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**REPRESENTATIVE
SHARON JACKSON**

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District 13 – Chugiak- Eagle River – JBER

**House Bill 113
Sponsor Statement**

The Blue Star and Gold Star Families Act of 2019

“An Act relating to private sector and state employment preferences for active service members, veterans, and spouses and dependent children of active service members and veterans; relating to employment preference for surviving spouses of deceased service members and veterans; and relating to employment preferences for disabled veterans and former prisoners of war.”

The purpose of House Bill 113 is to extend current hiring preferences to military spouses and dependent children in the State of Alaska and the private sector.

Military families fall into two categories: Blue Star or Gold Star Families. Blue Star families are military spouses and dependents of active service members and veterans. Gold Star families are spouses and children of a deceased service members who died while in active duty.

A recent report from the Department of Defense found that a quarter of military spouses are unemployed or underemployed. There are several efforts being done in all 50 states, but Alaska is one of the few states that do not extend employment preferences to military spouses. There are roughly 151,881 military spouses and dependents in Alaska according to the Alaska Department of Military & Veteran Affairs.

This is a small but significant way to honor our service members and their families, who are making a sacrifice to serve their country, yet often fall between the cracks while doing so.