

H B

7

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date referred: 1/19/87

FURTHER REFERRALS: Judiciary
Finance

DATE: 2-26-87

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee has considered HB 7

"An Act relating to volunteer guardians ad litem in the Office of Public Advocacy."

RECOMMENDS:

- replace with CS HB 7 (HESS) the same title
- attached amendment(s) a new title
- do pass
- do not pass
- no recommendation
- individual recommendations
- additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

- fiscal impact same as previous fiscal note published _____
- zero fiscal note same as previous zero fiscal note published _____
- zero with analysis

SIGNING DO PASS:

SIGNING OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Paul E. Pellini

John Ellis

Alvin Korgensen

Bill Harts

Mark Greenberg

David L. Douley

John Ellis
Co-Chairman's signature

Alvin Korgensen

JOHN SUND, REPRESENTATIVE

2504 2nd Avenue
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901
(907) 225-5552

While in Juneau
P. O. Box V
Juneau, Alaska 99811
(907) 465-4919

February 13, 1987

MEMORANDUM

TO: House HESS Committee

FROM: Representative John Sund

RE: HB7 "An Act relating to volunteer guardian ad litem
in, and grants to, the Office of Public Advocacy

.....

The purpose of this bill is to amend AS 44.21.410 allowing the Office of Public Advocacy to develop and coordinate a program to recruit, select, train, assign, and supervise volunteer guardians ad litem from local communities to aid in delivering services in cases in which the Office of Public Advocacy is appointed as guardian ad litem.

The court is given authority by statute to appoint an attorney or a guardian ad litem for the child in a proceeding which is concerned with the child's custody, support, visitation or in any other legal proceedings involving his welfare. A guardian ad litem appointed pursuant to the Alaska Statutes is an advocate for the best interests of the child with not only the power but the responsibility to represent the child zealously and to the best of his ability. While the child's attorney advocates the child's wishes, these are not always in the best interest.

In 1974, Congress enacted the "Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act". According to the Act, the guardian ad litem was to be more than a simple advocate for the child, but rather a guardian to protect the child's long range interests.

HB7 carries a fiscal note, but is expected to save money in the long-run, by freeing paid OPA staff to perform other functions.

HB 7 -- "An Act relating to volunteer guardians ad litem in
the Office of Public Advocacy."

FILE CONTENTS

- 1) Copy of HB 7
- 2) Memo from bill sponsor, Rep. John Sundā
- 3) Fiscal note from Office of Public Advocacy
- 4) Fiscal note and position paper from Dept. of Health and
Social Services
- 5) Sectional analysis of HB 7
- 6) Position paper from Office of Public Advocacy
- 7) Letter of support

**STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE**

REQUEST: _____

Bill Version: _____
Publish Date: _____

Revision Date: _____
Title: An Act relating to volunteer
guardians ad litem.
Sponsor: Sund
Requestor: _____

Agency Affected: Health and Social Services
BRU: Social Services
Youth Services
Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
PERSONAL SERVICES	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
---------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

REVENUE	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
---------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by: Yvonne M. Chase, Director Phone: 465-3170
Division: Division of Family and Youth Services Date: 2/23/87

Approved by Commissioner: Myra M. Munson Date: 2/24/87
Agency: Department of Health and Social Services

- Distribution (by preparer):
- Legislative Finance
 - Legislative Sponsor
 - Requestor
 - Office of Management and Budget
 - Impacted Agency(ies)
 - Senate Secretary

POSITION PAPER

HOUSE BILL NO. 7

For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to volunteer guardians ad litem in the Office of Public Advocacy."

This bill amends AS 44.21.410 to allow the Office of Public Advocacy to expand services of guardians ad litem by developing and maintaining a corps of volunteer guardians ad litem.

AS 47.17.030(e) states that "in all" actions taken by the Department or a Health and Social Services agency of a local government under this chapter that result in a judicial proceeding the child shall be represented by a guardian ad litem in that proceeding. Funds available for salaried guardians ad litem are not adequate to retain sufficient personnel to serve all children in Alaska who have a legal right to the services of a guardian ad litem under AS 47.17.030(e). This results in assignment of guardians only to those cases determined to be the most complicated and a lowering in quality of guardian services due to excessive caseloads. The average caseload in Anchorage is 150 cases per guardian ad litem. This is well above the level at which adequate services can be provided.

