

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



## REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

### **Brief Explanation of HB 151 (Version Y)**

- Implements new training and workforce standards for case carrying staff, including six weeks of training for new workers, and caseload limits for new caseworkers of six families in the first three months and 12 families in the first six months, as well as a statewide average caseload limit of not more than 13 families per worker; directs the department to meet best practice standards through the employment of mentors; requires that a report be provided to the legislature if the department is unable to meet the training and workload requirements
- States that supervisors must certify in writing that a search for relatives has been carried out
- Includes language from the Prudent Parent Standard, to make it easier for foster parents to make day-to-day decisions for a child's activities
- Enables youth ages 14 and older to participate in their case plan
- Enables contact with previous out-of-home caregivers
- Enables support for relatives to obtain foster home licenses
- Enables the sharing of contact information to encourage sibling contact
- States that the department may issue foster home licenses or provide foster care payments to individuals with a barrier condition if the barrier condition is more than 10 years old, and the placement is in the best interests of the child
- Notes that a child may not be placed with an out-of-home care provider if the department determines the child can remain safely at home with an adult family member
- Requires that decisions on applications for foster care home license applications, as well as for variances (for family members who do not have a foster care home license) be made in 45 days, and provides for assistance to family members in obtaining foster care licenses or variances
- Requires that youth leaving custody be provided with, or assisted with obtaining, official documents
- Enables the Department of Health and Social Services to share contact information for at-risk families with local social service agencies that provide services, with parental consent.
- Provides a staggered timeline for implementing the bill's provisions