

HB

234

HFIN

FILE

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(11)

Date Referred to Committee: April 30, 1997

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Date of Committee Action: 11/21/98

The FINANCE Committee considered:

HB 234

HOUSE BILL NO. 234

ABORTIONS UNDER GENERAL RELIEF PROGRAM

“An Act relating to assistance for abortions under the general relief program; and relating to financial responsibility for the costs of abortions.”

recommends it be replaced with the following committee substitute CS HB 234 (Fin) the same title a new title

additional referral to _____ Committee
 attached amendment(s)

ADOPTS: _____ Letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept) _____ APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date) _____
 fiscal note(s) HFC for HSS fiscal note(s) _____

zero fiscal note(s) _____ zero fiscal note(s) _____

SIGNING WITH RECOMMENDATIONS		DP	DNP	NR	AM
<i>Care Merrault</i>	Merrault	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<i>Larry Martin</i>	Martin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<i>Walt Kelly</i>	Kelly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<i>Walt Kohring</i>	Kohring	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<i>John Davis</i>	DAVIS			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>John Davies</i>	DAVIES		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<i>Ben Gussendorf</i>	Gussendorf		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<i>Mark Hanley</i>	Hanley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE *Care Merrault* *Mark Hanley*

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1998 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 234

Revision Date: _____
 Title: Relating to assistance for abortions under
the general relief medical program.
 Sponsor: Rep. Martin
 Requestor: _____

Dept. Affected Health & Social Services
 BRU: Medical Assistance
 Components: Medicaid Non-Facility
 Serial # 229

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

OPERATING	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants, Claims	1346.3	1777.4	2008.5	2271.1	2566.3	2899.9
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	1346.3	1777.4	2008.5	2271.1	2566.3	2899.9

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE						
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FUNDING: (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

General Fund	538.5	711.0	803.4	908.4	1026.5	1160.0
Federal Fund	807.8	1066.4	1205.1	1362.6	1539.8	1739.9
Other						
TOTAL	1346.3	1777.4	2008.5	2271.1	2566.3	2899.9

POSITIONS:

Full-Time						
Part-Time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (ATTACH A SEPARATE PAGE IF NECESSARY)

This fiscal note assumes that 20 % of the pregnant women eligible for Medicaid would give birth and remain on Medicaid. This amount is based on statistics by the Alan Guttmacher Inst, 1993.

Prepared by: House Finance Committee
Rep. Mark Hanley, Co-Chair
Rep. Gene Therriault, Co-Chair

Date: 1/21/98
 Phone: 465-4939
 Phone: 465-4797

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1998 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 234

Revision Date: _____
 Title: relating to assistance for abortions under the
general relief medical program
 Sponsor: Martin
 Requestor: Finance

Dept. Affected: Health and Social Services
 BRU: Medical Assistance
 Component: Medicaid Non-Facility
 COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 229
 See also (SN#): _____

Expenditures/Revenues:

(Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS	5,385.2	7,109.6	8,033.8	9,084.2	10,265.1	11,599.6
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	5,385.2	7,109.6	8,033.8	9,084.2	10,265.1	11,599.6

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGES IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE

(Thousands of Dollars)

	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04
1002 Federal Receipts	3,220.3	4,187.5	4,804.2	4,741.9	5,358.4	6,054.9
1003 GF Match	2,164.9	2,922.1	3,229.6	4,342.3	4,906.7	5,544.7
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (please specify)						
TOTAL	5,385.2	7,109.6	8,033.8	9,084.2	10,265.1	11,599.6

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of any current year (FY98) cost: \$0.0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

While this bill requires significant administrative action on the part of the division to recoup expenditures for abortions, it effectively eliminates funding for abortions under section 3, which places abortion procedures as number one on the priority list of services AS 47.25.205. All services numbered 1 through 7 have not been funded under General Relief Medical Assistance since 1986.

This fiscal note assumes that 80% of the pregnant women eligible for Medicaid would give birth and remain on Medicaid should abortion funding become available. This would account for 590 women, and their children, being added to the Medicaid Program annually (newborns receive automatic Medicaid coverage through their first year of life if the mother is receiving Medicaid at the time of birth). FY 99 assumes only partial funding for newborns, as their births will be scattered throughout the year, with some children born in the following year.

The federal match rate for Medicaid has been changed for a three year period, so this fiscal note assumes the higher match rate for FY 99-01, with a reduced federal match for following years.

Prepared by: Nancy Weller
 Division: Medical Assistance
 Approved by Commissioner: Karen Perdue, Commissioner
 Agency: Department of Health & Social Services

Phone: 465-3355
 Date: 01/16/98
 Date: 1/20/98

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Adopted 11/21/98

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 234()

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY

Offered:

Referred:

Sponsors: REPRESENTATIVES MARTIN, Green, Kohring, Kott, Dyson, Sanders, Kelly

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to assistance for abortions under the general relief program."

