

Alaska Women's Lobby

P.O. Box 20891, Juneau, AK 99802-0891
AWL@akwomenslobby.org ~ www.akwomenslobby.org

Letter of Support HB 73
CRIMES; VICTIMS; CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT
February 2013

The Alaska Women's Lobby is a statewide grassroots organization dedicated to advancing the right of women, children and families. The Women's Lobby appreciates the Governor's work to strengthen laws that protect domestic violence and sexual assault victims and hold offenders of these crimes accountable for their actions.

We specifically support adding to the crime of sexual assault in the third degree the egregious action of a probation or parole officer engaging in sexual penetration with a person who is on probation or parole. A probation or parole officer has authority both real and implied over a person on probation or parole and as such cannot have a consensual sexual encounter with a probationer or parolee.

Probation and parole officers must exhibit professionalism whether on or off duty. When acting in an official capacity, they must not compromise the trust of the public. The Federal Probation Officers Association, the American Probation and Parole Association and Alaska's own Code of Ethics all include recognition of the office as a symbol of public faith and requires the officer to accept it as a public trust. They also ask the officer to conduct his/her personal life with decorum, neither accepting nor granting favors in connection with the office and requires officers to put loyalty to moral principles above personal consideration. Alaska's code further requires officers to not engage in undue familiarity with probationers or parolees. It is clear that people who choose to enter the probation/parole profession do so knowing they are called to keep a strict code of proper conduct and are held to high standards.

Whether or not the probationer or parolee is under the specific supervision of an officer, they know that any officer has the authority to report misconduct/violations of their probation or parole conditions and can revoke probation or parole. It seems obvious that a person would believe he or she had to comply with a request of a sexual nature or suffer more consequences.

Adding probation or parole officers engaging in sexual penetration with a person who is on probation or parole to the crime of sexual assault in the third degree sends a strong message to everyone; Alaskans expect those we entrust with upholding the law and assisting offenders to successfully re-enter our communities to be true to their professional code of ethics, to be role-models and to conduct themselves accordingly.

AWL Statewide Steering Committee

Defending and advancing the rights and needs of women, children, and families in Alaska.

**Statewide Steering Committee: Jayne Andreen, Elizabeth Belknap, Nancy Courtney,
LaRae Jones, Jorden Nigro, Taber Rehbaum, Karl Robinson, Shannon Vargas
Lobbyist: Caren Robinson**