



Main Office
130 Seward St. #214
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Phone: (907) 586-3650
Fax: (907) 747-7547

Sitka Office
408 Oja Way, Suite A
Sitka, Alaska 99835
Phone: (907) 747-7545
Fax: (907) 747-7547

Anchorage Office
750 West 2nd Ave, Ste 105
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: (907) 297-2860
Fax: (907) 279-2451

Representative Tarr
State Capitol Room 128
Juneau AK, 99801

May 3, 2022

Re: HB 291, Extend the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Dear Representative Tarr:

Thank you for sponsoring HB 291 extending the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) through June 30, 2028. We appreciate your work and your understanding of the vital role CDVSA plays in victim safety, offender accountability, and community prevention efforts.

The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA) is the state coalition of domestic violence and sexual assault intervention/prevention programs operating throughout Alaska. ANDVSA was instrumental in creating CDVSA when Representative Hugh Malone and other legislators held meetings across the state to better understand the needs of people suffering through domestic violence and sexual assault; and to find the best way for the State to address these violent crimes. The resulting legislative proposal established CDVSA in the Department of Public Safety and was effective October 24, 1981.

Over the years CDVSA has progressed from funding shelters and rape crisis centers providing emergency services to victims/survivors to including work holding people who choose to commit domestic violence accountable for their actions through perpetrator rehabilitation programs; to prevention efforts situated so communities can move from accepting these crimes to becoming communities where such violence is no longer tolerated.

CDVSA started as a 7-member council; three public members appointed by the Governor with input from ANDVSA and four executive branch members (commissioners or designees of Public Safety, Health and Social Services, LAW and Education). During a sunset review in the early 2000's CDVSA expanded to 9 members; four public members (one of which is to be from a statutorily defined rural area of the state) and five executive branch members (the Department of Corrections was added). Today's legislation, HB 291, seeks to expand CDVSA by including an Alaska Native public member representative and the Chief Executive Officer or designee of the Mental Health Trust Authority. ANDVSA supports these additions. Both seek to address statistics that cannot be ignored.

Member Programs

Anchorage AWAIC, STAR | Hooper Bay Bay Haven | Bethel TWC | Cordova CFRC | Craig HOPE | Dillingham SAFE | Emmonak EWS | Fairbanks IAC | Haines Becky's Place | Homer SPHH | Juneau AWARE | Kenai LeeShore Center | Ketchikan WISH | Kodiak KWRCC | Kotzebue MFCC | Nome BSWG | Petersburg WAVE | Seward Seward's Safe Harbor | Sitka SAFV | Unalaska USAFV | Utqiagvik AWIC | Valdez AVV

American Indian/ Alaska Native women are disproportionately impacted by deadly violence against women in Alaska. In 2019 the rate of American Indian/ Alaska Native women killed by men in Alaska was 17.36 per 100,000, which is more than three times the rate for all women in Alaska and nearly seven times the rate for white women in Alaska.

In a 2016 study funded by the National Institute for Justice, Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men, Dr. Andre Rosay found results showing that more than four in five American Indian and Alaska Native women (84.3 percent) have experienced violence in their lifetime. This includes 56.1 percent who have experienced sexual violence, 55.5 percent who have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, 48.8 percent who have experienced stalking, and 66.4 percent who have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner.

The 2020 Alaska Victimization Survey asked respondents about their mental health history to determine if they may be an Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiary, identifying Alaskans with mental illness, developmental disabilities, chronic alcohol or drug addiction, Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, and traumatic brain injuries. The survey revealed that 3 out of 4 women in Alaska who were possibly Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiaries experienced partner violence, sexual violence, or both during their lifetime; and in the past year, women who were possibly Trust beneficiaries were 2.4 X more likely to have experienced interpersonal violence, sexual violence or both than women who were non-beneficiaries.

It is time to acknowledge these realities by including specific seats on the Council to continually bring the needs of Alaska Natives and Trust beneficiaries to the forefront of this work.

Thank you again for sponsoring HB 291, Extending the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault through June 30, 2028 and adding Alaska Native and Mental Health Trust seats to the Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Stanfill', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brenda Stanfill
Executive Director