

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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North to the Future

Senator Cathy Giessel

Senate District N

Sponsor Statement

SB 103 “Residential Psychiatric Education Funding”

Senate Bill 103 addresses a gap in the current way we provide education services to children admitted to residential psychiatric treatment centers (RPTCs).

Currently, the local school district where the licensed psychiatric treatment center is located is responsible for providing educational services. However, the education being provided in these facilities falls short of what districts provide in the schools. This is true for traditional students and especially for special education students who have individualized educational plans (IEP). Many times, RPTC students fail to receive the correct number of course hours to remain at grade level. Often the only instruction they receive are on-line only coursework with no personal or direct instruction. Students are falling further behind in school compounding their emotional and behavioral challenges. Districts without RPTCs receive these students back and bear the extra expense of these students repeating a grade.

This bill would create a three-year pilot program allowing RPTCs to contract with school districts to provide educational services for the patients/children seeking treatment for serious mental illness. Since most students in this situation have their treatment paid for by the state, it is in Alaska’s best interest to solve this problem.

The goal of this bill is to allow children to fulfill their full potential by providing stable environment and an adequate education.

I urge you to support this bill keeping children on their educational path while seeking treatment for a serious mental illness.

Chair Senate Resources Committee | Vice-Chair Health & Social Services | Vice-Chair Labor & Commerce

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