

34TH ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Session

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Committee

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REPRESENTATIVE ANDREW GRAY

House Bill 157 (34-LS0458/I) Sponsor Statement February 17th, 2026

Sibling relationships are among the most powerful and enduring connections a person can have.

For children in foster care, siblings are often a remaining link to their past, their identity, and their family. These bonds provide emotional stability, comfort, and a sense of belonging during an experience that is often confusing and traumatic.

American Academy of Pediatrics notes that family separation “can cause irreparable harm, disrupting a child’s brain architecture and affecting his or her short- and long-term health”. When siblings are placed apart in foster care, many never receive regular visits or contact with one another. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020)

Siblings who maintain contact experience greater feelings of safety, fewer emotional and behavioral challenges, stronger peer relationships, and better school performance. (NCCWE)

Under current Alaska law, adoption ends the legal relationship between adopted children and their birth family, including siblings. HB 157 preserves legal sibling relationships and encourages adoptive families to maintain these vital connections.

I urge you to support HB 157 and protect all siblings in foster care.