

SR

19



STATE OF ALASKA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
**BILL ANALYSIS**

DEPARTMENT Health & Social Services	DIVISION Public Health	BILL NUMBER SR 19	SPONSOR Hensley, et al.
DEPARTMENT POSITION Support establishment of a Senate Special Committee on Suicide Prevention			
PREPARED BY Elizabeth Ward	DATE 4/9/87	COMMISSIONER'S SIGNATURE <i>Morgan M. Munson</i>	DATE 4/10/87

**SUMMARY**

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED BY BILL Departments of Public Safety, Education & the Court System. Local law enforcemtn, education and health and social service agencies	CONSTITUENT GROUP(S) AFFECTED BY BILL Native corporations and tribal groups Mental Health Associations Social service organizations
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR BILL Not known	ORGANIZATIONAL OPPOSITION TO BILL None known

FISCAL IMPACT:       NONE       FISCAL NOTE ATTACHED

BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE INTENT  
Response to the serious problem of suicide in Alaska as outlined in the Resolution.

ANALYSIS OF BILL/PROGRAM EFFECTS  
Establishment of a committee would provide a prestigious public forum for discussion of the problem of suicide in Alaska, underscore the importance of the problem and provide guidance for agencies involved in suicide prevention.

AMENDMENTS PROPOSED  
None

PLEASE ATTACH A SEPARATE SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR ANALYSIS.

STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION  
FISCAL NOTE

SENATE

REQUEST: \_\_\_\_\_

Bill Version : SR 19  
Publish Date : 4/7/87

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title : Establishing a Senate Special Committee on Suicide Prevention.

Agency Affected : Legislative Affairs Agency  
BRU : Legislative Council

Sponsor : Senator Willie Hensley  
Requestor : Senate HESS Committee

Components : Legal Services

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

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

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE						
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

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

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

No fiscal impact.

Prepared by : Pamela A. Stoops, Manager  
Division : Administrative Services

Phone : 465-3850  
Date : 4/10/87

Approved by : Warren W. Endicott, Executive Director  
Agency : Legislative Affairs Agency

Date : 4/10/87

Distribution (by preparer) :

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

# Suicide now 'extraordinary' public health problem in Alaska: experts

**ANCHORAGE** — Alaskans are committing suicide at twice the national rate, and young Native men kill themselves at a rate 22 times higher than the national figure, a recent study concludes.

On average, Alaskans in 1983 and 1984 killed themselves at a rate of 21 per 100,000 — twice the national average, the report stated.

The annual rate for Natives was 43 per 100,000, but for Native men between 20 and 24 years old, the rate was 257 per 100,000, more than 13 times the state average, the report says.

In 1983 and 1984, the study determined that 185 deaths were legally determined to be suicides. The report was prepared by the Epidemiology Office of the Division of Public Health. It covers 1983 and 1984 and provides the most accurate data available on Alaska's suicides, the office said.

Suicide has become an "extraordinary" public health problem in Alaska, noted the report by Dr. Gary

J. M. Midaugh, Alaska's epidemiologist.

While seen as a major health problem in Alaska for the past 35 years, research on the issue has been regional in focus and concentrated on Natives, Midaugh said.

Historically, suicide was an affliction of the elderly, but today it is epidemic among the young, the study concludes.

For about 35 years, accurate data on suicides in Alaska has been difficult to obtain, the report's authors said. Many are reported as accidental deaths to spare the family grief and shame. Other information is lost in data processing systems in Alaska, they said.

The study represents the first attempt to research suicide in Alaska on a statewide basis, using data obtained from a manual review of death certificates, supplemented by coroner's files, police reports and autopsy records, the report's authors said.