



ANDVSA
Alaska Network on Domestic Violence
& Sexual Assault

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The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA) is grateful to Representative Claman and his staff for putting forth House Bill 25 (Insurance Coverage for Contraceptives), for which we offer our full support.

As domestic violence and sexual assault service providers, our 24 member agencies and affiliates served 6,317 women in FY 16 alone. Domestic violence and sexual assault are both public safety and public health issues. As a consequence, we are heavily invested in reproductive health access and equity. Thinking in terms of power and control as the overall basis of domestic violence and sexual assault, we understand that victims and survivors' autonomy is fundamental in both preventing and responding to violent acts. One critical element of this autonomy is women's access to affordable and consistent reproductive health care.

HB 25 critically enables victims and survivors' reproductive health autonomy, and greater abilities to survive and thrive. Firstly, the bill ensures that all methods of contraceptives – including long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) such as intrauterine devices and implants – are covered by insurers. This is vital for women who face contraceptive coercion, in which their abusers dictate when and how contraceptives can and cannot be used as part of their exerting power and control. The expansion of choices for women to include LARCs would assist in their living as safely as possible in the short term, while they worked towards longer-term safety. Without such coverage, lack of contraceptives could lead to unintended pregnancy; which could in turn impose an even greater vulnerability on women experiencing intimate partner violence.

Further, the assurance of a 12 month prescription of contraceptives also recognizes the underlying issue of equity in enabling more, consistent contraceptive coverage for under-served populations. In particular, this legislation would break down barriers to access for women in rural areas – who, often due to a lack of access to social services and health care are especially vulnerable to domestic violence and sexual assault.

We are hopeful that our perspective helps expand your understanding that women's access to contraceptives – and, consequently, survival, health and wellness – must not depend on cost, availability, or insurance carrier. Along with many other women's health and rights organizations, we strongly urge you to support HB 25 and help provide this important support for women's autonomy: including those who are victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (907) 586-3650 or clowry@andvsa.org. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carmen Lowry
Executive Director
Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

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