

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

H.B. 336

“Limiting Alcohol Sales within 400 Feet of Schools”

Sponsor Statement

Alcohol is Alaska’s most frequently abused substance and costs Alaskans millions of dollars each year in healthcare, social services, treatment programs, and lost productivity. Tens of thousands of Alaskans are dependent on drinking alcohol to make it through the day. Sadly, this results in some loitering outside of liquor stores. At any given time of day, this might result in people in areas outside liquor stores sleeping, drinking, urinating, or engaging in various other activities, compromising student and neighborhood safety. For the students at Clark Middle School in Anchorage, this inappropriate behavior around their school prompted them to speak up and ask what we can do to prevent this from happening in other locations.

Currently, alcohol laws restrict sales to 200 feet or more away from the entrance to a school. This bill would extend the restriction to 400 feet for future locations applying for liquor licenses and includes a grandfather clause which exempts existing locations with a liquor license. This legislation was also offered in 2006 by then Representatives Meyer (now Senator Meyer), Croft, and Cissna. Looking forward, this bill would increase student safety as new schools rise across Alaska and new establishments that sell alcohol are licensed.

There is no quick fix for the social symptoms of alcoholism. This bill is just one small but helpful step in addressing alcoholism and the problems it causes. To address the overall concern, we must recognize alcoholism as a disease, like cancer, that requires treatment for an individual to heal. I stand with Mountain View Community Council and others, including CHARR, calling for more dollars for alcohol treatment. In the meantime, I ask for your consideration in taking this small step to protect Alaska children around their schools.