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Alaska State Legislature

Senator Curt Menard



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MEMORANDUM

*Senate
District
E*

TO: Senator Arliss Sturgulewski,
Chair, H.E.S.S. Committee

FROM: Senator Curt Menard *CDM*

DATE: March 11, 1991

IN RE: Senate Bill No. 128

Senate Bill No. 128 appropriates \$4 million to the Alaska Children's Trust Fund. This fund was established legislatively in 1988 and is meant to provide continuous funding for programs in Alaskan communities aimed at the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

This appropriation will constitute the principle of the fund. The interest yield will be appropriated annually for expenditure in grant form specifically for preventative programs.

As this bill appropriates money for a trust fund created by prior legislation, I'll appreciate your quick consideration. Thank you.

WALTER J. HICKEL
GOVERNOR



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STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

ALASKA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

POSITION PAPER

House Bill 50: Making an Appropriation to the
Alaska Children's Trust Fund

The Alaska Children's Trust Fund was established by statute in 1988. Alaska is one of 49 states to have established such fund since 1980.

Trust funds were created to accomplish two goals: to focus on the increasingly high numbers of reported cases of child abuse, and to fund prevention programs at the community level.

The Alaska Children's Trust Fund is designed to provide funds to community-based child abuse prevention programs only. Funds are awarded through a competitive grant process, using the net income of the Fund. The statute requires that the principal remain in the Fund in perpetuity and that only the net income from investments be used as a funding source.

There can be no doubt that child abuse is a serious problem in our state. In FY90 alone, the Division of Family and Youth Services investigated 8,000 reports of child abuse - and there is general agreement that this is only a fraction of the total number of children who suffer violent physical, sexual, and mental abuse each and every day in our state.

The legacy of child abuse should be apparent to anyone who listens to the news or reads the paper: our jails, treatment programs, runaway shelters, and counseling programs are filled with people who were abused as children. The only way to stop the cycle of violence - and to begin to chip away at the enormous cost of treatment - is through prevention.

Prevention is a good, sound investment. The U.S. House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families estimates that for every dollar spent on prevention, three to ten dollars are saved in treatment, incarceration, and societal costs. It is far more cost effective to fund a

AK Commission On Children & Youth Position Paper

community-based prevention program than it is to build another jail.

In FY88, a total of \$21 million was allocated through 43 state trust funds to support more than 1,200 programs - an increase of 20% over FY87. The types of programs most frequently funded include support programs for new parents, pre-parenting programs for teens, programs for high risk parents, public information and education on child abuse, and specialized programs for substance abusing and incarcerated parents.

The National Alliance of Children's Trust Funds, which tracks and monitors the status of all 49 states' funds, reports that direct appropriations are the most stable sources of funding for children's trust funds, accounting for 39% of revenue. House Bill 50 is the first attempt to capitalize the Alaska Children's Trust Fund. The bill is a top priority of the Alaska Commission on Children and Youth, the entity designated to serve as the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund.

We look forward to an opportunity to work with the Department of Revenue in making a sound investment of this allocation and awarding grants to child abuse prevention programs in your community.

We urge your strong support of this bill.

Contact: Carla Timpone, Executive Director

Re: HB 50

March 7, 1991

testimony of Saralyn Tabachnick, MEd
Children's Program Director
AWARE, Inc.
Box 20809
Juneau, AK 99802

A 1981 study funded by the National Center on Child Abuse & Neglect found that half of children who came to shelters wre themselves physically or sexually abused. In the state of Alaska, 19,000 women were abused by their partners in 1986; 63% of those women had children who were abused. Further, when children witness abuse in their family, they are learning from their parents that violence is an acceptable way to solve problems. Sons who witness their father's violence have a 1000 % greater chance of becoming abusers than those who do not.

The importance of providing safe shelter for battered women & their children is clear- not only does it prevent women from being abused, it also protects children from violence. And while women & children are in shelter, we facilitate personal safety & education groups to empower them with the skills & support to help them keep themselves safe. By providing appropriate intervention, we can prevent the generational cycle of abuse.

Humans are born defenseless. We are totally dependent upon others to meet our needs, to protect us, keep us safe, care for us, love & nurture us. In fact, this is the job of a parent. Yet when we do not have our basic needs met, when children are humiliated, neglected, threatened, physically & sexually abused by the person who was to have protected & cared for them, the betrayal of trust a child feels leaves a long & deep scar. Child abuse can be & is physically & emotionally life threatening. We need to protect childrens' lives & spirits. We need to work to prevent violence, & prevent child abuse.

To do this, we must have the support of individuals & systems. We must provide prevention information to children so that they can protect themselves. We need to teach them that they can say no to inappropriate touch, learn the importance of telling an adult, & know that they are not to blame, they didn't do anything wrong, because an adult abused them does not mean they are bad.

