

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

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Representative Max Gruenberg

Representative Lindsey Holmes

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## SPONSOR STATEMENT

### **HB149 – “An Act allowing appropriations to the civil legal services fund from court filing fees.”** (26-LS0624 A 3.12.09)

This bill is designed to help fund civil legal services for low-income Alaskans. House Bill 149 will provide a mechanism for funding the Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC), by allowing the legislature to appropriate up to 25 percent of filing fees paid to the Alaska Court System during the previous fiscal year into the Civil Legal Services Fund. In the fiscal year of 2008, the Alaska Court System collected and turned over to the State of Alaska a total of \$2,525,300.

The Alaska Legal Services Corporation was established in 1966 to address the civil legal aid needs of low-income Alaskans. ALSC is not a state agency, but is instead a nonprofit charitable 501(c)(3) whose funding comes from a variety of state, federal, and private sources. Over the last several years ALSC funding has dwindled, from \$4.2 million as of 1987 to \$3.1 million as of 2007, while it struggles to serve a larger number of poverty-level applicants. Appropriations from the State of Alaska that were once as high as \$1.2 million in FY84 are currently at \$200,000. House Bill 149 aims to correct this lack of funding and helps ensure civil legal representation for Alaska's most needy population.