

29th Alaska State Legislature

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Representative Bryce Edgmon

SPONSOR STATEMENT

House Bill 154

Version A

“An Act allowing appropriations to the civil legal services fund from court filing fees.”

This bill will safeguard low-income Alaskans’ access to the civil justice system by creating a stable and sustainable mechanism for funding the Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC). It allows the Legislature to appropriate up to 25 percent of filing fees paid to the Alaska Court System during the previous fiscal year into the already existing Civil Legal Services Fund.

The Alaska Legal Services Corporation—established in 1966—is not a state agency but is instead a nonprofit charitable 501(c)(3), whose funding comes from a variety of state, federal, and private sources.

ALSC strives to serve a growing number of poverty-level applicants. Since 1984, the number of Alaskans eligible for legal services has more than doubled, from 41,000 to over 100,000. Yet currently, the state’s contribution to ALSC is only a fraction of what it was 30 years ago.

House Bill 154 aims to stabilize ALSC funding and help ensure that civil legal representation is available to Alaska’s most needy population.