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House Bill 325

Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to domestic violence."

HB 325 seeks to update our antiquated domestic violence statutes by incorporating image-based sexual abuse to the definition of domestic violence. While sending explicit images may be grounds for harassment in the second degree, it is not considered an act of domestic violence or crime involving domestic violence.

Images of individuals, taken with or without consent, are being distributed online as a tactic of abuse by perpetrators with the intent to harass, impersonate, humiliate, and cause harm. Abusers capture intimate, nude, or sexual images of their partners, with or without, their consent. In order to prevent the victim from leaving the relationship, the abuser will use that image as a weapon of control.

The effect of this abuse impacts every part of the victim's life and future. Victims tend to be revictimized in their school, workplace, or community and some have attempted or committed suicide as a result.

While educating people about the possible consequences of sharing explicit images is important, most of the danger and harm comes from the subsequent sharing of these images without consent and with the intent to hurt, shame, or emotionally abuse the victim.

We must do better to end cycle of domestic violence and sexual abuse. By tying image-based sexual abuses cases to our domestic violence laws will offers victims crucial benefits and protections that they might not otherwise get.

HB 325 is a small step to help protect Alaskans from sexual abuse and I urge your support.