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Governor Sean Parnell
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January 15, 2013

The Honorable Charlie Huggins
President of the Senate
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear President Huggins,

We remain dedicated to ending the epidemic of domestic violence and sexual assault in Alaska and building on our shared successes of the past three legislative sessions to ensure safe homes and strong families in our state. To those ends, I am transmitting a bill under the authority of Article III, Section 18 of the Alaska Constitution, relating to crimes associated with domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking.

Measures within this bill provide stronger protections for victims and survivors, strengthen penalties on the demand side of sex trafficking, strengthen law enforcement investigative tools to track down and prosecute perpetrators, and create tougher sentencing provisions.

Stronger Protections for Victims and Survivors

To protect victims of domestic violence and sexual assault from further trauma, this legislation will authorize the court to order GPS tracking devices on perpetrators with protective orders to further provide for the safety of the victim when warranted. It will restrict offenders from obtaining graphic forensic evidence of victims, clarify that probation and parole officers may not engage in sexual conduct with a person under their supervision, and restrict offenders in custody from contacting a victim. In cases where a domestic violence offender violates conditions of release, we will mandate an in-person appearance before a judge prior to their release, as they present a more serious risk to the victim and the public. And for those victims that have yet to seek justice, the statute of limitations for crimes of felony sex trafficking and human trafficking have been removed.

To protect children from further danger and abuse, the bill would allow the Department of Health and Social Services to petition a court to discontinue the department's obligation to engage in reunification efforts with parents or guardians who have committed sexual abuse against the child or who are required to register as a sex offender, thereby freeing up limited resources to make reunification efforts in other cases.

COMMITTEE COPY

SENATE BILL NO. 22

Strengthen Penalties on the Demand Side of Sex Trafficking

This legislation will require “johns” who prey on young people to register as sex offenders. We will mandate the forfeiture of property used in these crimes, and expand the definition of “sexual felony” to include online enticement of a minor and sex trafficking, so these crimes can be used as prior convictions in sentencing.

Investigative Tools

The bill allows the attorney general to request the court to authorize interception of private conversations in connection with sex trafficking. Currently, this investigative authority exists in cases of murder, kidnapping, or serious drug offenses. Sex trafficking and human trafficking are serious crimes that commonly would be carried out by coordination among perpetrators. Allowing for this investigative tool would help identify offenders and protect victims of these crimes.

Sentencing

To further strengthen sentencing provisions, the bill would also require that a defendant who is being sentenced for two or more crimes involving child pornography and similar offenses be sentenced to some consecutive term for each crime for which the person is being sentenced. Even a small amount of consecutive time for each crime gives closure to victims and justice to the public. Additionally, the bill would ensure that a prisoner is not eligible for good time release if the prisoner has committed an unclassified or a Class A sexual felony.

The bill also addresses a decision of the Alaska Court of Appeals, *Collins v. State*, 287 P.3d 791 (Alaska 2012). A majority, in my view, misinterpreted the legislative history for increased sentencing ranges for sexual felonies by holding that the history indicated lower standards for referral of sexual felonies to a three-judge panel. The bill corrects that interpretation.

I urge your support of this important legislation to enhance the safety of Alaskans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean Parnell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sean" and last name "Parnell" clearly distinguishable.

Sean Parnell
Governor

Enclosure