



526 Gaffney Road
Fairbanks, AK.99701
January 24, 2017

The Honorable Steve Thompson
State Capitol Room 500
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Thompson,

WallBusters is an advocacy group for people with disabilities. Our mission is to educate and advocate for the removal of barriers to independence for people with disabilities. We also advocate for the rights of people who experience a disability because it is our social responsibility to ensure that a person with a disability is able to access the same social benefits as any other member of our community.

We strongly support House Bill 16, the Training and Disability ID Bill. We support this piece of legislation because the primary goal of this bill is targeted education. This bill will ensure that law enforcement and corrections officers at the academy level will be informed about what a physical disability is, what a hidden disability is and what barriers a person with a disability may encounter. These professionals will become better equipped to interact with people who experience either apparent or non-apparent disabilities regardless of whether people with disabilities encounter the "systems" as victims, witnesses, or alleged perpetrators.

We also support the ID component of the bill because it will enable people who experience a disability to voluntarily disclose their disability in a discreet manner on an Alaska Driver's License or ID card. This ID marker is completely voluntary and will be a discreet way to inform a law enforcement officer that the person in front of them has a disability even though it may not be initially apparent to the officer.

Thank you for sponsoring HB16. This bill will ensure that law enforcement professionals in Alaska are trained to respectfully and appropriately interact with people who experience a disability. This legislation will go a long way to avoid misunderstandings and protect the right of people with disabilities be treated fairly and appropriately. HB16 will help improve the lives of all Alaskans, especially those with apparent and non-apparent disabilities.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Traylor
WallBusters