that we were always struggling day to day.

I was always being put down by my dad almost every other day. In his eyes I was never going to amount to anything because I was smoking weed every day and drinking from time to time. It had gotten to the point that I had tried to commit suicide, but I thought about my younger sisters and who was going to take care of them.

When I was sixteen I wanted to prove him wrong so I tried to cold turkey everything the first time and ended up doing the same old things. So I started smoking and drinking less each time until I was like nope I don't feel like doing that. Because I realized how much of a better person I was when I wasn't high or drunk. I learned how to love myself; I saw how much I improved afterwards. I did better in school I graduated on time; I even had an internship with the RAISE Program! My younger sisters look up to me. But I'm still trying to be a better person, a good role model for my sisters. I'm trying to get a higher education so that I may get a good paying job so I can give them a home where they can grow and put roots down instead of drifting from place to place.

I hope that you keep supporting counseling, treatment, and job support for the youth in Alaska, so we can have a better brighter future. And to show that there are people out there who care, who are willing to help. Thank you for listening to my story.

Alaska State Legislature  
Capitol Building  
Juneau, AK 99801

February 5, 2014

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Sincerely,

Brooke wes  
Brooke wes  
nightmoonbw@gmail.com

My name is Brooke wes I'm From Juneau

I fully support the Passing of this bill. when I was a child I was sexually abused by my father and my older sister. I think people who sexually abuse others learned it from someone else. so I think it is a learned behavior I would Really like to break the cycle  
Thank you

## Story Practice Sheet

- Is your story short and to the point? Is it only 1-3 minutes and only one page?
- Is it "real"? Does your story come from your heart and inspire others?
- Does your story let listeners know what outcome or action you're asking for – the "ask"?
- Use the reverse side, or a separate piece of paper, if you need extra space.

**Introduce yourself** – your name and residence, subject, and purpose. (2-4 sentences)

Hello my name is Brooke wees. I am 22 years old. I was in foster care until I was 13 and then I got adopted.

**Tell Your Story** – the experience or challenge, the action, the result. (5-15 sentences)

I don't remember most of my childhood. I do know that a lot of the time my siblings and I did not have food or water or clothes. We did not have heat or blankets. We went days in our dirty clothing. I was born at home I was born into a family that badly abused drugs and alcohol we got beaten so badly that I could not sit for days we got taken away a few times but for some reason they would put us back but when I was 5 1/2 years old I was in a very bad accident and we got taken away for the last time.

**Wrap it up** – state your "ask" and say thank you. (3-5 sentences)

I think kids should be seen and heard you never know what goes on behind closed doors and the disabilities that might be even more effected by it. So take the time to see and hear. Thank you!



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When I first was meeting with a social worker in 2nd grade, I was asked why I didn't tell anyone about Sincerely, the abuse. I told that social worker that I did, I had told my teacher. I don't know why the teacher didn't help me.

Ciara Goodman  
Ciara M. Goodman

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**Introduce yourself** – your name and residence, subject, and purpose (2-4 sentences)

I am born & raised Alaskan Native, Ciara Goodman. I am a college student @ UAA in Anchorage. Currently 22 yrs old. I aged out of foster care, graduated residential treatment, and lived in many places of Alaska. I consider myself an intelligent, empathetic, and genuine person and I want to help make a difference.

**Tell Your Story** – the experience or challenge, the action, the result (5-15 sentences)

My childhood was filled with inconsistency, multiple homes & schools, rejection from family, early medication and a loss of my will to live. Addiction, manipulation, greed & lack of love contributed to the trials of my childhood. As much as it hurt to feel like nothing more than a file it was more painful to witness that I was not alone. That many, hundreds more, children carried the same burden as me, if not worse. And more so we could not see a light at the end of this dark & confusing tunnel. As I realized the depths of the issues concerning many homeless youth I felt the need to do something. Yet I was powerless then. The change that is seriously needed can only source from the power in charge, & unfortunately they didn't know the problem existed. These painful truths gave me the drive to carry on in hopes that I can find a way to break light into that tunnel and see that no foster kid walks through it alone, again.

