



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
STATE LEGISLATURE

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Sponsor Statement

HB 265 An Act changing the term “child pornography” to “child sexual abuse material”

“An Act changing the term ‘child pornography’ to ‘child sexual abuse material.’”

House Bill 265 proposes to change the term “child pornography” to “child sexual abuse material” throughout Alaska Statutes.

Child sexual abuse is a heinous crime that inflicts lasting trauma on its victims. The terminology used to describe such offenses is not merely a matter of semantics but plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and legal frameworks. In the Alaska Statutes, a shift towards the term “Child Sexual Abuse Material” (CSAM) over the commonly used “child pornography” is not just linguistics; it is a recognition of the gravity of the crime and a step toward more accurate and victim-centric language.

Language is a powerful tool that shapes our understanding of various issues. The term “child pornography” carries misleading connotations, suggesting a consensual act. It fails to capture the essence of the crime when it involves minors, as children cannot provide legal consent. The use of “Child Sexual Abuse Material” serves to correct this misconception, highlighting the non-consensual and abusive nature of the acts depicted.

Prominent organizations in the fight against child exploitation and abuse, including the Alaska Department of Public Safety, have recognized the importance of using accurate and sensitive terminology. They are using the term “child pornography” less in favor of “Child Sexual Abuse Material.” This shift in language reflects a commitment to acknowledging the trauma suffered by the victims and challenges the societal perception of these crimes.

There is a growing recognition that “Child Sexual Abuse Material” is a more accurate and sensitive description. By incorporating this terminology into the Alaska Statutes, legislators can align state law with evolving international standards and emphasize the severity of the crime and its impact on the victims.

The adoption of the term “Child Sexual Abuse Material” in the Alaska Statutes is not merely a symbolic gesture; it is a critical step toward acknowledging the true nature of the crime and its profound impact on victims. Language matters, and in the fight against child sexual abuse, precise and victim-centric terminology is an essential tool for raising awareness, shaping public perception, and ensuring that the legal system reflects the severity of these offenses.