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REPRESENTATIVE DAVE TALERICO

Sponsor Statement for House Bill 328

“An Act prohibiting smoking in certain places; relating to education on the smoking prohibition; and providing for an effective date.”

Current Alaska law prohibits smoking in many areas of the state, including healthcare facilities, schools, childcare facilities, and public meeting rooms in government buildings. Many communities and businesses have voluntarily created smoke-free workplaces allowing over one-half of Alaskans to live and work in smoke-free buildings. There are however many businesses and smaller communities who have chosen not, or are not able to take similar action in their buildings, leading to exposure to second-hand smoke and the resulting negative health effects.

House Bill 328 seeks to safeguard working Alaskans and their children from the adverse effects of secondhand smoke by providing a statewide smoke-free workplace law for businesses and public places. Certain boroughs, cities, and the unorganized borough who do not have the ability to create and enforce smoke-free workplace laws will be covered under HB 328. State-level Medicaid expenditures that can be attributed to smoking is about \$67 Million per year, which can be reduced as we limit unwanted exposure to second-hand smoke.

HB 328 does not make smoking in Alaska illegal, but rather puts reasonable limitations for where someone can smoke. This bill does not prohibit outdoor smoking, except within certain areas near building entrances/exits, air intakes, and other specifically designated public gathering places. It does not legislate who a business can hire and free standing tobacco and e-cigarette shops are excluded from HB 328.

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