

HB 89: DAY CARE ASSISTANCE/CHILD CARE GRANT PROGRAM **April 2023**

Please accept this statement as support for passage of HB 89. The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA) is Alaska's state coalition of victim services providers. Twenty-three programs across the state focus on services to victims/survivors of sexual assault, stalking and domestic violence.

Access to childcare is one of the main barriers that many survivors face when seeking to leave an abusive partner. In a [survey](#) asking the most common financial factors for staying with or returning to an abusive partner, 83 percent of respondents stated they were unable to support themselves or their children on their income, and 50 percent of respondents stated they would have problems affording childcare.¹ Lacking access to childcare can also force a parent in an abusive relationship to leave a child alone with their abusive partner, putting children in danger.

For a family who has experienced domestic violence, access to affordable and quality childcare is an essential component in the journey of recovery and healing. Survivors need to know that their children are safe and cared for while they navigate the aftermath of abuse or assault—whether it be attending court hearings, receiving healthcare and mental services, working to support their families, or simply finding time to heal.

Additionally, improving access to childcare would help address the workforce shortages at many of our member programs. Staff working at our programs often struggle to find or afford childcare, and qualified individuals may turn down working at shelters due to difficulties securing childcare during job hours.

When speaking to our member programs, many of them cite childcare as a key difficulty in their region. Several communities have had daycare centers close down during the pandemic, or prices have increased such that program clients and employees cannot afford childcare services. HB 89 would address some of the foundational causes of the declining state of childcare in Alaska—it would increase the number of families able to afford childcare services, and it would keep more providers up and running.

Access to affordable and quality childcare is essential if we are to put an end to domestic and sexual violence. HB 89 would improve the lives of survivors, their children, those working at our member programs, and families all across the state of Alaska.

¹ Hess, C.; Del Rosario, A. Dreams Deferred: A Survey of the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence on Survivors' Education, Careers, and Economic Security. Institute for Women's Policy Research 2018.

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