2 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

3 * Section 1. AS 47.25.205 is amended to read:

4 Sec. 47.25.205. Priority of general relief medical assistance. (a) Except
5 as provided in (b) of this section, if [IF] the department finds that the cost of medical
6 assistance for all persons eligible under AS 47.25.120 - 47.25.300 will exceed the
7 amount allocated in the state budget for that assistance for the fiscal year, the
8 department shall eliminate coverage for medical services in the following order:

- 9 (1) abortions and related services and supplies, such as medical
- 10 supplies and equipment, transportation, laboratory and x-ray services, physician
- 11 services, hospital services, and pharmaceuticals, used for an abortion;
- 12 (2) treatment of speech, hearing, and language disorders;
- 13 (3) [(2)] optometrists' services and eyeglasses;
- 14 (4) [(3)] occupational therapy;
- 15 (5) [(4)] emergency dental services for adults;

- 1 (6) [(5)] prosthetic devices not including dentures;
- 2 (7) [(6)] medical supplies and equipment other than those used to
- 3 perform an abortion;
- 4 (8) [(7)] physical therapy;
- 5 (9) [(3)] outpatient laboratory and outpatient x-ray services other than
- 6 those used for an abortion;
- 7 (10) [(9)] ambulatory surgical center services other than services to
- 8 perform an abortion;
- 9 (11) [(10)] nonemergency medical transportation other than
- 10 transportation to obtain an abortion;
- 11 (12) [(11)] outpatient physician services other than services to
- 12 perform an abortion;
- 13 (13) [(12)] outpatient hospital services other than services to perform
- 14 an abortion;
- 15 (14) [(13)] intermediate care facility services;
- 16 (15) [(14)] skilled nursing facility services;
- 17 (16) [(15)] emergency medical transportation other than
- 18 transportation for an abortion;
- 19 (17) [(16)] pharmaceuticals other than those used in an abortion;
- 20 (18) [(17)] inpatient physician services other than services to perform
- 21 an abortion;
- 22 (19) [(18)] inpatient hospital services other than services to perform
- 23 an abortion.

24 * Sec. 2. AS 47.25.205 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

25 (b) Notwithstanding (a) of this section, the department shall provide coverage

26 for abortions and related services and supplies in cases where a woman who is

27 otherwise eligible under AS 47.25.120 - 47.25.300 suffers from a physical disorder,

28 physical injury, or physical illness, including a life-endangering physical condition

29 caused by or arising from the pregnancy itself, that would, as certified by a physician

30 licensed under AS 08.64, place the woman in danger of death unless an abortion is

31 performed.

My name is Bill Elkinton. I support this bill. Many years ago a government leader of the Jews was told, "Get your house in order." I firmly believe that elected officials need to hear and heed that call. THIS IS SUCH A TIME!

Recent actions by legislative bodies across America to restore order and propriety has refreshed multitudes of our citizens. Welfare reform efforts are among those showing great promise of success in restoring a sense of worth to many as they learn the benefits of employment. That is more than money!

Over 25 years ago the US Supreme Court conveyed to women and girls the "right" to destroy their offspring before birth. That opened the door to a multitude of extensions due to judicial activism. Today I wish to address the issue of government funding of abortions. The notion that a class of people have been given a "right" DOES NOT convey an obligation of the public to fund the exercise thereof.

I have the "right" to travel. Does that necessitate public purchase of my airline tickets? Foolish, you say?! Tragically, in many cases during recent decades the answer has been YES on the sensitive issue before you now. The issue of legislative stewardship of public monies is lively and urgent. This proposal addresses the issue candidly. Government should NOT fund elective abortions.

The sponsors are to be commended for their courage in calling for this action. It is a logical component of fiscal responsibility as well as welfare reform. The morality factor also figures in my reasoning. It is not right to conscript monies from the public purse to provide goods and services contrary to the general welfare. WE SHOULD NOT PROVIDE needles to the druggies, alcohol to the drunkards, nor ABORTIONS to the demanding.

As a teacher and practitioner of CIVICS for nearly half a century, I promote the concept of "responsible citizenship." In closing, I call your attention to the Bill of Responsibilities developed and distributed by Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. Please let me share the Preamble and the first item.

I urge the speedy passage of ^{CS/}HB234.

copy on file

Bill of Responsibilities

Preamble. Freedom and responsibility are mutual and inseparable; we can ensure enjoyment of the one only by exercising the other. Freedom for all of us depends on responsibility by each of us. To secure and expand our liberties, therefore, we accept these responsibilities as individual members of a free society:

To be fully responsible for our own actions and for the consequences of those actions. Freedom to choose carries with it the responsibility for our choices.

To respect the rights and beliefs of others. In a free society, diversity flourishes. Courtesy and consideration toward others are measures of a civilized society.

To give sympathy, understanding and help to others. As we hope others will help us when we are in need, we should help others when they are in need.

To do our best to meet our own and our families' needs. There is no personal freedom without economic freedom. By helping ourselves and those closest to us to become productive members of society, we contribute to the strength of the nation.

To respect and obey the laws. Laws are mutually accepted rules by which, together, we maintain a free society. Liberty itself is built on a foundation of law. That foundation provides an orderly process for changing laws. It also depends on our obeying laws once they have been freely adopted.

To respect the property of others, both private and public. No one has a right to what is not his or hers. The right to enjoy what is ours depends on our respecting the right of others to enjoy what is theirs.