Volunteer guardian ad litem programs such as proposed in this bill have proven successful in many states. A stable corps of paid professional staff would be able to maintain a quality service at an expanded level by providing necessary recruitment, training, and supervision for a volunteer corps.

The Department strongly supports this bill.

RECOMMENDED:

Yvonne M. Chase
Yvonne M. Chase, Director
Division of Family
and Youth Services

DATE:

2/23/87

APPROVED:

Myra M. Munson
Myra M. Munson, Commissioner
Department of Health
and Social Services

DATE:

2/24/87

House Bill 7 - An act relating to volunteer guardians ad litem in, and grants to, the Office of Public Advocacy
Overview prepared by Rep. John Sund's office

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

Section 1, subsection (a)(6) allows the Office of Public Advocacy set up a program to train and supervise volunteers to serve as guardians ad litem.

Subsection (b)(3) allows the Office of Public Advocacy to solicit funds from local governments and private individuals.

Section 2 restricts non-attorney guardians ad litem from giving legal advice or acting as an attorney for a minor and limits the civil liability of volunteer guardians, while participating within the program.

HISTORY

A guardian ad litem is appointed, at the discretion of a judge, to represent a child's best interests in court proceedings. An attorney guardian ad litem within the Office of Public Advocacy may be appointed as guardian when no appropriate family member or friend is available, as in the case of a neglected or abused child.

Section 1, subsection (a)(6): The Office of Public Advocacy began a volunteer guardian program in August 1985, as a pilot project, because of the overwhelming need for additional guardians ad litem and the lack of available staff time. (each attorney guardian ad litem carries a caseload of between 80 and 100 people) As of 12/20/85, five volunteers were under the supervision of an attorney guardian from the Office of Public Advocacy.

The volunteers have been able to provide more personal attention to the everyday requirements of their wards, such as coordinating meetings and conferring with social workers. This has allowed the staff additional time to perform the more specialized duties required of guardian ad litem.

Section 1, subsection (b)(3): Offers of monetary assistance for training and materials have been forthcoming from the Alaska Bar Association, the City of Anchorage and others. Because of this potential for funding from sources other than state government, the subsection was included in the bill.

Section 2: The non-attorney language was added in House Judiciary. The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association suggested that the liability issue be addressed. It is in line with the statutes of Delaware, Florida, Indiana and North Carolina. Volunteer guardian programs in states without legislative protection are finding difficulty in obtaining affordable liability insurance.

POINTS re: HB7

A guardian ad litem is appointed to protect a child's best interests during court proceedings, particularly for abused or neglected children or in custody cases. The Office of Public Advocacy has attorneys who perform this service and each carries a caseload of between 80 and 100.

The bill will begin a volunteer program to take over some of the responsibility for these cases, as Jay McCarthy can explain in detail.

Jay supervised 5 volunteers in a pilot project that was begun last year.

Volunteer guardian ad litem have been successfully utilized throughout the nation.

The program carries a fiscal note, but is expected to save money in the long-run, by freeing paid staff to perform other functions. Jay can explain this more fully.

POSITION PAPER
House Bill 7

An Act relating to Volunteer Guardian
ad litem/Court Appointed Special Advocates
(VGAL/CASA) in the Office of Public Advocacy

House Bill 7 mandates that the Office of Public Advocacy (OPA) develop a volunteer guardian ad litem program and allows the agency to receive funds from additional sources for this purpose.

The following review of the history of OPA and the volunteer concept will provide the background underlying the OPA's support of HB7.

HISTORY AND DUTIES OF OFFICE OF PUBLIC ADVOCACY:

The Office of Public Advocacy was created and placed within the Department of Administration in the Spring of 1984. The Office of Public Advocacy is required by Statute (A.S. 44.21.410) to provide services in the following three areas.

(1) Guardian ad litem representation to abused children in Child In Need of Aid proceedings, guardian ad litem representation of children in custody disputes, legal representation of parents in Child In Need of Aid proceedings where there is a conflict with the Public Defender's Office, guardian ad litem activities in guardianships for minors, and a host of other civil functions, including legal representation of parents involved in custody disputes where the other party is represented by a public agency, i.e. Alaska Legal Services.

(2) Legal representation of indigent persons charged with crimes where the Alaska Public Defender Agency has a conflict of interest;

(3) Public Guardian services as well as payment to visitors, experts and attorneys for the respondent.

