

# SITKANS AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE

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March 28, 2016

Members of the House Health and Social Services Committee  
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing in opposition of HB334. SAFV has been advocating for survivors of domestic violence since 1984. We have concerns with language in HB334 changing requiring a history of perpetuating domestic violence to invoke rebuttable presumption to requiring a criminal conviction of domestic violence.

Often times, victims do not press criminal charges for various reasons but will instead get a civil protective order. Currently judges can review civil history in order to make an informed decision with regards to custody agreements involving domestic violence. This is also important because domestic violence criminal cases are often plead down. With the current language, these pleas can still be considered by judges in custody cases.

Children who are exposed to domestic violence in their home are at an increased risk of physical injury and can have a severe impact both emotionally and to their mental health. In addition, there is an increased risk for the children exposed to domestic violence to be in a violent relationship as an adult.

Please protect Alaskan children from the damaging effects of domestic violence by considering our input on HB 334. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Michelle Mahoney, Acting Director  
Sitkans Against Family Violence



Member of the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault  
United Way Member Agency