

**HOUSE BILL NO. 481**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

NINETEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES MASEK, Kohring, Ogan

Introduced: 2/9/96

Referred: State Affairs, Judiciary

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 "An Act authorizing capital punishment, classifying murder in the first degree as  
2 a capital felony, and allowing the imposition of the death penalty when certain  
3 of those murders are committed against children; establishing sentencing procedures  
4 for capital felonies; and amending Rules 32, 32.1, and 32.3, Alaska Rules of  
5 Criminal Procedure, and Rules 204, 209, 210, and 212, Alaska Rules of Appellate  
6 Procedure."

7 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

8 \* **Section 1.** AS 05.15.140(b) is amended to read:

9 (b) In an application for a permit, a municipality or qualified organization shall  
10 disclose the name and address of each person responsible for the operation of the  
11 activity and whether any person named

12 (1) has been convicted of a violation of a law of this state that is, or  
13 a law or ordinance of another state that would be if committed in this state, **a capital**

1 or [AN] unclassified felony described in AS 11, a Class A felony, extortion, or a  
2 violation of a law or ordinance of this state or another jurisdiction that is a crime  
3 involving theft or dishonesty or a violation of gambling laws; or

4 (2) has a prohibited financial interest, as defined in regulations adopted  
5 by the department, in the operation of the activity.

6 \* **Sec. 2.** AS 11.31.100(d) is amended to read:

7 (d) An attempt is

8 (1) an unclassified felony if the crime attempted is murder in the first  
9 degree;

10 (2) a class A felony if the crime attempted is an unclassified felony  
11 [OTHER THAN MURDER IN THE FIRST DEGREE];

12 (3) a class B felony if the crime attempted is a class A felony;

13 (4) a class C felony if the crime attempted is a class B felony;

14 (5) a class A misdemeanor if the crime attempted is a class C felony;

15 (6) a class B misdemeanor if the crime attempted is a class A or class  
16 B misdemeanor.

17 \* **Sec. 3.** AS 11.31.110(c) is amended to read:

18 (c) Solicitation is a

19 (1) class A felony if the crime solicited is a capital or [AN]  
20 unclassified felony;

21 (2) class B felony if the crime solicited is a class A felony;

22 (3) class C felony if the crime solicited is a class B felony;

23 (4) class A misdemeanor if the crime solicited is a class C felony;

24 (5) class B misdemeanor if the crime solicited is a class A or class B  
25 misdemeanor.

26 \* **Sec. 4.** AS 11.31.120(h) is amended to read:

27 (h) Conspiracy is

28 (1) an unclassified felony if the object of the conspiracy is murder in  
29 the first degree;

30 (2) a class A felony if the object of the conspiracy is a crime  
31 punishable as an unclassified felony [OTHER THAN MURDER IN THE FIRST

1 DEGREE];

2 (3) a class B felony if the object of the conspiracy is a crime  
3 punishable as a class A felony;

4 (4) a class C felony if the object of the conspiracy is a crime  
5 punishable as a class B felony.

6 \* **Sec. 5.** AS 11.31.120(i) is amended to read:

7 (i) In this section,

8 (1) "overt act in furtherance of the conspiracy" means an act of such  
9 character that it manifests a purpose on the part of the actor that the object of the  
10 conspiracy be completed;

11 (2) "serious felony offense" means an offense

12 (A) against the person under AS 11.41, punishable as **a capital,**  
13 **an unclassified,** or class A felony; or

14 (B) involving controlled substances under AS 11.71, punishable  
15 as an unclassified, class A, or class B felony.

16 \* **Sec. 6.** AS 11.41.100(b) is amended to read:

17 (b) Murder in the first degree is **a capital** [AN UNCLASSIFIED] felony and  
18 is punishable as provided in **AS 12.55.125(a)** [AS 12.55].