Prior to 1984, the Alaska Court System had provided these services primarily through a system of court appointed attorneys. The Public Guardian function was also within the Alaska Court System.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A VOLUNTEER GUARDIAN AD LITEM/COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE:

A Court Appointed Special Advocate/Volunteer Guardian ad litem (hereinafter known as VGAL/CASA) is an individual who is an advocate for a child's best interests in court proceedings. A

VGAL/CASA does not have the legal authority to make decisions effecting the child's person or property, i.e. medical decisions or financial investments. A VGAL/CASA's obligation is to objectively insure that the court receives all pertinent information necessary to make a decision which is in the child's best interest. A major difference between an attorney appointed to represent a child and a VGAL/CASA for a child is that the VGAL/CASA may disagree with the position of the child. A guardian ad litem from the Office of Public Advocacy or its contractors are appointed for every child for which the State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services petitions to be a Child In Need of Aid under A.S. 47.10.010 due to abuse or neglect. A child may also have a GAL in contested divorce custody proceedings, contested adoptions, and guardianships.

HISTORY OF CASA

In 1976, King County, Seattle, Washington, Superior Court Presiding Judge David W. Soukop began exploring ways to insure abused and neglected children's best interests were consistently presented to the court. Traditionally, the court appointed attorneys to serve as guardians ad litem for these children. However, due to the high number of cases involving children and the lack of adequate training by many attorneys, as well as cost considerations, Judge Soukop decided to recruit and train community volunteers who would be asked to make a long-term commitment to each child for whom they serve as GAL. The term Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) was coined by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in 1982. This organization of judicial experts also recommended that every juvenile court in the United States implement a CASA project.

In May of 1985, the Office of Public Advocacy became a member of the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association and began exploring the feasibility of a VGAL/CASA program in Alaska. The Office of Public Advocacy had informal meetings in Anchorage with judges, family and children's court masters, the Division of Family and Youth Services, Alaska Youth Advocates, the District Attorney's Office, Attorney General's Office, Public Defender's Office, community mental health providers, and the Alaska Bar Association to request their input and recommendations as to whether or not a VGAL/CASA program would be acceptable in the Anchorage area. Due to the overwhelming support of the concept, the Office of Public Advocacy recruited and trained five volunteers in the summer of 1985. The five volunteers were screened by an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee continues to assist Office of Public Advocacy staff in the development and operation of the VGAL/CASA program.

THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC ADVOCACY'S SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 7:

The Office of Public Advocacy strongly supports passage of HB7. The Office of Public Advocacy would request that the statute be amended to state Volunteer Guardian ad litem/Court

Appointed Special Advocate so as to be able to utilize the efforts of the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association. The passage of HB7 would require that the Office of Public Advocacy recruit and develop a permanent VGAL/CASA program. Passage of HB7 would require creating the position of Program Director. It is believed that a non-attorney should be hired in order to implement the VGAL/CASA program first in Anchorage, then in Fairbanks and Ketchikan, and then study the feasibility of developing such a program in other areas of Alaska.

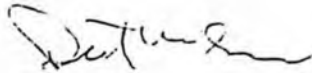
A national survey of all VGAL/CASA programs in the nation was undertaken by the National Court Appointed Special Advocates Association in July, 1985. This nationwide survey found that the average volunteer handled 2.56 cases. It is the belief of the Office of Public Advocacy that a VGAL/CASA program in Anchorage would result in the recruitment of at least 30 volunteers in its first year who could be assigned at least 60 cases. It is believed that a system could be developed in 3 years to have in excess of 100 volunteers in the Anchorage area providing advocacy services to children.

Passage of HB7 would substantially improve the ability of the Office of Public Advocacy to provide guardian ad litem representation to children. Since the Anchorage Office of Public Advocacy began accepting guardian ad litem cases, approximately 1200 cases in Anchorage alone have been opened from the period of January, 1985 through January, 1987. The Office of Public Advocacy currently has two attorney and two associate attorney positions who handle guardian ad litem responsibilities. Under Alaska law a guardian ad litem does not need to be an attorney. The Office of Public Advocacy is attempting to use non-attorneys with training in the needs of children to provide the effective delivery of guardian ad litem services.

A 1985 national study by Donald N. Duquette, J.D., of the Child Advocacy Law Clinic at the University of Michigan Law School and Sarah H. Ramsey, J.D. of the Syracuse College University of Law clearly indicates that a trained and supervised VGAL/CASA provides superior services than an attorney without specific training in child abuse, and services equal to that of trained social workers and attorneys. However, it is essential that non-attorney VGAL/CASA's have the backup support of an attorney to ensure that the best interests of the child are adequately litigated in contested court cases. Staff attorneys at the Office of Public Advocacy would provide this function.

