

**Alaska State Senate**  
**Senator Forrest Dunbar**

**Session:**  
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**SPONSOR STATEMENT**

***SB 1: CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FUND***

SB 1 CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FUND improves low-income Alaskans' access to the civil justice system by increasing the funding available for the Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC). ALSC is a state-established nonprofit that provides free legal help in non-criminal cases to those who otherwise cannot afford a lawyer.

This bill amends the statute creating the Civil Legal Services Fund (AS 37.05.590). Currently, the state appropriates 10% of State Court System filing fees to Alaska Legal Services. If passed, this bill would allow the state to appropriate up to 25% of those fees.

In the past three decades, the number of Alaskans eligible for legal services has more than doubled. However, the state's contribution to Alaska Legal Services Corporation is only a fraction of what it was in 1984. A bill passed in 2018 allows the legislature to appropriate filing fees for ALSC. The appropriation was initially set at 25% but was later reduced to 10% with the intention to reassess the organization's needs later. The original contribution level is now necessary to fully support ALSC's mission.

Senate Bill 1 aims to stabilize the Alaska Legal Services Corporation funding and help ensure that civil legal aid is available to all Alaskans, not just the few who can afford it. I urge you to join me in supporting SB 1.