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February 26, 2018

Re: HCR 22 – Sexual Assault Awareness Month, April 2018

Dear Legislators:

On behalf of our 19 member agencies who provide lifesaving and crisis services to domestic and sexual violence victims and survivors across our state, we want to thank you for recognizing the extent and impact of sexual violence by introducing HCR 22.

We are making strides in this State to address the impacts of sexual violence as well as learning more about how we can prevent sexual violence. The 2015 UAA victimization study reported that at least 50% of the women who were interviewed in the survey reported experiencing either domestic, sexual, or both types of violence. The 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Study reported that 1 out of 10 young people who responded to the survey said they had been forced to engage in some type of sexual activity over the past year. For these same young people, electronic bullying is on the rise, and we know that social media platforms are routinely being used to harass and intimidate young people. We also know, however, that there are actions we can take and actions we have already taken.

Ending sexual assault is a priority not only for individuals but also within and amongst communities throughout our State. The Network is honored to stand in support of your efforts, and we applaud the movement we have made as a State to ensure that the backlog of sexual assault kits is being managed in a more efficient and affirming way. We applaud the efforts of the CDVSA to mobilize and convene a sexual assault response leadership team so that we learn more about how victims receive immediate medical care. We applaud your efforts to pass Bree's Law so that we have a renewed commitment to working with young people to prevent dating violence.

We appreciate the work that has been done, and we look forward to future collaboration. We urge you to support HCR 22 and to continue to promote awareness and increase access to resources so that we continue to reduce sexual violence in our State. Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your belief that together, we can end sexual violence.

Carmen Lowry
Executive Director
ANDVSA

Member Programs

Anchorage AWAIC, STAR Bethel TWC Cordova CFRC Dillingham SAFE Fairbanks IAC Homer SPHH Juneau AWARE
Kenai LeeShore Center Ketchikan WISH Kodiak KWRCC Kotzebue MFCC Nome BSWG Petersburg WAVE
Seward SeaView Community Services Sitka SAFV Unalaska USAFV Utqiagvik AWIC Valdez AVV