



Crisis Intervention | Advocacy | Education | Prevention

April 18, 2019

RE: House Bill 20

House State Affairs Committee
State of Alaska

Dear Co-Chairs Fields and Kreiss-Tomkins and Members:

My name is Keeley Olson, and I am providing written testimony as the Executive Director of STAR (Standing Together Against Rape, Inc.), in continuing support of HB20. I want to express gratitude to this committee for hearing testimony on this bill and its efforts to move it forward this session.

I have provided repeated testimony in support of this bill and am writing today in support of the most recent amendment, which removes reference to a defendant's mental state in regards to the crime of Sexual Assault in the 2nd Degree. This change will clarify the statute and make it more consistent with other crime bills (such as SB35) currently before the legislature. The current statute has been problematic for finders of fact to determine what a defendant "knew" at the time of the sexual assault. This change would shift the focus away from the perspective of the defendant and would allow finders of fact to evaluate whether a defendant's conduct was reasonable under all of the facts and circumstances.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill, and thank you to Representative Tarr for her enduring efforts to support bills that are collaboratively forged, trauma-informed and victim-centered.

Sincerely,

Keeley Olson
Executive Director

STAR's mission is to provide quality crisis intervention, education and advocacy services to victims of sexual assault, sexual abuse, their families and our community.

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