19 \* **Sec. 7.** AS 12.30.020(a) is amended to read:

20 (a) A person charged with an offense shall, at that person's first appearance  
21 before a judicial officer, be ordered released pending trial on the person's personal  
22 recognizance or upon the execution of an unsecured appearance bond in an amount  
23 specified by the judicial officer unless the offense is **a capital felony,** an unclassified  
24 felony, or **a** class A felony or unless the officer determines that the release of the  
25 person will not reasonably assure the appearance of the person as required, or will  
26 pose a danger to other persons and the community. If the offense with which a person  
27 is charged is a felony, on motion of the prosecuting attorney, the judicial officer may  
28 allow the prosecuting attorney up to 48 hours to demonstrate that release of the person  
29 on the person's personal recognizance or upon the execution of an unsecured  
30 appearance bond will not reasonably assure the appearance of the person, or will pose  
31 a danger to other persons and the community.

1 \* **Sec. 8.** AS 12.30.040(b) is amended to read:

2 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of (a) of this section, a person may not be  
3 released on bail either before sentencing or pending appeal if the person has been  
4 convicted of an offense that is

5 (1) a capital felony, an unclassified felony, or a class A felony; or

6 (2) a class B or class C felony if the person has been previously  
7 convicted of an offense in this state that is an unclassified felony, a class A felony, or  
8 a violation of AS 11.41.260, 11.41.420 - 11.41.425, or 11.41.436 - 11.41.438 or of an  
9 offense in another jurisdiction with elements substantially similar to an offense of this  
10 state described in this paragraph.

11 \* **Sec. 9.** AS 12.47.110(b) is amended to read:

12 (b) On or before the expiration of the initial 90-day period of commitment the  
13 court shall conduct a hearing to determine whether or not the defendant remains  
14 incompetent. If the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant  
15 remains incompetent, the court may recommit the defendant for a second period of 90  
16 days. The court shall determine at the expiration of the second 90-day period whether  
17 the defendant has become competent. If at the expiration of the second 90-day period  
18 the court determines that the defendant continues to be incompetent to stand trial, the  
19 charges against the defendant shall be dismissed without prejudice and continued  
20 commitment of the defendant shall be governed by the provisions relating to civil  
21 commitments under AS 47.30.700 - 47.30.915 unless the defendant is charged with a  
22 crime involving force against a person and the court finds that the defendant presents  
23 a substantial danger of physical injury to other persons and that there is a substantial  
24 probability that the defendant will regain competency within a reasonable period of  
25 time, in which case the court may extend the period of commitment for an additional  
26 six months. If the defendant remains incompetent at the expiration of the additional  
27 six-month period, the charges shall be dismissed without prejudice and either civil  
28 commitment proceedings shall be instituted or the court shall order the release of the  
29 defendant. If the defendant remains incompetent for five years after the charges have  
30 been dismissed under this subsection, the defendant may not be charged again for an  
31 offense arising out of the facts alleged in the original charges, except if the original

1 charge is a class A felony, [OR] unclassified felony, **or capital felony**.

2 \* **Sec. 10.** AS 12.55.025(i) is amended to read:

3 (i) Except as provided by AS 12.55.125(a)(3), 12.55.125(k), 12.55.145(d),  
4 12.55.155(f), and 12.55.165, **or in determining if a sentence of death should be**  
5 **imposed under AS 12.58**, the preponderance of the evidence standard of proof applies  
6 to sentencing proceedings.

7 \* **Sec. 11.** AS 12.55.125(a) is amended to read:

8 (a) A defendant convicted of murder in the first degree shall be sentenced to  
9 a definite term of imprisonment of at least 20 years but not more than 99 years, **or**  
10 **shall be sentenced to death**. A defendant convicted of murder in the first degree, **but**  
11 **not sentenced to death**, shall be sentenced to a mandatory term of imprisonment of  
12 99 years when

13 (1) the defendant is convicted of the murder of a uniformed or  
14 otherwise clearly identified peace officer, fire fighter, or correctional officer who was  
15 engaged in the performance of official duties at the time of the murder;

16 (2) the defendant has been previously convicted of

17 (A) murder in the first degree under AS 11.41.100 or former  
18 AS 11.15.010 or 11.15.020;

19 (B) murder in the second degree under AS 11.41.110 or former  
20 AS 11.15.030; or

21 (C) homicide under the laws of another jurisdiction when the  
22 offense of which the defendant was convicted contains elements similar to first  
23 degree murder under AS 11.41.100 or second degree murder under  
24 AS 11.41.110; or

25 (3) the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the defendant  
26 subjected the murder victim to substantial physical torture.

