

From: No More Free Passes
To: Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky
Subject: House Bill 287
Date: Saturday, March 7, 2020 1:50:14 PM

Good afternoon Representative Zulkosky,

Thank you very much for your service to Alaskans in the house legislature and particularly for your efforts to improve the VPSO program.

No More Free Passes would like to express concern about one particular provision of HB 287 that would allow certain felons and those convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence to serve as VPSO's. While we recognize that felonies against persons under AS 11.41 would be an exception, we believe that there are felonies not under AS 11.41 that would be a serious concern for village police to be convicted of. For example, individuals convicted of crimes like possession of child porn and drug manufacturing would be eligible for the VPSO program, 10 years after conviction. We are also concerned about convicted domestic abusers serving in a position of authority as village police. While misdemeanor domestic violence might seem like a minor crime, we urge you to consider how many serious crimes of domestic violence are pled down to the misdemeanor level. We have heard from countless victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in remote villages who express concern about reporting their abuse to village police when that police officer has a history of committing violence.

We respectfully ask you to consider amending HB 287 to exclude all felons and all individuals convicted of domestic violence from being eligible for the VPSO program. Legislation shapes culture. If this bill is passed in its current form, it will send a strong message that the state of Alaska tolerates domestic violence and is willing to elevate those who hurt our most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you again for your hard work to reform and improve rural public safety. We look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,
Elizabeth Williams
Isaac Williams