



THE STATE  
*of* **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of Public Safety**

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March 15, 2018

The Honorable Matt Claman  
Chair, House Judiciary  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Claman,

Please accept this request to schedule SB 148— Background Checks for Police & Training —for consideration by House Judiciary at your earliest convenience. As you recall, SB 148 is the companion bill to HB 293, which is currently also assigned to your committee.

A fingerprint based national criminal history background check is required of all applicants seeking to become police officers in the state for good reason—police officers have a tremendous amount of authority and police legitimacy depends on the public trust. A fingerprint based background check verifies the identity of the applicant and ensures the applicant is free of disqualifying criminal history. Accordingly, this important public safety measure has been required by regulation since the establishment of the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC) in 1972.

Most police departments around the state may perform these checks without issue. For those few small agencies without the financial resources or staff to comply with FBI CJIS requirements APSC had requested the checks on their behalf. However, APSC recently became aware that the FBI has determined that it does not have the authority to do this under current state law. Accordingly, some small agencies now have no way to comply with the requirement to do a fingerprint based background check for their prospective applicants. SB 148 would fix this problem and allow the APSC to resume providing this service.

SB 148 was not amended by the Senate and passed unanimously on the floor vote. A copy of the bill, the sectional analysis, and fiscal notes are attached for your review. All materials previously submitted in support of HB 293 also remain relevant.

Executive Director Robert Griffiths of the Alaska Police Standards Council will be available to present the bill and to answer any questions the committee may have. If you should need any additional information please contact Allison Hanzawa at 465-5505 or

[Allison.Hanzawa@alaska.gov](mailto:Allison.Hanzawa@alaska.gov).

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this important public safety bill.  
Sincerely,

Walt Monegan

Commissioner

