

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

February 28, 2018

7:59 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Gary Stevens, Chair
Senator Cathy Giessel
Senator John Coghill
Senator Tom Begich
Senator Shelley Hughes

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 214

"An Act renaming a portion of the Alaska Safe Children's Act as Bree's Law; relating to Bree's Law programs and Bree's Law activities; relating to dating violence and abuse policy, training, awareness, prevention, and notices; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 214

SHORT TITLE: BREE'S LAW; DATING VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) DRUMMOND

04/05/17	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/05/17	(H)	EDC
04/12/17	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
04/12/17	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
02/09/18	(H)	EDC RPT 6DP
02/09/18	(H)	DP: TALERICO, PARISH, SPOHNHOLZ, KOPP, JOHNSTON, DRUMMOND
02/09/18	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/09/18	(H)	Moved HB 214 Out of Committee
02/09/18	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/14/18	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)

02/14/18 (H) VERSION: HB 214
02/16/18 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/16/18 (S) EDC, JUD
02/28/18 (S) EDC AT 8:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

PATRICK FITZGERALD, Staff
Representative Harriet Drummond
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 214 on behalf of the sponsor.

BUTCH MOORE, Bree Moore's Father
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in support of HB 214.

CINDY MOORE, Bree Moore's Mother
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in support of HB 214.

ACTION NARRATIVE

7:59:34 AM

CHAIR GARY STEVENS called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 7:59 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Giessel, Coghill, and Chair Stevens. Senators Begich and Hughes joined shortly thereafter.

7:59:58 AM

HB 214-BREE'S LAW; DATING VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

CHAIR STEVENS announced the consideration of HB 214. [HB 214, version 30-LS0781\O, was before the committee.]

PATRICK FITZGERALD, Staff, Representative Harriet Drummond, Alaska State Legislature, presented HB 214 on behalf of the sponsor. He said Bree's Law refers to Bree Moore, who was a victim of dating violence that ended her life. Alaska ranks in the top 10 states with the worst records of dating violence and sexual abuse, with more than 1,000 high school students reporting sexual dating violence one or more times in 2017 alone. Not only is it a horrifying statistic, but it is a scary glimpse into the future of generations of Alaskans who think it isn't abnormal to experience abuse in a relationship.

MR. FITZGERALD said everybody has a role in preventing dating violence. Bree's Law will address the dating violence section of the Alaska Safe Children's Act in an effort to create an effective, knowledgeable awareness to combat the horrible trend that plagues Alaska. Their hope is that Bree's Law will be recognized and identified in helping young adults in relationships being able to access any help they need to remove themselves from abusive relationships. Bree's Law, which is being referenced by educators all over Alaska, is the informal identifier of dating violence prevention. Passing HB 214 will make it official.

[8:02:19 AM](#)

At ease.

MR. FITZGERALD presented the sectional.

Section 1: Amends the AS 14.30.355 portion of the Alaska's Safe Children's Act to be known as the Alaska Safe Children's Act. This section also renames AS 14.30.356 portion of the Alaska Safe Children's Act as Bree's Law.

[8:03:16 AM](#)

Section 2: Establishes that all education, training programs, and activities developed or undertaken by school districts to implement AS 14.30.356 shall be known as Bree's Law programs and Bree's Law activities.

[8:03:36 AM](#)

Section 3: Establishes retroactivity of Sections 1 and 2 to June 30, 2017.

[8:03:58 AM](#)

Section 4: Establishes sections 1 and 2 of this Act.

Section 5: Establishes Section 3 takes effect immediately.

[8:04:25 AM](#)

BUTCH MOORE, Bree Moore's father, spoke in support of HB 214. He said in the Safe Children's Act Task Force report, at the bottom of page 10, there was a special note. The task force recognized that additional curricula is needed for grades 10-12. The education mandated across Alaska grades 10-12 contains nothing about the lethality of dating violence. No peer-reviewed, data-

driven curricula in the country acknowledges that someone could be murdered. They have been working with multiple organizations--the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), the Anchorage and Mat-Su School Districts, multiple Alaska Native corporations--to create material, including a small module, a video, that can be downloaded with a short, one-page, question-and-answer sheet to use in classroom discussion.

8:07:22 AM

MR. MOORE said when they speak to students, the students identify with Bree's story. Governor Bill Walker declared February teen dating violence awareness month. Mr. Moore and his wife printed and mailed 3,500 posters to all 359 middle schools and high schools in the state. The poster has a hotline phone number teens can contact. One of the big gaps is that teachers are put in the position of teaching something they had never taught before and students did not always want to talk to teachers. Working with multiple agencies, they came up with an 800 hotline number staffed by trained advocates, part of national teen dating violence awareness prevention by loveisrespect.org. Teens, parents, and teachers can text or talk anonymously with someone through this service. This has been a huge missing link. Curricula can be delivered in classrooms, but now an additional resource is available. DEED Commissioner Michael Johnson wrote a letter explaining the campaign that was sent with the posters. Mr. Moore will forward an email to committee members with a copy of the letter. He mentioned that Rhonda McBride [KTVA program Frontiers] did a story Sunday on teen violence and prevention and awareness in Alaska. He said what the kids have to say in the program is so strong and compelling. They want and need this education.

