



Main Office
130 Seward St. #214
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Phone: (907) 586-3650
Fax: (907) 747-7547

Sitka Office
408 Oja Way, Suite A
Sitka, Alaska 99835
Phone: (907) 747-7545
Fax: (907) 747-7547

Anchorage Office
750 West 2nd Ave, Ste 105
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: (907) 297-2860
Fax: (907) 279-2451

Rep. Gray
State Capitol, Rm 118
Juneau AK, 99801
May 5, 2025

CSHB 101 FIN Crimes Against Minors

The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA) is the federally recognized state coalition of twenty-four community-based domestic violence and sexual assault service providers. ANDVSA supports the House Finance Committee Substitute for HB 101, version 34-LS0451\I.

Adding 16- and 17-year-olds into the definition of minor in criminal statutes emphasizes the heinous nature of crimes when an adult chooses to harm them (examples include homicide, assault, stalking, sexual abuse of a minor, or endangering the welfare of a child). With passage of CSHB 101 FIN persons convicted of these crimes against 16- or 17-year-olds will face enhanced penalties.

Alaska will join 12 other states and the District of Columbia by raising the age of consent to have unlimited sexual contact or sexual penetration to the age of 18. CSHB 101 FIN adds 16- and 17- year-olds into two statutes (AS 11.41.436(a) Sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree and AS 11.41.438(a) Sexual abuse of a minor in the third degree) that criminalize sexual penetration and sexual contact with persons with certain age differences. The addition to these statutes will remove the requirement to prove lack of consent when there is sexual contact or sexual penetration and will protect this age group from being exploited, groomed, and abused by adults.

The bill allows for 16- and 17-year-old individuals to make the choice to have sexual contact or engage in sexual penetration when close-in-age. Alaska will join 8 other states who have a "close in age" exception. CSHB 101 FIN's close in age exception allows individuals in this age range to choose to have sexual contact or engage in sexual penetration with an individual less than 6 years older than them.

We believe allowing individual choice within this age range will keep consensual peer-based relationships from being criminalized while being sufficient to catch adults trying to harm young people.

Age of Consent: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/age-of-consent-by-state>

Member Programs

Anchorage AWAIC, STAR | Hooper Bay Bay Haven | Bethel TWC | Cordova CFRC | Craig HOPE | Dillingham SAFE | Emmonak EWS | Fairbanks IAC | Haines Becky's Place | Homer SPHH | Juneau AWARE | Kenai LeeShore Center | Ketchikan WISH | Kodiak KWRCC | Kotzebue MFCC | Nome BSWG | Palmer AFS | Petersburg WAVE | Seward Seward's Safe Harbor | Sitka SAFV | Unalaska USAFV | Utqiagvik AWIC | Valdez AVV



March 20, 2025

Representative Andrew Gray
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
Room 118
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Gray,

On behalf of the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC), thank you for your work and advocacy in continuing to ensure the safety of all Alaskans in our state. Today, I write to you in support of House Bill 101, Crimes Against Minors, which addresses issues surrounding current loopholes in Alaska law while providing additional protection and justice to our most vulnerable populations.

As you are aware, Alaska leads in the highest rate of rape in the United States, with disproportionate representation affecting Alaska Natives and vulnerable youth. The AKNWRC has witnessed firsthand the devastating impact that sexual violence has on communities, particularly among our youth. Alaska's current legal framework contains gaps that allow perpetrators to exploit minors, creating cycles of trauma that can persist for generations.

The AKNWRC recognizes the significant and often lifelong impacts of sexual abuse on young survivors. By raising the age of consent to 18 years of age, House Bill 101 closes the 'Age of Consent' loophole and presents an opportunity to enhance legal protections for survivors. This change acknowledges the power imbalance that exists between adults and minors and prioritizes the safety and well-being of our children above all else.

Further, this legislation aligns with the AKNWRC's mission of ending violence in our Alaska Native communities. The proposed changes would strengthen our ability to prosecute those who prey on vulnerable youth while sending a clear message that Alaska prioritizes the protection of minors. Our

Alaska Native Women's Resource Center
P.O. Box 80382 Fairbanks, AK 99708
907-328-3990
www.aknwrc.org



communities have advocated for these protections for many years, and we believe this bill represents a crucial step forward in safeguarding Alaska's children.