27 \* **Sec. 12.** AS 12.55.125(f) is amended to read:

28 (f) If a defendant is sentenced under (a) or (b) of this section,

29 (1) imprisonment for the prescribed minimum term may not be  
30 suspended under AS 12.55.080;

31 (2) imposition of sentence may not be suspended under AS 12.55.085;

1 (3) imprisonment for the prescribed minimum term may not be  
2 otherwise reduced;

3 **(4) a sentence of death may not be suspended under AS 12.55.080.**

4 \* **Sec. 13.** AS 12.55.145(a) is amended to read:

5 (a) For purposes of considering prior convictions in imposing sentence under  
6 AS 12.55.125(c), (d)(1), (d)(2), (e)(1), (e)(2), or (i)

7 (1) a prior conviction may not be considered if a period of 10 or more  
8 years has elapsed between the date of the defendant's unconditional discharge on the  
9 immediately preceding offense and commission of the present offense unless the prior  
10 conviction was for **a capital**, [AN] unclassified, or class A felony;

11 (2) a conviction in this or another jurisdiction of an offense having  
12 elements similar to those of a felony defined as such under Alaska law at the time the  
13 offense was committed is considered a prior felony conviction;

14 (3) two or more convictions arising out of a single, continuous criminal  
15 episode during which there was no substantial change in the nature of the criminal  
16 objective are considered a single conviction unless the defendant was sentenced to  
17 consecutive sentences for the crimes; offenses committed while attempting to escape  
18 or avoid detection or apprehension after the commission of another offense are not part  
19 of the same criminal episode or objective.

20 \* **Sec. 14.** AS 12.55.155(f) is amended to read:

21 (f) **Under this section, if** [IF] the state seeks to establish a factor in  
22 aggravation at sentencing or if the defendant seeks to establish a factor in mitigation  
23 at sentencing, written notice must be served on the opposing party and filed with the  
24 court not later than 10 days before the date set for imposition of sentence. **Under this**  
25 **section, factors** [FACTORS] in aggravation and factors in mitigation must be  
26 established by clear and convincing evidence before the court sitting without a jury.

27 All findings must be set out with specificity.

28 \* **Sec. 15.** AS 12 is amended by adding a new chapter to read:

29 CHAPTER 58. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

30 ARTICLE 1. IMPOSITION OF SENTENCE.

31 Sec. 12.58.010. SENTENCING PROCEDURE FOR A CAPITAL FELONY.

1 (a) If, after a trial by jury, a defendant is convicted of a capital felony, the court shall  
2 conduct a separate sentencing proceeding before the trial jury as soon as practicable.  
3 If a jury trial has been waived or if the defendant has pled guilty, the sentencing  
4 proceeding shall be held before a jury impaneled for the purpose.

5 (b) During the sentencing proceeding, evidence may be presented as to any  
6 aggravating or mitigating factor that the court considers to have probative value,  
7 regardless of the admissibility of the evidence under the rules of evidence. The  
8 defendant shall have an opportunity to rebut hearsay evidence that is admitted. The  
9 state and the defendant or the defendant's counsel shall be permitted to present oral  
10 statements. This subsection does not authorize the introduction of evidence in  
11 violation of the Constitution of the State of Alaska or the Constitution of the United  
12 States.

13 (c) After hearing the evidence, the jury shall deliberate and recommend a  
14 sentence to the court. The recommended sentence must include written findings of  
15 whether the jury unanimously finds

16 (1) beyond a reasonable doubt that an aggravating factor or factors exist  
17 to justify the death sentence;

18 (2) by a preponderance of the evidence that the aggravating factor or  
19 factors outweigh any mitigating factors found to exist by a preponderance of the  
20 evidence; and

21 (3) that the defendant should be sentenced to death.

