

From: Sami Velez-Douglas [<mailto:mtsamiam@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2011 9:20 PM
To: Rep. Anna Fairclough
Subject: CSHB21(Fin)

Dear Representative Fairclough:

I am currently a graduate student at the University of Alaska in Anchorage pursuing my Masters of Social Work degree. As part of my Policy practice course, I have been following with great interest HB 21 (now known as CSHB21(Fin)). My primary graduate research and professional interests include the analysis and development of innovative community-based programs that provide post-combat resource navigation and trauma/crisis intervention strategies.

I am a veteran of the United States Army and have held the distinct honor of serving as a federal civilian contractor at Fort Wainwright (2007) and a federal civilian employee at Fort Richardson (2008-2010). In my role as a Family Readiness Support Assistant, I worked directly with the command group of a deployable unit at Fort Richardson. Together, we implemented and sustained a comprehensive Family Readiness Program to support nearly 500 Soldiers and their family members through all phases of the unit's two-year deployment cycle -- pre-deployment, mobilization, deployment, and reintegration. Through these experiences, I have learned first-hand -- the challenges of post-combat integration can only be expressed by those who have walked that difficult path.

Combat veteran and military family member voices *must* be heard. I offer my wholehearted support for the inclusion of a *combat* veteran representative on the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council.

Please accept my deepest appreciation for sponsoring this bill, and for your service to the State of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Sami J. Douglas
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