8:11:07 AM

MR. MOORE said the video module will be in schools next year. Work is being done to have an 800 number in Alaska available through the crisis center in Fairbanks so someone under the age of 18 will have someone to call in Alaska. Until the governor signed the February teen violence dating awareness month proclamation, he and his wife were not aware of what this campaign has accomplished, through the work of the legislature, teachers, parents, kids. The 2015-2017 teen violence numbers that just came out show that number cut in half. This campaign is like the wear-your-life vests campaign, which has cut drowning deaths in half. It is a huge step in reducing domestic and sexual violence in Alaska, where Alaska is still number one in men killing women. Over 50 percent of women in Alaska have been sexually assaulted or physically abused.

CHAIR STEVENS thanked the Moores for their advocacy.

[8:14:56 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH said he wanted the Moores to know their patience and perseverance have been critical for putting teen dating violence in the forefront.

[8:15:33 AM](#)

CINDY MOORE, Bree Moore's mother, spoke in support of HB 214. She encouraged everyone to watch the Frontiers show with Rhonda McBride. She described how droves of kids hug them after they speak. They all say thank you for bringing this to light. They say in the past they have not known what to do, they had been led to believe it's not something to talk about. This is like other public safety campaigns. People can do something when they see dating violence. People should not turn a blind eye. Senator Lisa Murkowski has sponsored a bill to name Bree's Law nationally, cosponsored by Senator Sullivan. Representative Don Young has a mirror bill in the House. They see this as something like the AMBER alert. When people hear of an AMBER alert, they know what that means. It is an education in two words. That is what they hope to develop with the naming of Bree's Law. Instead of saying this is the Alaska Safe Children's Act, teen dating violence prevention and awareness education, she said, "We say 'Bree's Law,' two words. Everyone knows exactly what is meant." It is all about creating awareness and starting a conversation.

[8:18:58 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked if the email Mr. Moore planned to send would include the Rhonda McBride piece.

[8:19:10 AM](#)

MR. MOORE said he would send the link to their Facebook page with the KTVA program.

[8:19:31 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES asked if students are instructed to call law enforcement to report this activity.

[8:20:01 AM](#)

MR. MOORE said reporting requirements for hotlines are only to report in cases of child abuse or senior abuse. They have worked to get most of the service agencies in Alaska into the loveisrespect database so the loveisrespect hotline can refer people to services. He is not trained as a responder, but they do have a system and tree to route calls.

[8:22:28 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES asked if middle school and high school students are encouraged to call law enforcement during training.

[8:22:53 AM](#)

MR. MOORE said the first part of training addresses the apprehension about going forward and who to contact. When they present at schools, multiple kids come up and cry and tell their stories. They do not tell people to go directly to law enforcement. Hundreds of people have contacted them in last few years because they don't know what to do. It is important to connect them to resources. The first priority is not to get them to law enforcement. Certainly if a crime is committed that is the route.

[8:25:09 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked if there were any public testimony. There was none.

[8:25:36 AM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL said SB 171 by the Senate Rules Committee by request of the governor takes the first half of bill they just heard, HB 214, but adds reporting mechanisms. The governor's bill addresses reporting requirements for people who know about things that have been happening to students who are not school employees. She heard, in the Moores' testimony about kids coming forward after their presentations and telling their stories, the phrase "are happening" to them. Adults that hear that become automatic mandatory reporters. She sees that issue addressed in the Senate version put forward by the governor. When an adult hears something happening to a child, that has to be reported to the appropriate authorities. HB 214 doesn't address that critical piece.

[8:28:06 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES said Mr. Moore's response is about making sure the victim is tended to, but she is worried about the perpetrator repeating the violence with others. She is not sure of the best way to handle it. She understands that for someone experiencing this it is a tender, tough situation, but if they do not go after the perpetrator there will be more victims. If this is the most dangerous state for women, they need to address that.

[8:29:00 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS said the issue of adults needing to report is something they need to address.

[8:29:08 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH said he sees both bills as separate bills. Although SB 171 talks about changing the name [to Bree's Law], that bill takes more work. This one, as Cindy Moore testified, ensures a clear brand that speaks to kids immediately. Hopefully HB 214 will be moved on to the floor to get that piece of the law taken care of while looking at the complex issue of protecting kids' safety. This is a first step. It can happen immediately while they continue deliberating to create a strong Senate bill.

[8:30:43 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES said dealing with perpetrators would be more a matter for the Judiciary Committee instead of the Education Committee, but she wanted to make that comment on the record.

[8:31:05 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS held HB 214 in committee for further review.

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Stevens adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee at 8:31.