**Wrap it up** – state your "ask" and say thank you (3-5 sentences)

It is my desire to join the forces that will aid these youth and to help influence change for a better & brighter tomorrow. I hope to minimize the number of children facing the same sorrows and pain as I did and to increase those filled with love, hope, & fulfillment. Thank you for listening and please join me in supporting Alaska's Youth.

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February 5, 2014

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Sincerely, *Alex Krause*  
Alex Krause.

1/5/14

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**Introduce yourself** - your name and residence, subject, and purpose (2-4 sentences)

Hello My Name is Alexandra Krause, I'm From North Pole Alaska, I currently live in Fairbanks, I work at QuizNoz and I ride in my car with my fiancée, who is a college student, and my Dog Romeo

**Tell Your Story** - the experience or challenge, the action, the result (5-15 sentences)

I grew up rough. Never around positive influences. Drug addicts and moving from home to home. I've struggled with homelessness my whole life. Growing up I had 13 Child Protective Service cases on me and my younger sister. But we never got taken from my mother. I often wonder if life would have been better if they did take us. A Gang through that I learned to lie about things so I could stay with my mom. they made it too easy. I moved out when I was 11. And no one noticed, as was long gone. there I found S.O.A.P. They helped for a long time. then they started losing funds.

**Wrap it up** - state your "ask" and say thank you (3-5 sentences)

I can't receive help from SOAP any more because they have too many clients, and too little money. I'm not worried about myself this has been my life. But those kids are me and local homeless programs need much more funding and

services available to them. 2014 Youth Policy Summit Application - Page 5 of 5

Thank You!

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Capitol Building  
Juneau, AK 99801

February 5, 2014

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Sincerely,

 2/4/14  
James LeBlanc - Tweedy

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**Introduce yourself** – your name and residence, subject, and purpose (2-4 sentences)

My name is James Alexander Lettsland-Tuesday. My name before adoption was James Robert LeBlanc. I am twenty years old and live in Juneau Ak. I was placed in foster care when I was 10 and was in and out of treatment and jail till I was 19.

**Tell Your Story** – the experience or challenge, the action, the result (5-15 sentences)

I can always remember when I was young and small and scared, lonely and always getting into trouble. When I was placed in foster care with my two younger brothers Isaac (6) and August (5) I was ten. When in foster care I never committed but accepted it after being placed in residential 14 times. I was sent to treatment at the age of 14 for a crime I did not commit. I was then placed on probation. Now I have been between jail and treatment since I was 19. I was then homeless until now although I am now living in the glory hole.

**Wrap it up** – state your "ask" and say thank you (3-5 sentences)

I hope the story I have presented to you will help you look at the youth systems and make the changes that would make young childrens lives happier and something they can be proud of. Thank you for reading my story. I hope it helps you make the needed changes that are needed. Thank you for your time.

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Juneau, AK 99801

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Sincerely,

Deborah

Deborah  
Yunak

Yunak

Scammon Bay

Scam Bay

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My name is Deborah Yunak, I'm 19 yrs. old, and I live in Scammon Bay Alaska. I went to a residential treatment in the year of 2010 to Fairbanks for 9 months for substance abuse and depression.

once I got into Junior high I started to get into trouble with marijuana use and alcohol. I thought it would make me cool and have more friends by doing substance abuse, I used it daily to where I got addicted. I started to miss school more often because I was so depressed missing my aunt that passed away. I'd always let my friends make me alcohol. I use to think doing substance abuse would help me go to my aunt, but nothing happen, my mom finally realize that I haven't been home, so she called the school attendant to see if I've been going school, she told my mom that I haven't been to school for a week now. when I finally went home I went home drunk, my mom scold me, I took it the wrong way and hung my self.

I hope that the support of our community programs help our young people with counseling, treatment, and jobs so they can be close to our loved ones, and our friends to stay out of big trouble. And I want to say thank you for listening to my story.



