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A Communication From
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HB 400

*An Act relating to emergency compensation from the
Violent Crimes Compensation Board*

Sponsor Statement

The Victims of Violent Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB) was created in 1972 in an attempt to mitigate the financial hardships suffered by victims of violent crimes. This board is able to support these victims and their dependents with up to \$40,000 and \$1,500 in immediate emergency compensation.

**HB 400 proposes to increase the limit
for emergency compensation to \$3,500.**

The allowable amount for emergency compensation has not been increased since 1975 and is limited to verifiable lost wages, counseling, security measures and relocation costs. The most pressing need for emergency compensation is to cover relocation costs when a victim is in immediate danger at their current location.

The costs for these emergency expenses have increased substantially over the years, and \$1,500 is unable to cover deposit and first and last month rents, especially when a family or dependents are involved. Emergency awards are necessary because the Board only meets approximately five times per year, and it can be several weeks or months before a claim is considered.

In Fiscal Year 2009 there was \$25,547.80 given in emergency compensation for 22 claims. 12 of these were made at the maximum amount of \$1,500. So far in FY2010, \$29,699.17 has been awarded by way of emergency awards for 24 claims. The crime victim compensation fund receives approximately 70% of its appropriations from the state in the form of felon's garnished Permanent Fund Dividends and 30% from federal funds. This type of compensation is deducted from the final amount given to the victim and any excess award must be repaid to the Board.

I urge you to join me in assisting Alaska's victims of violent crimes when their need is greatest and support HB 400.