The measures within the bill represent your commitment to protecting child survivors and promoting safety within our communities. Thank you to you and your staff, as well as all sponsors of this bill, for the efforts to address these important issues.

We look forward to the positive impact this legislation will have on our children and communities within our state.

Sincerely,

Tami Truett Jerue

Executive Director
Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

CC:

Representative Jeremy Bynum
Representative Frank Tomaszewski
Representative Sarah Vance
Representative Nellie Unangiq Jimmie

Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Representative Andrew Gray, Chair
Representative Chuck Kopp, Vice Chair
Representative Ted Eischied, Member



Representative Genevieve Mina, Member
Representative Sarah Vance, Member
Representative Mia Costello, Member
Representative Jubilee Underwood, Member



Public Safety Employees Association, Inc.
"Representing Alaska's Finest"
A.F.S.C.M.E. Local 803



March 28, 2025

Rep. Andrew Gray
Alaska State Capitol
Anchorage, AK 99503

Dear Representative Gray,

On behalf of the Public Safety Employees Association, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 101, which seeks to raise the age of consent in Alaska to 18. The alarming statistics surrounding sexual violence in our state highlight an urgent need for legislative action to protect our youth from exploitation and abuse.

As you noted in your sponsor statement, Alaska has the highest rate of rape in the United States and one of the highest rates of child sexual assault. These figures are unacceptable, and the current age of consent law creates a dangerous legal loophole that puts our teenagers at further risk. By allowing individuals as young as 16 to legally consent to sexual activity, we are inadvertently complicating prosecution for those who prey on our vulnerable youth.

House Bill 101 is a critical step toward closing this gap and creating a safer environment for all minors in Alaska. By raising the age of consent to 18, we can strengthen protections for young people and ensure that survivors are not burdened with the difficult task of proving lack of consent in court. The inclusion of a close-in-age exemption demonstrates a balanced approach, allowing for consensual relationships among peers while still prioritizing the safety of our youth.

Additionally, aligning Alaska's laws with those of other states that have successfully implemented similar measures is essential. It sends a clear message that we take the protection of our children seriously, and we will not tolerate exploitation in any form.

We urge all members of the legislature to support House Bill 101 and work towards a safer future for Alaska's youth. Together, we can make a significant difference in the lives of those who are most vulnerable in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Charisse Millett
Executive Director
Public Safety Employees Association



300 North Willow St.
Wasilla, AK 99654
907-373-4357

www.myhousematsu.org
myhousematsu@gmail.com

4/9/2025

Board of Directors:

Dave Balmer, President
Michael Carson, Vice
President
Stephanie Berta, Treasurer
Cathy Cottle, Member
Kurt Hoenack, Member
Isaac Smoldon, Youth
Representative

**Youth Board of
Directors:**

Odessa Jackson, President
Maggie Edwards-Jones
Jamin Kamm
Timothy Keena
Brendan Haines
Raven Evan
Ashton Engebretsen
Michelle Parker

Honorary Members:

Jess Lederman
Holly Gittlien
Mitchell Slater

Dena'inaq enen'aq'
gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu.
(Dena'ina)
*I live and work on the land
of the Dena'ina. (English)*

Representative Andrew Gray
April 9, 2025
Alaska State Capital
Room 118
Juneau, AK 99801

Representative Gray,

On behalf of the clients of MY House, I would like to officially thank you for your work on HB 101, Crimes Against Minors, and write in support of the passage of this legislation. The staff and clients of MY House believe that HB 101 will both provide justice for minors who are survivors of sexual assault and will also prevent the victimization of future youth by closing current loopholes in statute.

MY House is a youth drop-in center in Wasilla that serves at-risk youth ages 14-25 from around the State of Alaska. We provide stable housing to youth that are couch surfing, living outside, sleeping in cars, or residing in generally unsafe situations. Our organization also gives our clients access to comprehensive wrap-around services, with on-site case management, peer support, substance abuse treatment, shower and laundry services, and meal assistance.

