

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 8, 2022

1:05 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Matt Claman, Chair
Representative Liz Snyder, Vice Chair
Representative Harriet Drummond
Representative David Eastman
Representative Christopher Kurka
Representative Sarah Vance

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: ALASKA VICTIMIZATION SURVEY RESULTS

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

INGRID JOHNSON, PhD, Associate Professor
Alaska Justice Information Center
University of Alaska Anchorage
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave a PowerPoint presentation, titled "Results from the 2020 Alaska Victimization Survey" and answered questions.

ACTION NARRATIVE

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CHAIR MATT CLAMAN called the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Representatives Kurka, Snyder, Vance, and Claman were present at the call to order. Representatives Eastman and Drummond arrived as the meeting was in progress.

PRESENTATION: Alaska Victimization Survey Results

1:06:40 PM

CHAIR CLAMAN announced that the only order of business would be a presentation on the results of the Alaska Victimization Survey.

1:07:15 PM

INGRID JOHNSON, PhD, Associate Professor, Alaska Justice Information Center, University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), gave a PowerPoint presentation, titled "Results from the 2020 Alaska Victimization Survey" [hard copy included in the committee packet]. She stated that the Alaska Victimization Survey (AVS) documented the prevalence of intimate partner violence and sexual victimization among adult women in Alaska on a lifetime and a past year basis. The Survey was a joint effort between the Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) and the University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center. It was modeled after the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS). Overall, 13,000 women had participated; in 2020, there were 2,100 participants. She pointed out that the 2020 results show that 48 out of every 100 adult women in Alaska experience intimate partner violence (IPV) in their lifetimes, with 6.9 percent in the past year; 41 experienced sexual violence (SV) in their lifetime, with 3.4 percent in the past year; and 58 experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or both in their lifetime, with 8.1 percent in the past year. Rates of IPV and SV against women were higher in Alaska compared to the national average. She stated that between 2015 and 2020, experiences with SV in the past year stayed relatively stable, while IPV fluctuated up and down. The study found that an increase in IPV and SV correlated with both unemployment or reduced work hours and negative impacts to financial stability as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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DR. JOHNSON, in response to a question from the committee, discussed data collection and the proportional weighting of the sample size. She reported that Alaskan women were included in the NISVS data; however, the Alaska sample was not weighted enough to skew the national prevalence rates. Lifetime prevalence of IPV was fairly consistent across different

regions; past year prevalence of IPV was the highest in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta at a rate of 16.9 percent and the lowest being Sitka at 6.8 percent. In addition, violence was twice as prevalent in women under 40. She discussed potential research on the effectiveness of prevention efforts, which is challenged by the state's small population. The 2020 AVS found that women with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) were two times as likely to have experienced violence in the past year compared to those with no ACEs; consequently, preventing ACEs could be an important mitigator.

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DR. JOHNSON, in response to additional questions from the committee, explained that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) received federal funding in 2016 and 2017 to submit and test the backlog of sexual assault kits and conduct research on sexual assault investigations, prosecutions, and victim support and engagement. The UAA Justice Center worked with DPS on the research component to take a holistic, victim-centered approach, considering involvement of state agencies in all stages of sexual assault. Research showed that "belief" was the top-rated justice priority for sexual assault victims. On the topic of reporting, a small survey of women who had experienced sexual assault in Alaska during their lifetime found that 22 percent failed to report the incident due to fear of harm by the perpetrator; 22 percent failed to report because nothing happened with a prior report; 18 percent were too ashamed to report; and 18 percent failed to report the incident out of fear of not being believed by police. Two important findings were displayed on page 10 of the AVS report: first, women under 40 were more than twice as likely as those 40 and older to experience IPV, SV, or both in the past year; second, women under 40 were significantly more likely to have experienced most types of ACEs. In addition, 41.9 percent of parents under 40 who were separated or divorced had experienced past year violence or ACEs compared to 29.1 percent of those over 40.

DR. JOHNSON highlighted an ongoing effort to compile ACEs data sources and launch a separate survey which includes protective factors. She concluded the presentation by acknowledging that most victims are not reporting to the police. She added that there is not a consistent sense of why the rates were fluctuating. Nationally, 40 percent to 50 percent of crime victims report their victimization experience to the police; victims of IPV report at a rate of 50 percent to 54 percent, per the NISVIS; and the most commonly reported victimization

experience was motor vehicle theft at 75 percent. She noted that men were excluded from the AVS because they would need to be oversampled to generate reliable estimates.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.