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HB 286: Crime Victim Restitution March 2024

Please accept this statement as support for HB 286. The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA) is Alaska's state coalition of victim services providers. Twenty-four programs across the state focus on services to victims/survivors of sexual assault, stalking and domestic violence.

Restitution is an important component of the criminal justice system that allows victims greater access to justice and an increased likelihood of healing. HB 286 would clarify that prosecutors could request restitution not just for injuries related to counseling, medical, or shelter services, but also for lost income, childcare, elder care, transportation, or any other expenses incurred during the victim's participation in legal action related to the case (such as the investigation or prosecution). This is especially important in cases of domestic violence, because we know that financial hardship is one of the greatest barriers a survivor faces in accessing the legal system and in leaving their abuser in the first place.¹

When a survivor of domestic violence must attend court hearings and other legal proceedings, it often creates a slew of new difficulties for them: missing work, needing additional childcare, having to find transportation to and from the court. These circumstances all place undue financial burden on the survivor. In some cases, survivors lose their job due to absences at work. According to a [FreeForm report](#), as many as 60% of domestic violence survivors lose their jobs as a result of the DV.² In many cases, individuals experiencing domestic violence do not leave their partner due to the financial burden doing so would put on them and their family.³

It is important that prosecutors and judges understand the breadth of circumstances for which restitution may be granted, so that every survivor of violence has the greatest likelihood of receiving the support they need and deserve. HB 286 would increase survivors' ability to access the legal system and increase their ability to escape domestic violence situations in the first place. We hope this bill can move swiftly through the legislative process and be enacted this year.

¹ Kodama, Corrine, and Lauren Wheeler. "Intersecting Barriers: Challenges to Economic Empowerment for Domestic Violence Survivors." Edited by Sharmili Majmudar and Judy Miyashita, *Womenemployed.Org*, Women Employed, 2022, womenemployed.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Intersecting-Barriers-Report_Jan-2022.pdf.

² Kirkley Doyle, Pamela Guerra, and Sonya Passi, Prioritizing Financial Security In The Movement To End IPV: A Roadmap, FreeFrom, July 13, 2021, <https://bit.ly/PS-report>

³ Kodama, Corrine, and Lauren Wheeler. "Intersecting Barriers: Challenges to Economic Empowerment for Domestic Violence Survivors." Edited by Sharmili Majmudar and Judy Miyashita, *Womenemployed.Org*, Women Employed, 2022, womenemployed.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Intersecting-Barriers-Report_Jan-2022.pdf.

Member Programs

Anchorage AWAIC, STAR | Hooper Bay Bay Haven | Bethel TWC | Cordova CFRC | Craig HOPE | Dillingham SAFE | Emmonak EWS | Fairbanks IAC | Haines Becky's Place | Homer SPHH | Juneau AWARE | Kenai LeeShore Center | Ketchikan WISH | Kodiak KWRCC | Kotzebue MFCC | Nome BSWG | Petersburg WAVE | Seward Seward's Safe Harbor | Sitka SAFV | Unalaska USAFV | Utqiagvik AWIC | Valdez AVV