It is anticipated that the trend of dramatic increases in child abuse and neglect cases will continue. Additionally, the State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services' decision in October of 1985 to be in compliance with the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, Public Law 96-272, will result in the involvement of the guardian ad litem past the


dispositional stage of a Child In Need of Aid proceeding. The effect of Public Law 92-272 will be higher caseloads for the Office of Public Advocacy due to the continued monitoring of cases by a guardian ad litem. With current average caseloads of 150 children per staff person at the Anchorage Office of Public Advocacy, there is grave concern that the quality of representation will decline with these projected increases. The implementation of the VGAL/CASA project is a viable solution to this impending crisis.



Brant McGee
Public Advocate

February 6, 1987

Date



Commissioner Garrey Peska
Department of Administration

2/10/87

Date

STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

Bill Version: HB 7
Publish Date: 1/19/87

REQUEST: _____

Revision Date: 2/09/87

Agency Affected: Administration
BRU: Office of Public Advocacy

Title: "An Act relating to volunteer guardian ad litem program..."

Sponsor: Rep. Sund

Components: _____

Requestor: House HESS

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
PERSONAL SERVICES		53.1	84.2	87.6	91.1	94.7
TRAVEL		3.6	3.7	3.8	4.0	4.2
CONTRACTUAL		2.0	0	0	0	0
SUPPLIES		2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4
EQUIPMENT		2.4	9.3	0	0	0
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	63.1	99.3	93.6	97.4	101.3

CAPITAL						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

REVENUE						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	-0-	63.1	99.3	93.6	97.4	101.3
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	-0-	63.1	99.3	93.6	97.4	101.3

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	-0-	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by: Brant McGee, Public Advocate Phone: 274-1684
Division: Office of Public Advocacy Date: 2/7/87

Approved by Commissioner: Garrey Peska, Commissioner Date: 2/10/87
Agency: Department of Administration

Distribution (by preparer):

- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget
- Impacted Agency(ies)
- Senate Secretary

CONTINUATION of FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

For Bill/Resolution No. HB 7

This bill relates to the establishment of a volunteer guardian ad litem program within the Office of Public Advocacy. This bill would substantially improve the ability of the Office of Public Advocacy to provide guardian ad litem representation to children in abuse and neglect cases as well as contested custody cases.

It is anticipated that the Office of Public Advocacy would need a program director position in FY88 and a clerk typist III position in FY89 in order to implement a volunteer guardian ad litem program.

BUDGET ANALYSIS

<u>Personal Services</u>	<u>FY88</u>	<u>FY89</u>
Associate Attorney II - Range 19/A (FY88)	53.1	55.2
Clerk Typist III - Range 08/A (FY89)	0	29.0
	53.1	84.2
 <u>Travel</u>		
3 Trips to Ketchikan		
3 Trips to Fairbanks	3.6	3.7
 <u>Contractual</u>		
Advertising		
Printing Training Material	2.0	0
 <u>Supplies</u>		
	2.0	2.1
 <u>Equipment</u>		
Associate Attorney II (FY88)	2.4	
Clerk Typist III (FY89)	—	9.3
TOTAL:	63.1	99.3

