

# 34<sup>TH</sup> ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## Session

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## Interim

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House Judiciary Committee, Chair

House Health and Social Services  
Committee

House Military and Veterans'  
Affairs Committee

Joint Armed Services Committee,  
Co-chair

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## REPRESENTATIVE ANDREW GRAY

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### House Bill 101: Version I Sponsor Statement

5/20/25

Alaska has the highest rate of rape in the United States—more than three times the national average. We also have one of the highest rates of child sexual assault, nearly six times the national average, according to the UAA Justice Center's Alaska Victimization Survey (AVS). The 2020 AVS found that over 35% of Alaskan women reported being sexually abused before the age of 18. Additionally, sex trafficking remains a major issue in our state, disproportionately affecting vulnerable youth.

Despite these alarming statistics, Alaska's low age of sexual consent creates a dangerous legal loophole that leaves 16- and 17-year-olds particularly vulnerable. Under current law, individuals as young as 16 can legally consent to sex, which leaves them vulnerable to predatory relationships with older adults and complicates prosecution in cases of sexual assault and trafficking. Survivors must prove in court that they did not consent, making it harder to hold perpetrators accountable for sexual crimes, including rape.

House Bill 101 raises Alaska's age of consent to 18, closing this legal gap and strengthening protections for minors. To ensure that consensual relationships between peers are not criminalized, the bill retains a pre-existing 4-year close-in-age exemption for 13-, 14-, and 15-year-olds and provides for a 6-year close in age exemption for 16- and 17-year-olds. Additionally, HB 101 aligns other areas of criminal statute to treat 16- and 17-year-olds consistently, including provisions that criminalize the transmission of explicit images of minors. Raising the age of consent to 18 would bring Alaska in line with states such as Florida, Kentucky, Idaho, Utah, Oregon, California, Wisconsin, Tennessee, and Arizona.

I urge you to support House Bill 101 and protect Alaska's youth from exploitation and abuse.