



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

## Department of Public Safety

COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT  
L. Diane Casto, Executive Director

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March 9, 2020

Representative Ivy Spohnholz  
State Capitol, Room 421  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Spohnholz:

At the direction of the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault's Board of Directors, I am pleased to provide our support for House Bill 133, relating to "clean up" language for statutes that guide the DHSS Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The most significant component of HB 133 for CDVSA are changes to AS.11.47 clarifying the definitions of DJJ juvenile probation officer staff and their position of authority over a minor.

The need for this change was brought to light during the 2017 court case *State v. Carey* where a DJJ facility staff member engaged in a sexual relationship with a minor he previously supervised and was acquitted due to the vague language in the DJJ statute. We understand that HB 133 clarifies that DJJ facility staff are in a position of authority over DJJ youth. It is our hope these statute changes will no longer allow this type of behavior to occur without accountability.

The other significant component of this legislation that is important to CDVSA is related to AS 47.14.020(a) that adds juvenile probation officers and DJJ staff to the list of mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect. While reporting child abuse and neglect is a policy of DJJ, this statute change will codify this requirement in law. It is important that all Alaskans are willing to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect of children, and especially those professionals who work and interact with children and youth every day.

The Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault supports the overall intent of HB 133, especially the two components identified above. Thank you for introducing this important piece of legislation.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "L. Diane Casto".

L. Diane Casto, MPA  
Executive Director



Alaska's Council on  
Domestic Violence  
& Sexual Assault