Position Title Clerk Typist III		No. of Positions 1	Range/Step 08/A	Barg. Unit G																										
Time Status PFT	Staff Months 12	Location Anchorage-EBA		Election District 8																										
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of Expenditure</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> <tr> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Salary</td> <td>21,078</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Benefits</td> <td>7,954</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Premium Pay</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Personal Services</td> <td>29,032</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Travel</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Contractual</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Commodities</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Equipment</td> <td>9,338</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Cost</td> <td>38,370</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Type of Expenditure	Amount	1	2	Salary	21,078	Benefits	7,954	Premium Pay		Other		Total Personal Services	29,032	Travel		Contractual		Commodities		Equipment	9,338	Other		Total Cost	38,370	Justification A Clerk Typist III position will be needed to provide clerical support to the volunteer guardian ad litem program director. At present, Office of Public Advocacy has only 3 clerical support positions who provide clerical support to a professional staff of 12 in the Anchorage office. It is not possible for the present secretarial positions to absorb the additional clerical support generated by the program director and the volunteer program.		
Type of Expenditure	Amount																													
1	2																													
Salary	21,078																													
Benefits	7,954																													
Premium Pay																														
Other																														
Total Personal Services	29,032																													
Travel																														
Contractual																														
Commodities																														
Equipment	9,338																													
Other																														
Total Cost	38,370																													
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Funding Source for Total Cost</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Federal Receipts</td> <td>1002</td> </tr> <tr> <td>G. E. Match</td> <td>1003</td> </tr> <tr> <td>General Fund</td> <td>1004</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I-A Receipts</td> <td>1006</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CIP Receipts</td> <td>1061</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Funding Source for Total Cost		Federal Receipts	1002	G. E. Match	1003	General Fund	1004	I-A Receipts	1006	CIP Receipts	1061	Other																
Funding Source for Total Cost																														
Federal Receipts	1002																													
G. E. Match	1003																													
General Fund	1004																													
I-A Receipts	1006																													
CIP Receipts	1061																													
Other																														

Request For
New Position

Agency Department of Administration
 BRU Office of Public Advocacy
 Component Office of Public Advocacy

Page 4 of 4
 Revised Date

ICY 89

STATE OF ALASKA

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF PUBLIC ADVOCACY

900 W. 5TH AVENUE
SUITE 525
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501
PHONE: (907) 274-1684

FEB 10 1987

January 26, 1987

The Honorable John Sund
Alaska State Representative
P.O. Box V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Representative Sund:

The Office of Public Advocacy is currently in the process of developing a Volunteer Guardian ad litem Program. A Guardian ad litem (GAL) is appointed by the Court for every child the State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services petitions to be a Child In Need of Aid due to abuse or neglect. The volunteers are individuals who advocate to the Court what he or she believes to be in the child's best interest.

The Volunteer Guardian ad litem Program is headed by an advisory committee consisting of volunteers who are judges, family and children's court masters, attorneys, community mental health providers, and current volunteer GALs. The advisory board strongly supports the passage of the volunteer GAL Bill, HB7, and establishment of Alaska Children's Trust Corp., SB19 and HB57.

The advisory committee would like to arrange a joint teleconference with Representative Sund, Representative Goll, Senator Kerttula, and Commissioner Peska. We would like to discuss with you these bills and the possibility of the VGAL Program being a beneficiary of the Children's Trust. Jay

(Continued)

Letter, Representative Sund
January 26, 1987

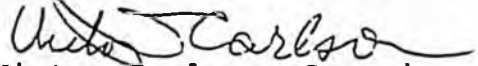
Page 2 of 2

McCarthy, Assistant Public Advocate, is coordinating this effort. He will be contacting you in the next week to make these arrangements.

We appreciate your concern for children in Alaska and look forward to working with you on these matters.

Sincerely,

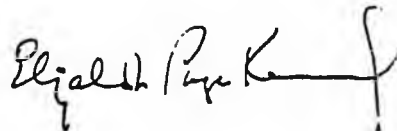
Volunteer Guardian ad litem Advisory Committee

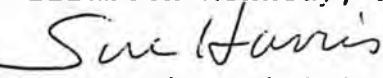

Victor Carlson, Superior Court Judge

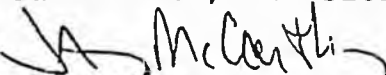

William Hitchcock, Children's Court Master

Janet Kowalski, Executive Director, AWAIC

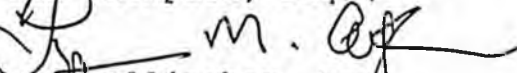

Elizabeth Kennedy, Assistant Attorney General

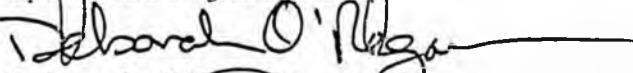




Sue Harris, Division of Family and Youth Services


Jay McCarthy, Assistant Public Advocate

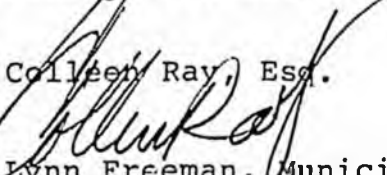

Nan Thompson, Esq.



Lynn Allingham, Esq.

