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Our mission is to create a culture that values parenting and keeping children safe through education, respect, advocacy, and strengthening families.

April 22, 2026

Re: Support of HB384 – Definition of “Victim Counseling Center”

Dear Honorable Members of the Alaska Legislature:

On behalf of the Resource Center for Parents and Children (RCPC), I write in strong support of House Bill 384, which would amend AS 18.66.250 to include Tribal governments within the definition of “victim counseling center” by adding the words “or tribal” to the statute. This small but critical change will ensure that Tribal advocates working with survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault receive the same confidentiality protections already afforded to advocates working within private organizations, military programs, and local governments.

RCPC is a nonprofit organization serving Interior Alaska through prevention, advocacy, and intervention services for children and families impacted by abuse, neglect, violence, trauma, and exploitation. RCPC operates Stevie’s Place Child Advocacy Center, provides forensic interviews and family advocacy services, supports multidisciplinary team coordination, offers supervised visitation and family support services, and works collaboratively with Tribal partners, law enforcement, schools, healthcare providers, and child welfare agencies to improve outcomes for children and families throughout our region.

Every day, advocates across Alaska help survivors navigate some of the most dangerous and traumatic moments of their lives. Survivors disclose abuse, develop safety plans, seek shelter, and access critical support services because they believe those conversations are protected. Tribal advocates are doing this same work in communities throughout Alaska, often in rural areas where resources are limited and trust is essential. Yet under current law, those confidential communications remain vulnerable to subpoena and disclosure. Throughout my career, I have worked with children, families, and survivors in both rural and urban Alaska communities and have firsthand experience responding to the unique barriers survivors face in accessing safe, confidential support services. I am also a trained Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) advocate and have personally responded to SART calls alongside multidisciplinary partners supporting survivors during some of the most traumatic moments of their lives.

As Executive Director of RCPC and Board President of the Alaska Children’s Alliance, the statewide membership organization supporting Alaska’s Child Advocacy Centers, I understand firsthand how vital confidentiality is to survivor safety and community trust. Child advocacy centers and victim service providers rely on strong collaborative relationships with Tribal partners to support children and families impacted by violence, abuse, and exploitation. Survivors should not receive different protections simply because they sought help from a Tribal government advocate instead of another recognized provider.

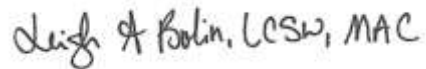
HB 384 does not interfere with criminal investigations, mandatory reporting obligations, or public safety efforts. It simply ensures that Tribal advocates are recognized under Alaska law in the same manner as other victim service providers already protected by statute.

Most importantly, this change strengthens survivor safety. In many communities, survivors already hesitate to seek help due to fear, stigma, and concerns about confidentiality. Extending these protections to Tribal advocates removes barriers to disclosure and allows advocates to fully support victims without fear that sensitive communications could later be used against them.

RCPC and the Alaska Children's Alliance strongly support HB 384 and urge swift passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Leigh Bolin, LCSW, MAC

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leigh A. Bolin, LCSW, MAC". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Executive Director
Resource Center for Parents and Children

Board President
Alaska Children's Alliance