

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
State Capitol, Room 421
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Rep. Spohnholz:

This letter is being sent in support of HB 138, which permanently designates March as Sobriety Awareness Month. Both Eklutna, Inc. and Fallen Up Ministries have taken a strong interest in and support Social Justice.

As you know, Alaska has one of the highest rates of Substance Abuse in the Nation. Sadly, this factors into Domestic Violence, and other crimes of which Alaska also has a higher than normal statistic nationwide.

I am the Parent and Sister of recovering Addicts. My Daughter has just completed Court Ordered Substance Abuse Treatment in Seattle and has six months of clean & sober recovery. It was necessary to send her to Seattle, as there was no immediate room available at the very limited facilities here in AK. My Sister has been clean & sober for over thirty years and is a lifelong member of Narcotics Anonymous.

Individuals who suffer from addiction do recover! Addiction is a brain-based disease, it is not "bad people, who willfully choose wrong things." It is known that many Addicts have had Adverse Childhood Experiences/Mental Health issues. Also, as with the current Opiate Crisis we are facing, many became addicted by taking prescription medicine. The support that Addicts receive in their recovery process is critical. It is known that in many recovery programs, the first step is to admit that there is a problem.

I believe it is a critical first step for our State to recognize that we have and have had problems with Substance Abuse for many years. By declaring March as Sobriety Month, we acknowledge that there is an issue, which can then help us move forward by recognizing and identifying solutions. Perhaps more importantly, we need to educate our population by every means possible to understand the causes and cures for Substance Abuse, and the impact it's had on our State.

Declaring March as Sobriety Month in Alaska will also set us up to be a Leader in our great Nation to set the example and fight the good fight for a healthier and happier State and Country. If the right steps are taken, we can also reduce crime and recidivism. This will save both tax payer dollars and the lives of our most precious resource, our Citizens.

Thank you for Sponsoring HB 138.

Sincerely,

Kim Zello
Eklutna, Inc.
Fallen Up Ministries