



# Alaska State Legislature

## Representative Anna Fairclough – House District 17

### House Bill 123

"An Act extending the termination date of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council; and providing for an effective date."

House Bill 123 extends the termination date of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council to June 30, 2013. Suicide is a very serious public health concern in Alaska, particularly among young males and the Alaska native population. Extension of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council is important in curtailing this avoidable loss of life. The mission of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council is to advise the governor and the legislature on issues relating to suicide. In collaboration with communities, faith-based organizations, and public-private entities, the Council works to improve the health and wellness of Alaskans by reducing suicide and its effect on individuals and communities.

By statute the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council consists of 15 members, 11 appointed by the governor and four by the Legislature. The governor appoints two executive branch state employees; one member of the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse; one member of the Alaska Mental Health Board; a designee from the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc.; a counselor in a secondary school; an adult active in a statewide youth organization; a person who has experienced a family member's death by suicide; one person who resides in a rural community not connected by a road or Alaska marine highway to the state's main road system; a member of the clergy; and a youth under 18. The senate president appoints one majority member of the Senate; the speaker of the House appoints one majority member and one minority member of the House.

The council serves in an advisory capacity to the Legislature and governor with respect to what actions can and should be taken to improve health and wellness throughout the state by reducing suicide and its effect on individuals, families and communities; broaden the public's awareness of suicide and the risk factors related to suicide; enhance suicide prevention services and programs throughout the state; develop healthy communities through comprehensive, collaborative, community-based approaches; develop and implement a statewide suicide prevention plan; and strengthen existing and build new partnerships between public and private entities that will advance suicide prevention efforts in the state.

I urge your support on this important piece of legislation.