



"In service to Alaskans, families, and communities to collectively create a better tomorrow."

January 24, 2023

The Honorable Representative Josephson
State Capitol Room 432
Juneau AK, 99801

Re: Support for House Bill 11 - An act establishing the crime of assault in the presence of a child.

Dear Representative Josephson:

Alaska Family Services fully supports efforts to protect children from the trauma of interpersonal violence through passing House Bill 11: "An act establishing the crime of assault in the presence of a child."

For over 40 years Alaska Family Services has provided safe shelter, advocacy, resources, and support to women and their children seeking safety from domestic violence and sexual assault. There is substantial evidence indicating that children who are present when interpersonal violence occurs are at an increased risk of experiencing a variety of short- and long-term negative effects. Instead of relying on the resilience of children to overcome these negative effects it's time to prevent violence from occurring in the presence of children.

House Bill 11 is a tool to protect Alaska's children. At Alaska Family Services we have seen the toll that exposure to violence takes on children. We know that children cannot protect themselves from such exposure and so we support HB 11 as a tool to create a safe environment for all children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Desiré Shepler".

Desiré Shepler, MPH
President/CEO
Alaska Family Services