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Capitol Building  
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Sincerely,



Kristie Lynn Sheppard 2.5.14

Mountain Village, AK

Hello, my name is Kristie Lynn Sheppard, eighteen years of age from Mountain Village, Alaska. I was born in Bethel, Alaska. I am a Senior in High School, during the summer I work with Kwikpak Fisheries. My favorite things to do are math, writing poems and singing.

I have a lot of experience with being in foster care. The first time I ever got taken away from my mother I was five years old. My younger sister wasn't around. I stayed in an OCS facility for a while, then moved to a foster home where they treated me horribly. But I was too afraid to tell anyone. After about six months I moved with my mother and sister in treatment. A couple years later my two twin baby sisters were born. When they were about one year old we all got taken away by OCS. We all stayed in an OCS facility for a while, then were separated into different foster homes. We were all reunited after a few months, been to two different foster homes, then I moved to Mountain Village with my sister, the youngest ones are now adopted. I've also been to about ten different schools my whole life, which was pretty complicated.

This kind of experience is very hard to go through, no one deserves it. But sometimes we just have to deal with it. Children who go through this must get stronger because I had to. Well, thank you very much for listening to my experience and I hope this story would be able to help others. And I hope you can help by listening to our stories!

Hi my name is Nathaniel Bennett and I currently live in Anchorage, Alaska. I am part Alaskan native and African American and I have experience growing up in rural Alaska for about 10 years in the village of Chevak. I am a for intern for Alaska Native Justice Center assisting two Youth Advocates on working with you who have been in trouble with Alcoholism. I also attend the University Of Anchorage, AK as a Justice Major. I've experienced about 2 days of treatment at North Star behavioral center for underage drinking, which my parents sent me to. I've also had trouble growing up through bullied in school which led to problems from childhood to teen hood.

Since I was growing up at a young age I spent most of my life in the village. From the time I entered elementary I was bullied by my classmates and kids around the village because I looked different from the other kids in my village. Experiencing bullying at that young of an age caused me to lash out in anger against my classmates and caused me to verbally attack my teachers because they did not prevent the bullying that the kids were putting me through. So my parents stepped in and spoke to the principal and teachers to help stop the bullying. Since they did little to prevent the problem, my parents moved me out of the village and into the city. When they did that my anger and disruptive behavior quickly diminished against my new teachers and classmates. By the time I entered middle school and high school I formed a phobia with socializing with other people because I thought that they were judging the way I looked and spoke. So that caused me to live a very isolated and private life style. So after a while I became very lonely and depressed and decided to drink alcohol to relieve the social anxiety. When I would drink alcohol, it made me feel more "accepted" by others and I felt like I could talk to anyone without feeling judged and without feeling uneasy. After a while of drinking, I would

either get arrested for being intoxicated, wake up with severe hang overs, and get into fights with family and friends which would strain relationships between my parents and siblings.

I decided to give up drinking in order to show my parents, siblings, and friends that I was no screw up. I found myself in a prison without a job or diploma and decided it was time for me to be responsible for myself and to live a productive life. I studied for about a 6 months to prepare for my test for my diploma. I took the test and earned my diploma. As soon as I earned my diploma I applied for jobs. I had got hired for various different jobs that were involved in construction. I wanted to take a break from that type of work, and gain more experience in data entry, working with youth, and computer programs. I searched around for job openings, so that I could gain experience in helping people. So I got a job working with youth who were in trouble with drugs and alcohol at the Alaska Native Justice Center. With experience in living a negative life style into a productive and positive one, I plan to show other youth that they too can make a difference in their lives to stop underage drinking and drug usage and to be responsible in their lives by earning an education, staying out of trouble, finding career that they are interested in, and to be a productive citizen in their community.

I know that pretty soon the government will create classes, clubs, or programs to help educate youth from abusing alcohol/drugs, to stop underage drinking, and to ignore peer pressure from family and friends. Also to help show them the steps to live a healthy life style, to go to college or trade school, and to maintain their paths to success. I appreciate your patience to read my personal story, thank you and have a good day.