Last week, the Prevention/Education Specialist at AWARE provided 3, 45 minute presentations to middle school students. After her presentations, 12 students came to speak to her, individually, about personal safety concerns.

We must provide information for parents as well, so that they can offer the loving care a child needs to develop his potential. We must offer parent support groups and intervention when parents are abusing their children, or fear they may do so. By providing information to children and parents, we prevent abuse. By providing safe shelter for battered women & their children, we prevent abuse.

There are no children testifying here today. They don't have the ways or means or words to speak to you. I am here on behalf of children, to advocate for childrens' needs, for their safety & well-being, for their care & protection. Children deserve these things. It's not their fault if they don't have them. It's our responsibility to provide them. We all need to do what we can to advocate for those whose voices are not heard.

Thank you.

Lynn Squires, MA
Tongass Community Counseling Center
March 7, 1991

Testimony on HB 5650

I wear a couple of hats with Tongass Community Counseling Center. I work with both the Family Services Treatment Program and Sex Offender Treatment Program. That may sound contradictory, but most of our offenders were also victims - some studies say that from 1/3 to 2/3 of offenders are also sexual assault victims. Most of them have families that are characterized by high levels of dysfunction. Working with these two groups becomes much more compatible if you keep that in mind.

These particular statistics are personalized for me in that 95% of the men I work with at Lemon Creek Correctional Center are victims of physical or sexual assault. I certainly believe that the key to decreasing the rate of recidivism is treatment. Statistics prove that incarceration itself does not deter sex offenders from re-offending.

How does this tie into the Family Services Treatment Program? Treatment is the key to preventing this inter-generational cycle of violence from perpetuating itself. We know that often the abused become the abusers; that people re-enact their childhood traumas. Women abused as children either become abusers or enter into abusive relationships. Men abused as children become abusers. The victims begin to identify with the victimizers - why not? - that's a much more powerful position than that of a victim.

What goes into prevention? We get referrals for families in crisis. Either the child is acting out, has been abused and taken from the home, or has been sexually assault and the social worker feels they would benefit from treatment. There needs to be a number of resources available for a family in crisis. One family receiving services from Tongass's Family Services Treatment Program has a mom who is a recovering alcoholic. She needs, or has needed, services from Juneau Recovery Unit, Natives for Sobriety, Alcoholics Anonymous and Tongass. Dad is a sex offender receiving private therapy services. The son is in school, is involved in Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and individual therapy with Tongass. The daughter is in school, receives treatment from Milam, special tutoring and alcohol programs, and is in a group at Tongass.

Lynn Squires, MA
Testimony on HB 56
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That's a lot of resources that one family needs, and this situation/family is not atypical. This is indicative of the depth of the crisis.

Why family treatment? Why not just treat the kids? We feel that isolating the children for services perpetuates the problem. We believe you have to intervene at a family systems level. Parenting skills, education, developing a variety of family roles, besides scapegoat and rebel, are essential. We attempt to avoid identifying a child as the problem because that leads to perpetuating feelings of "I'm bad" or worthlessness. Primarily, we do not want these cycles to continue inter-generationally and it must be stopped at a family level.

You must decide which kind of work you want to do: crisis work or prevention. Prevention may take more of an investment in the beginning, but when you realize that every man who molests children has an average of 76 victims, and if even 10 of those victims perpetuate the cycle, it doesn't take long for the crisis to escalate beyond control.

GEORGE W. BROWN, MD, FAAP
P. O. BOX 4488 • SOUTH BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05408

February 24, 1991

Senator Arliss Sturgulewski
Chairperson
Health, Education, & Social Services Committee
Alaska State Senate
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Honorable Senator Sturgulewski:

Although now working in Vermont, my heart remains in Alaska. I especially appreciate the youthful vigor and compassionate vision of so many Alaskan legislators from the vantage of a more fixed east coast and New England mentality.

Please know how much I endorse Senator Menard's SB 128 with a truly lasting investment in Alaska's children. President Bush shared a copy of his speech at the September 1990 World Summit For Children. That children are a non-partisan issue came across quite clearly in the President's quote from the Little Prince: "Grown-ups never understand anything but themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them."

Thank you for leading for children.

Respectfully,

cc: HESS members

George W. Brown

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: SENATOR STURGULEWSKI

NAME: DONALD STEIN/CMTE MEMBER
TITLE: ALASKA LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS WATCH
ADDRESS: PO BOX 10904
CITY: FAIRBANKS ZIP: 99710
PHONE: 455-6208
BILL NO: SB 128
SUBJECT: APPROP: ALASKA CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND
MESSAGE: ALASKA LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS WATCH OPPOSES SB128. THANK YOU. EOM/CLS

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DATE: 91/03/15
TIME: 12:46:22
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	MENARD