22 Sec. 12.58.020. SENTENCE IMPOSITION FOR CAPITAL FELONY. (a)  
23 After considering the evidence and the recommended sentence, the court shall enter  
24 a sentence of death or a term of imprisonment in accordance with AS 12.55.125(a).  
25 The court may not impose the death sentence unless the jury (1) finds beyond a  
26 reasonable doubt at least one aggravating factor, (2) finds by a preponderance of the  
27 evidence that that factor or those factors are not outweighed by any mitigating factors  
28 found to exist by a preponderance of the evidence, and (3) recommends that the  
29 defendant be sentenced to death. If the jury findings include an aggravating factor or  
30 factors that are not outweighed by one or more of the mitigating factors and if the jury  
31 recommends a sentence of death, the court shall sentence the defendant to death. If

1 a sentence of death is not recommended by the jury, the court shall sentence the  
2 defendant to a term of imprisonment under AS 12.55.125(a).

3 (b) When the court enters a sentence of death, it shall state in writing the  
4 jury's findings of

5 (1) aggravating factors that exist to justify the sentence; and

6 (2) mitigating factors considered but found insufficient to outweigh the  
7 aggravating factors.

8 (c) A judgment of conviction for which a sentence of death is imposed is  
9 subject to automatic review under AS 12.58.100.

10 Sec. 12.58.030. AGGRAVATING FACTORS. In determining whether to  
11 impose a sentence of death, the following aggravating factors may be considered: the  
12 defendant's conduct caused the death of a child under 18 years of age, the defendant,  
13 at the time of the offense, was at least two years older than the child, and the  
14 defendant

15 (1) was kidnaping, assaulting, or sexually assaulting, or was attempting  
16 to kidnap, assault, or sexually assault, the child; or

17 (2) had kidnaped, assaulted, or sexually assaulted the child.

18 Sec. 12.58.040. MITIGATING FACTORS. In determining whether to impose  
19 the death sentence, all mitigating factors shall be considered, including, but not limited  
20 to, the following:

21 (1) the defendant committed the offense under a degree of duress,  
22 coercion, threat, or compulsion that was insufficient to constitute a defense but that  
23 significantly affected the defendant's conduct;

24 (2) the conduct of a youthful defendant was substantially influenced by  
25 a person more mature than the defendant;

26 (3) the defendant acted with serious provocation from the victim;

27 (4) the defendant assisted authorities to detect or apprehend other  
28 persons who committed the offense with the defendant.

## 29 ARTICLE 2. SENTENCE REVIEW.

30 Sec. 12.58.100. REVIEW OF JUDGMENT OF CONVICTION OF A  
31 CAPITAL FELONY. (a) A judgment of conviction of a capital felony for which a

1 sentence of death is imposed shall automatically be reviewed by the supreme court  
2 within 60 days after imposition of the sentence. This time limit may be extended by  
3 the supreme court for good cause.

4 (b) A review under this section has priority over all other cases and the case  
5 shall be heard in accordance with rules adopted by the supreme court. On review, the  
6 court shall determine whether

7 (1) the sentence was imposed under the influence of passion, prejudice,  
8 or other arbitrary factor;

9 (2) the evidence supports the finding of an aggravating factor under  
10 AS 12.58.030 and whether the jury has properly considered mitigating factors under  
11 AS 12.58.040;

12 (3) the sentence is excessive or disproportionate to the penalty imposed  
13 in similar cases, considering both the crime and the defendant; and

14 (4) any other issue that the defendant may raise as a point on appeal.

15 (c) In its consideration of an automatic appeal under (a) and (b) of this section,  
16 the supreme court

17 (1) may not require the defendant to file a notice of appeal unless the  
18 defendant raises an issue as a point on appeal under (b)(4) of this section;

19 (2) may not require the defendant to pay a fee;

20 (3) shall designate the entire record of the proceedings before the  
21 sentencing court as the record on appeal;

22 (4) shall prepare the transcript of the proceedings for the record on  
23 appeal at public expense; and

24 (5) may not require the defendant to submit and file a brief unless the  
25 defendant raises an issue as a point on appeal under (b)(4) of this section.

