

7702 Stillwater Circle

Wasilla, Alaska 99654

February 28, 2013

Re: **Support for HB No. 54, S**

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter in support of HB No. 54, “An Act relating to the identification, location, and notification of specified family members and family friends of a child who is in state custody.”

My name is Jennifer Payton. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in the State of Alaska. I have worked in the mental health field for 18 years. My experience is varied, and includes work as an Adoption Home Study Writer. This gave me a firsthand look at the need in our state for homes for children in need of adoption. Along with my professional work I am also a therapeutic foster parent for teenage boys. The number of youth in need of foster/adopt homes is astounding and I believe it is our duty to try our best in finding placement for these youth. Making the right match is an important factor for the success of foster homes, and beginning with next of kin is most logical as the youth are already connected to them biologically, and most likely have a level of comfort with them, as well as heritage and history in common.

Thank you for hearing my voice and through me the voice of children in foster care.

Respectfully,

Jennifer L. Payton, LCSW

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HB 54 supporting document letter
Jennifer Payton 2-28-13