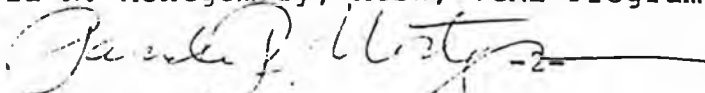

Deborah O'Regan, Executive Director, Alaska Bar Association


John Beese, Esq.

Colleen Ray, Esq.


Lynn Freeman, Municipality of Anchorage


Pamela R. Montgomery, ACSW, VGAL Program Director



HB 7 - Volunteer Guardian Ad Litem Program

Letters of Support for the program are from:

Deborah O'Regan, Executive Director
Alaskan Bar Association

Frank Dalley, Regional Social Services Manager
Division of Family and Youth Services

Dana Fabe, Public Defender

Veronica Duke, Chief of Clinical Social Work Services
Division of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

Elizabeth Sheley, Assistant District Attorney

Ann Stockman, Director of Crisis Services
S.T.A.R.

Gordon Lantrip, Director
Alaska Baptist Family Services

Milli Andreini, Executive Director
The Center for Children and Parents

William D. Hitchcock
Master, Childrens Court, Third Judicial District

Pamela Kirk and Phillip Kaufman
Human Relations Center

Corrine Radergraham, Coordinator
Close Encounters and Alaska Permanency Planning Task Force

Douglas J. Serdahely, Presiding Judge
Third Judicial District

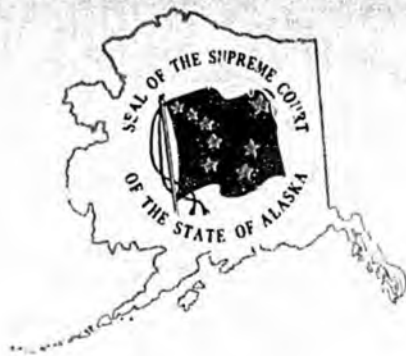
Rick Calcote
Ohlson Psychological Services

Ardis J. Cry, Custody Investigator
Superior Court Third Judicial District

Yvonne Chase, Deputy Director
Southcentral Counseling Center

Peter Scales, PhD
Family Connection

Letters and petition signatures from 137 individuals.



Alaska Court System

State of Alaska

303 "K" STREET
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
99501

ARTHUR H. SNOWDEN II
ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

(907) 274-8611

February 27, 1987

Representative Max Gruenberg, Jr.
Representative John Sund
Co-Chairmen
House Health Education and
Social Services Committee
P. O. Box V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Representatives Gruenberg and Sund:

I am writing to express support by the Alaska Court System for those provisions of HB 7 which would permit the Office of Public Advocacy to develop and coordinate a volunteer guardian ad litem program.

Information from other states in which similar programs have been established indicates that programs of this nature improve the quality of guardian ad litem services and also help contain costs.

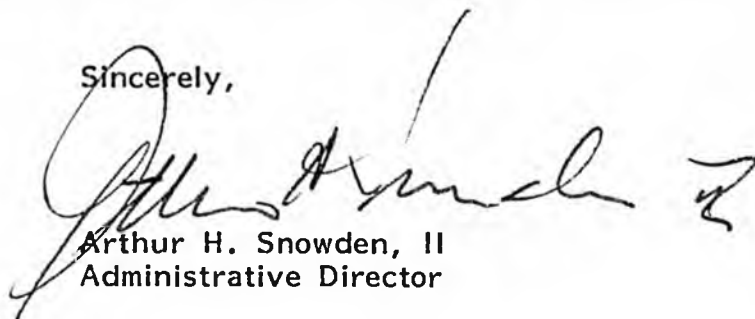
It is my understanding that a committee substitute for HB 7 may be drafted which would change the words "volunteer guardian ad litem" to "court appointed special advocates", or CASA. This acronym is used nationwide, and would permit the Office of Public Advocacy to affiliate with the national CASA organizations.

The court system has no objection to this change. However, it would be helpful to define the term in the legislation, clarifying that appointment by the court is through the Office of Public Advocacy, and does not entitle an advocate under this program to compensation from the court.

Representatives Gruenberg and Sand
February 27, 1987
Page Two

If you have any questions regarding the court's position, please contact either me or my staff counsel Karla Forsythe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arthur H. Snowden, II", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Arthur H. Snowden, II
Administrative Director

KLF:bs

cc: Representative Niilo Koponen
Representative Johnny Ellis
Karla L. Forsythe, Staff Counsel
Brant McGee, Office of Public Advocacy
William Hitchcock, Children's Master