26 Sec. 12.58.110. ISSUANCE OF DEATH WARRANT. If the supreme court  
27 upholds a judgment of conviction and sentence of death, the court shall issue a death  
28 warrant that specifies a date of execution. The specified date of execution must be not  
29 less than 30 days nor more than 60 days after the date of the warrant. The death  
30 warrant shall be delivered to the commissioner of corrections.

31 ARTICLE 3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY.

1           Sec. 12.58.200. ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY. The  
2 commissioner shall establish a procedure for the execution of a sentence of death  
3 ordered by the state supreme court at the time and place legally appointed.

4           Sec. 12.58.210. EXECUTION UNDER SUPREME COURT DEATH  
5 WARRANT. After receiving a supreme court warrant issued under AS 12.58.110, the  
6 commissioner shall specify the time and place of execution.

7           Sec. 12.58.220. MANNER OF EXECUTION. (a) The punishment of death  
8 shall be inflicted by continuous, intravenous administration of a lethal dose of sodium  
9 thiopental until death is pronounced by a licensed physician.

10           (b) A death sentence shall be carried out within a state correctional facility.

11           Sec. 12.58.230. RETURN OF DEATH WARRANT. After the execution the  
12 commissioner shall make a return upon the death warrant showing the time and place  
13 in which the defendant was executed.

14                           ARTICLE 4. STAY OF EXECUTION.

15           Sec. 12.58.300. INCOMPETENCY OR PREGNANCY OF PERSON  
16 SENTENCED TO DEATH. If, after a sentence of death is imposed, the commissioner  
17 has reason to believe that the defendant has become incompetent to proceed with the  
18 execution or that the defendant is pregnant, the commissioner shall immediately give  
19 written notice to the court in which the sentence of death was imposed, the prosecuting  
20 attorney, and counsel for the defendant. The execution of sentence shall be stayed  
21 pending further order of the court.

22           Sec. 12.58.310. EXAMINATION INTO COMPETENCY. (a) On receipt of  
23 notice under AS 12.58.300 that the defendant is believed to be incompetent, the  
24 sentencing court shall examine the mental condition of the defendant in the same  
25 manner as provided for examining persons for competency to stand trial under  
26 AS 12.47.070.

27           (b) If the sentencing court finds that the defendant is incompetent, the court  
28 shall immediately certify that finding to the supreme court and the commissioner and  
29 shall enter an order for commitment in the same manner as provided for commitment  
30 under AS 12.47.110.

31           (c) If the sentencing court finds that the defendant is competent, the court shall

1 immediately certify the finding to the supreme court and the commissioner. The  
2 supreme court shall issue and deliver another warrant to the commissioner under  
3 AS 12.58.110, together with a copy of the certified finding. Unless the sentencing  
4 court's finding is appealed in accordance with applicable court rule, the warrant shall  
5 specify a date of execution that is not less than 30 days nor more than 60 days after  
6 the date of the warrant.

7 Sec. 12.58.320. DISPOSITION PENDING PREGNANCY. (a) If the  
8 defendant is pregnant, the sentencing court shall immediately certify that finding to the  
9 supreme court and the commissioner. The supreme court shall issue an order staying  
10 the execution of the sentence of death during the pregnancy.

11 (b) When the defendant is no longer pregnant, the sentencing court shall  
12 immediately certify the finding to the supreme court and the commissioner. The  
13 supreme court shall issue and deliver another warrant under AS 12.58.110, together  
14 with a copy of the certified finding. Unless the sentencing court's finding is appealed  
15 under applicable court rule, the warrant shall specify a date of execution not less than  
16 30 days nor more than 60 days after the date of the warrant.

17 ARTICLE 5. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

18 Sec. 12.58.900. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter,

- 19 (1) "commissioner" means the commissioner of corrections;  
20 (2) "department" means the Department of Corrections.

