

May 2, 2025

Dear Members of the Alaska House State Affairs Committee,

We provide this letter of support for HB 24 (Aggravating Factors at Sentencing) on behalf of the board, staff, and members of Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT), a statewide environmental health and justice nonprofit organization dedicated to research and advocacy to protect public health in Alaska and the world. We respectfully request that you support the passage of this critical piece of legislation. We want to thank Representative Josephson for sponsoring HB 24, which we strongly support because Alaska needs to create a culture where hate is condemned.

The purpose of HB 24 is to fix a flaw in our judicial codes by adding two key phrases: sexual orientation or gender identity. Currently, suppose an individual commits a crime against a person because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In that case, nothing in the code can be used to increase the individual's sentence. As a state and society, we must make it clear that hate of any kind will not be tolerated, and if you decide to commit a hate crime against a protected class, your sentence will and should be increased to send a clear message to any other individual, who is thinking about doing a similar action.

In our current times, members of the LBGTQ+ community are under attack from various sides. According to several outlets, hate crimes against the LBGTQ+ community are increasing alarmingly. As a society, we must stand with the LBGTQ+ community and protect their members against hate crimes. We must show the world that these types of crimes are unacceptable and will be thoroughly punished under the law.

Thank you for your careful consideration

Sincerely,

Francisco "Cisco" Mercado  
Policy Director  
Alaska Community Action on Toxics  
1225 East International Airport Road, Suite 220  
Anchorage, Alaska -99518  
907-222-7714, ext. 104  
[Francisco@akaction.org](mailto:Francisco@akaction.org)

Pamela Miller  
IPEN Co-Chair ([www.ipen.org](http://www.ipen.org)) and  
Executive Director  
[Alaska Community Action on Toxics](http://AlaskaCommunityActiononToxics.org)  
1225 East International Airport Rd. Suite 220, Anchorage, Alaska 99518  
Phone (907) 222-7714; Fax (907) 222-7715  
[Pamela@akaction.org](mailto:Pamela@akaction.org)