

# Representative Grier Hopkins



## ALASKA STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

### House Bill 297 – Military Member Child Protection Sponsor Statement

Alaska has approximately 14,000 children who are classified as active-duty military dependents and over 5,000 children who are dependents of those who serve in the National Guard and Reserves. Our state has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest per capita population of military children in the nation, coming in behind our sister state Hawaii and the District of Columbia.

These young people are important to Alaska, and as leaders of our state we have a responsibility for their health and welfare. When unfortunate incidents occur that affect the health and welfare of a child of a military member requiring intervention by state authorities, there is not currently a legal protection to make sure that the appropriate officials within the military chain of command are notified. House Bill 297 would place into statute the requirement that the state agency who intercedes on behalf of a child's welfare must notify the appropriate, identified, authorities at the affiliated duty station. This would allow for the creation of a coordinated and collaborative approach to protective and rehabilitative services can be offered to the child and the child's family.

Getting families the help, guidance and support they need to keep families together is the most important thing we can do for the health of the child as they grow up. Alaska is renowned for its support of our military and for working with the Department of Defense to ensure the health and safety of our nation's military and Alaskan families are safe and secure is essential.

Please join me in supporting HB 297 to help ensure that military children and families are able to be offered the most comprehensive support they need to thrive.

**Ester – Goldstream – Fox – Steese – Birch Hill**

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