



# AKCHILD & FAMILY

April 4, 2024

Subject: SB 231

Dear Senator Claman and Health, and Social Service Committee:

Thank you for the recent opportunity to provide public testimony and for your openness to feedback related to a bill that ensures that the safety and rights of youth are protected.

I want to amend an aspect of my prior written letter – “The current scope of this bill, while a good step forward, seems to protect only a narrow portion of children in care, **potentially overlooking those in out of state and acute levels of care**. A more inclusive approach that considered different levels of care would ensure broader protection and support for all children within the system, including those in out of state facilities and hospitals.”

This bill specifically refers to Psychiatric Residential Treatment Centers of which there are only a handful in Alaska while the majority of the testimony and uploaded documents expressing concerns are referring to out of state and/or acute care settings that are not covered in the bill as currently written.

We are supportive of the following suggestions that were discussed in the recent hearing:

- Always account for the safety and wellbeing of youth and staff, keeping in mind the importance of supervision and monitoring of high risk behaviors
- Allow for flexibility in communication – provide choice and options to parents/minors to include phone calls and varying lengths of time as developmentally appropriate
- Avoiding redundancy, if other regulations are already in place that address these issues
- Clarifying language within the bill for uniform interpretation by all stakeholders including auditors

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude for your dedicated efforts and leadership. Thank you for your commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of Alaskans.

Warm Regards,

Anne Dennis-Choi

President & CEO

*Serving one child, one family at a time since 1890.*

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