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January 21, 2022

By electronic delivery only:

The Honorable Matthew Claman
Chair, Alaska House Judiciary Committee
120 Fourth Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Chair Claman,

On behalf of the ADL (Anti-Defamation League) Pacific Northwest Region, we are pleased to submit this letter in support of Alaska [House Bill 51 \(Rep. Josephson\)](#), a bill that would add sexual orientation or gender identity as protected categories under Alaska's hate crime law, sending a critical and long overdue message that hate has no home in the great state of Alaska.

For far too long, the state's hate crime laws have not provided protections for victims who are targeted based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. This sends a devastating message to victims of hate crimes that they are not worthy of protection simply because of who they love or how they express themselves. At a time of rising hatred and bigotry across the nation, this gap in the law must be closed to ensure we are protecting all Alaskans and holding perpetrators accountable for their actions.

With the rise of hate and bigotry in community, House Bill 51 is a critical piece of legislation

Many incidents of hate crimes go unreported. Especially when victims know they will not be protected, as is the case under the current Alaska state hate crime law. Still, we know that, according to the 2019 FBI Hate Crimes Report, the state experienced its highest number of hate crimes (11) in the last decade, with a third of those incidents committed based on the victim's sexual orientation – despite not being a protected category under Alaska state hate crime law. Additionally, in 2020, of the 7,759 hate crimes documented by the FBI across the country, nearly one in six were motivated by bias towards an individual's actual or perceived sexual orientation (1,051 incidents) or gender identity (236 incidents).

These figures understate the true number of hate crimes motivated by a victim's sexual orientation or gender identity. Because state law does not provide hate crime



protections for victims who are targeted based on these protected characteristics or track efficient data, victims are more reluctant to come forward to report these crimes and law enforcement may not be equipped to recognize and respond to such crimes when victims do come forward. In addition, it is well documented that victims are far more likely to report a hate crime if they know a special reporting system is in place – if they believe law enforcement is ready and able to respond effectively. By passing House Bill 51 and enshrining this protection under the law, a more accurate picture of how our communities are affected by hate and bigotry can be seen.

Alaska has the opportunity to take a step forward in its commitment toward equal treatment and protections for all. We urge you to support House Bill 51.

Sincerely,

Mara Kimmel
Executive Board Member
ADL Pacific Northwest

January 19, 2022

Alaska State Legislature

The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, a membership organization of domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy organizations across Alaska, would like to share our support of HB51-Version A adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of aggravators considered during criminal sentencing.

According to the FBI Hate Crimes Report published in November, 2020, crimes based on sexual orientation represent 16.7% of hate crimes, the third largest category after race and religion. The report also shows an increase in gender identity hate crimes rising from 2.2% in 2018 to 2.7% in 2019.

These crimes are happening in Alaska. There are many stories of victimization that have been shared based upon sexual orientation and gender identity. This has included rocks thrown through windshields, threatening notes, physical assaults, and rapes where the survivor has stated the rapist commented on their sexual orientation or gender identity while the rape was occurring.

While there is much work to be done to address the equity issue of those marginalized in our communities, the passage of this bill will send a message that Alaska values all residents for their diversity and will continue to work towards safety for all.

Sincerely,



Brenda Stanfill
Executive Director

Member Programs

Anchorage AWAIC, STAR | Hooper Bay Bay Haven | Bethel TWC | Cordova CFRC | Craig HOPE | Dillingham
SAFE | Emmonak EWS | Fairbanks IAC | Haines Becky's Place | Homer SPHH | Juneau AWARE |
Kenai LeeShore Center | Ketchikan WISH | Kodiak KWRCC | Kotzebue MFCC | Nome BSWG | Petersburg WAVE |
Seward Seward Prevention Coalition | Sitka SAFV | Unalaska USAFV | Utqiagvik AWIC | Valdez AVV