21 \* **Sec. 16.** AS 22.07.020(a) is amended to read:

22 (a) The court of appeals has appellate jurisdiction in actions and proceedings  
23 commenced in the superior court involving:

- 24 (1) criminal prosecution, **except prosecution for a capital felony for**  
25 **which a death sentence is imposed;**  
26 (2) post-conviction relief;  
27 (3) children's court matters under AS 47.10.010(a)(1), including waiver  
28 of children's court jurisdiction over a minor under AS 47.10;  
29 (4) extradition;  
30 (5) habeas corpus;  
31 (6) probation and parole; and

1 (7) bail.

2 \* **Sec. 17.** AS 22.07.020(b) is amended to read:

3 (b) Except **for appeals of a death sentence or** as limited in AS 12.55.120, the  
4 court of appeals has jurisdiction to hear appeals of unsuspended sentences of  
5 imprisonment exceeding two years for a felony offense or 120 days for a misdemeanor  
6 offense imposed by the superior court on the grounds that the sentence is excessive,  
7 or a sentence of any length on the grounds that it is too lenient. The court of appeals,  
8 in the exercise of this jurisdiction, may modify the sentence as provided by law and  
9 the state constitution.

10 \* **Sec. 18.** AS 47.10.010(e) is amended to read:

11 (e) When a minor who was at least 16 years of age at the time of the offense  
12 is arraigned on a charge for an offense specified in this subsection, AS 47.10.020 -  
13 47.10.090 and the Alaska Delinquency Rules do not apply to the offense for which the  
14 minor is arraigned or to any additional offenses joinable to it under the applicable rules  
15 of court governing criminal procedure. The minor shall be charged, prosecuted, and  
16 sentenced in the superior court in the same manner as an adult unless the minor is  
17 convicted of some offense other than an offense specified in this subsection, in which  
18 event the minor may attempt to prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the  
19 minor is amenable to treatment under this chapter. If the court finds that the minor is  
20 amenable to treatment under this chapter, the minor shall be treated as though the  
21 charges had been heard under AS 47.10.010 - 47.10.142, and the court shall order  
22 disposition of the charges of which the minor is convicted under AS 47.10.080(b). The  
23 provisions of this subsection apply when the minor is arraigned on a charge

24 (1) that is **a capital felony**, an unclassified felony, or a class A felony  
25 and the felony is a crime against a person; or

26 (2) of arson in the first degree.

27 \* **Sec. 19.** AS 47.10.060(f) is amended to read:

28 (f) For purposes of making a determination under (a) and (d) of this section,

29 (1) the standard of proof is by a preponderance of the evidence; and

30 (2) the burden of proof that a minor is not amenable to treatment under  
31 AS 47.10.010 - 47.10.142 is on the state; however, if the petition filed under

1 AS 47.10.020 seeking to have the court declare a minor a delinquent is based on the  
2 minor's alleged commission of an offense that is **a capital felony**, an unclassified  
3 felony, or class A felony and that is a crime against a person, the minor

4 (A) is rebuttably presumed not to be amenable to treatment  
5 under AS 47.10.010 - 47.10.142; and

6 (B) has the burden of proof of showing that the minor is  
7 amenable to treatment under AS 47.10.010 - 47.10.142.

8 \* **Sec. 20.** APPLICABILITY TO CRIMINAL RULES. AS 12.58, added by sec. 15 of this  
9 Act, has the effect of modifying the sentencing provisions of Rules 32, 32.1, and 32.3, Alaska  
10 Rules of Criminal Procedure, by establishing exclusive procedures for imposition of death  
11 sentence by a trial court and by authorizing automatic appeal of those sentences to the Alaska  
12 Supreme Court.

13 \* **Sec. 21.** APPLICABILITY TO APPELLATE RULES. AS 12.58.100, added by sec. 15  
14 of this Act, has the effect of amending Rules 204, 209, 210, and 212, Alaska Rules of  
15 Appellate Procedure, by establishing procedures and limitations on procedures relating to the  
16 filing and disposition of appeals of sentences in cases in which the death penalty is imposed.