

HB

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POSITION PAPER  
ON  
SENATE BILL NO. 188

An Act relating to mentally retarded persons; and providing for an effective date.

The legislative intent is not clear from the bill as stated. This should be specified further as to the goals or objectives of this act.

The effect of this legislation is to remove age restrictions, thus expanding availability of service to all exceptional persons. The introduction of this legislation is timely in that Alaska Statute 14.30 enacted during the 1974 Legislature for special education has had impact on the scope of AS 47.20.

Line 11 uses the word "may" and line 18 uses the word "shall" in reference to the same function of the Department. The desired function of the Department should be clarified.

The Department of Health and Social Services, in consultation with the Department of Education, has proposed an Infant Learning Program for exceptional children under the authority of AS 47.20 as it currently stands. To the extent the proposed amendments of Senate Bill No. 188 would broaden the coverage under AS 47.20, it has the potential of detracting from the Infant Learning Program as proposed.

Fiscal implications. Passage of Senate Bill No. 188 doubtless will result in increased costs. The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to operating within the Governor's approved administration budget. The costs should be considered carefully.

Providing the clarifications listed above can be achieved, the Department supports the goals of the bill but does not see any way that the funding can be provided through the divisional or departmental budget for FY 76.

Recommended by: Donald G. Freedman 3/12/75  
Director, Division of Public Health Date

Approved by: Robert W. ... 3/12/75  
Deputy Commissioner Date  
Department of Health & Social Services