

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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## **SPONSOR STATEMENT** **HB 170: REPORTING VIOLENT CRIMES** **“KATHLEEN’S LAW”**

House Bill 170 seeks to increase penalties for failing to report violent crimes committed against adults. This bill is about accountability, justice, and ensuring that silence in the face of violence no longer shields perpetrators from consequences.

Too many lives have been lost or shattered due to inaction. One tragic example is the death of Kathleen Jo Henry, an Alaska native woman whose life was violently taken, and whose case underscores the devastating consequences of delayed reporting and failure to act. Kathleen was murdered and sexually assaulted in September of 2019. Her killer was sentenced to a mandatory 99-year sentence for an aggravating factor in torture and her murder. However, a suspect who knew of the crime, being shown her dead body has yet to face any criminal charges. Kathleen’s story is not an isolated incident. Her name joins a heartbreaking list of individuals, particularly Indigenous women, whose voices were silenced and whose families still seek justice.

This legislation is part of an ongoing commitment to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP). For far too long, these cases have been underreported, under-investigated, and overlooked. By strengthening the requirement to report violent crimes, we are reinforcing the message that every life matters, every voice deserves to be heard, and every crime must be met with action.

I urge my colleagues to stand with me in supporting this measure. Not only in honor of Kathleen Jo Henry, but for all those whose stories demand justice and accountability.

**Session: State Capitol • Juneau, AK 99801-1182 • RM 108 • (907) 465-3473**  
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