Because of the nature of our work, many individuals we serve are survivors of abuse. This includes under-18 clients that are extremely vulnerable to predators looking to use existing statute to abuse and exploit them.

The passage of HB 101 will assist us in the prosecution of these perpetrators of sexual assault by removing their ability to claim consensual relations with 16- and 17-year-olds. Furthermore, we believe that the passage of this bill will deter predators from targeting members of this population in the first place.

This legislation is incredibly important to us, as we believe the effects of its passage will assist us and the State of Alaska in the combating of sexual abuse, trafficking and domestic violence. We thank you for your work on this issue and look forward to the positive impact it will have on our clients and our state as a whole.

Respectfully,

Michelle Overstreet
Founder and CEO of MY House

February 28, 2025

Dear Representative Gray:

We are writing to you today in full support of HB101, a bill related to Crimes Against Minors. This bill offers, among other things, protection to teens aged sixteen and seventeen from predatory adults by raising the age of sexual consent to eighteen.

Sixteen and seventeen year olds are minors. They cannot legally enter into a contract on their own, they cannot rent a motel room, or a car, they cannot enter a bar, they cannot get a credit card or even open a bank account without an adult signer on the account.

Juvenile offenders under the age of eighteen are treated in ways significantly different from adult offenders. There is an entirely separate justice system set up to deal with them, and they have certain rights that must be upheld, because as a society we recognize children should not be treated as adults.

Why then, are child victims of sexual assault treated as though they have the full responsibilities of adults when they are victimized by predatory older persons?

This proposed legislation is in alignment with Alaska's statute regulating the age of marriage. A sixteen or seventeen year old needs approval from a court to marry and can only marry a person with an age difference of less than four years.

We cannot simply turn our backs on vulnerable minors and believe they have the capacity to seek out appropriate resources, develop positive coping mechanisms, and access necessary support without taking the crimes committed against them seriously.

STAR is in full support of the bill, and we urge all legislators to vote for it. Thank you for your consideration,

STAR Board of Directors:

Barry Wilson, Chair
Paula Reiswig, Vice Chair
Audrey Lance, Treasurer
Leah Levingston, Secretary
Catherine Bradshaw
Mariajose Echeverria-Stewart
Jodi Harskamp
Scott Kendall
Molly Masters
Skye Nevada
George Vakalis
Bianca Cross

Retired, Alaska State Troopers
Municipality of Anchorage
Thomas, Head & Greisen
Alaska Wealth Advisors
Cadence Consulting
Yuit Comms
Anchorage Community Member
Cashion, Gilmore & Lindemuth
Southcentral Foundation
The Bridge, Co.
Vakalis & Associates, LLC.
Retired, APD and Chugach Electric Association



May 7, 2025

The Honorable Andrew Gray
House of Representatives
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Gray:

On behalf of Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), I would like to express our formal support of House Bill 101, Crimes Against Minors, and urge its passage into law.

AWAIC is a nonprofit based in Anchorage, dedicated to supporting domestic violence victims and other victims of violent crime, advocating for policy change, and strengthening systems that protect survivors. Many of the people we serve are also survivors of sexual abuse, including many young people.

Alaska's crisis-level statistics on rape and sexual assault are indicative of a serious problem that demands urgent legislative action. This crisis is exacerbated by systemic gaps in protection for minors, who often lack the legal safeguards necessary to prevent abuse and ensure justice.

There is no denying the particular vulnerability of teenagers engaged in sexual activity with older adults. The imbalance of power, life experience, and often financial means is inherent to these dynamics, leaving the younger parties vulnerable to manipulation, grooming, and exploitation.

HB 101 is a common-sense change that would increase legal protection for a vulnerable group of Alaskans by raising the age of consent to 18. As is the case in twelve other states, 16- and 17-year-olds should be considered minors when it comes to sexual consent.

We believe the passage of House Bill 101 will help survivors of sexual abuse gain justice and will prevent the further abuse of young Alaskans. It is a critical step toward ensuring that our legal system adequately protects minors from sexual abuse and related offenses while holding perpetrators accountable.

We urge all members of the legislature to support House Bill 101 and continue working towards a safer future for our youth.

Sincerely,

Randi Breager
Executive Director