

# Part 5 – Seeking Justice, Wanting Protection: Disparities in Sexual Assault Crimes in Nome

By [KNOM Radio](#) | February 27, 2021



*This is the final part in a [series of five stories](#) that explores the community dynamics around sexual assault in Nome and efforts by law enforcement to heal long-standing mistrust.*

*If you need to talk with someone while reading this, or need help, here are some resources:*

Bering Sea Women's Group: (907) 443-5444; Toll Free: 1-800-570-5444.  
Behavioral Health Services at the Norton Sound Health Corporation: (907) 443-3344, emergency number: 443-3200  
Alaska Native Justice Center: (907) 793-3550  
STAR Alaska: (907) 276-7273; Toll Free (800) 478-8999  
ANDVSA: (907) 586-3650

## Addressing Caseloads

Nome Mayor John Handeland was one of many who highlighted the need for more district attorneys in Nome to help address the overwhelming caseload that current DA John Earthman has to deal with on his own.



Nome Mayor John Handeland in front of his NJUS office. Photo by Jenna Kunze.

Handeland says he has reached out to the state asking when the vacancy left by former Nome prosecutor Tom Jamgochian will be filled but it is unclear when someone new from the state will come to town. Meanwhile, Handeland asserts that it is not the City of Nome's purview to help fill that void but there are other factors at play as well.

"It isn't the city's responsibility to fund the State Department of law... and I don't believe that is lack of funding, [as to] why they can't fill the position, as far as I know. But that it's other factors...maybe somebody doesn't want to come to Nome, they don't believe that the state is steady enough, with employment, and based on our budget. They may decide to come to Nome, and they don't have a job, come July 1st...those types of considerations. What's the longevity and the likelihood that I'm going to stay employed in a year? And that is a big question every year with the state currently."

— Nome Mayor John Handeland