To share with others our appreciation of the benefits and obligations of freedom. Freedom shared is freedom strengthened.

To participate constructively in the nation's political life. Democracy depends on an active citizenry. It depends equally on an informed citizenry.

To help freedom survive by assuming personal responsibility for its defense. Our nation cannot survive unless we defend it. Its security rests on the individual determination of each of us to help preserve it.

To respect the rights and to meet the responsibilities on which our liberty rests and our democracy depends. This is the essence of freedom. Maintaining it requires our common effort, all together and each individually.



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS
ALASKA CHAPTER**

318 4th Street, Juneau AK 99801
586-4438 Fax: 586-4439
naswak@alaska.net

Testimony Regarding

HB 234 - FUNDING FOR ABORTION UNDER GENERAL RELIEF MEDICAL

Before the
FINANCE COMMITTEE
ALASKA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
January 21, 1998

Presented by
Angela M. Salerno, ACSW
Executive Director,
National Association of Social Workers Alaska Chapter

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS ALASKA CHAPTER

318 4th Street, Juneau AK 99801
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The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the world's largest organization of professional social workers. NASW's 155,000 members nationwide and 500 in Alaska work in a wide range of settings at all levels in the public and private sectors. Professional social workers focus on vulnerable populations and promote state and federal policies which enhance the lives of the people we serve.

NASW opposes HB 234 and strongly recommends its defeat.

This bill will eliminate the only source of public funding for abortions for poor women. If passed, this policy will be costly and unconstitutional.

- Research done in 1993 by the Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI) showed that for every \$1 spent by government to pay for abortions for poor women, **about \$4 is saved in public medical and welfare expenditures** incurred as a result of the unintended birth.
- Research on "Pregnancy Planning and Wantedness" done by the Alaska Division of Public Health, Section of Maternal, Child and Family Health found that among low-income women (annual family income \leq \$10,000) 68% have unintended pregnancies and 17% have unwanted pregnancies. When public funds are unavailable, 20% of low-income women who want to have an abortion carry their pregnancy to term. **Unwanted childbearing has been linked with costly consequences for women, families, children and the state.**
Unwanted children:
 - experience more mental handicaps and are twice as likely to receive psychiatric care at government expense;
 - are more than twice as likely as wanted children to have a record of juvenile delinquency;
 - are six times more likely to receive some form of welfare between the ages of 16 and 21;
 - are at increased risk of suffering abuse, neglect, abandonment and removal to foster homes or institutions.
- Research done in 1995 shows that women with unintended pregnancies are **four times more likely to experience physical violence** during pregnancy than women with intended pregnancies.
- **The Alaska Supreme Court has found that reproductive rights are fundamental**, and that they are encompassed in the right to privacy found in the Alaska Constitution. State restrictions on public funding for abortion make it difficult and often impossible for poor women to exercise their constitutional right to safe and legal abortion. Passage of this bill would most likely result in yet another costly legal battle in the Alaska courts.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to the committee.



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Finance
Committee Name
Committee on H. B. 234 Dated 1-21-98

Good afternoon Bill / Subject

I very much appreciate Rep. Jerry Martin for being the prime sponsor of H.B. 234 and thanks to our very own Rep. Kelly for co-sponsoring H.B. 234. Thanks also, to all our legislators who are concerned about Alaska's precious unborn babies. The unborn babies cannot speak for themselves nor defend themselves. In abortion, the baby has no choice nor any chance to live. The bottom line is, abortion is murder.

I agree wholeheartedly with H.B. 234 in the fact that no public funding should be used for abortions on demand.

Thank you, that you all value and appreciate the sanctity of the lives of our precious unborn babies.

Mother Teresa said (I'll paraphrase it) - that all life must be respected. In America, we are taught that life isn't important or valuable, because our own mothers murder their own babies in their own wombs. God alone creates life; life is beautiful, wonderful and precious. Life is a gift from God. Abortion should never be a medical procedure for the convenience of the mother and sure death for the baby. If every one of our mothers chose to murder us in their own womb then none of us would be here today, now, would we?!

Let's set precedence from the State of Alaska to the entire world saying "abortion is unacceptable + will not be legally funded in anyway." & keep up the good work!

SIGNED: Mrs. Sharon J. Smith

Testifier

Parent, mother + home educator
Representing

1017 Kodiak St. Fairbanks, AK 99709
Address / Phone Number
(907) 474-9457



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Finance
 Committee on HB 234 Dated 1-21-98
 Bill / Subject Committee Name

- I fully support the discouragement & hopefully total elimination of the state paying for abortions. My understanding is that this bill would eliminate the destruction of almost 600 babies each year using government money. I am now aware that state monies are used to buy airline tickets and room & board in Seattle for the distressed mother and a friend in addition to the actual abortion costs.

- On the pro-life side we individually/personally support and finance the many crisis pregnancy centers. We volunteer our time, and we do not use state or any government money. This is a good thing for us and adds to our commitment to apply our efforts to help the distressed mother, and her

SIGNED: Ruth Emig
 Testifier

Alaska Right to Life - Interior
 Representing

2325 - 30th Avenue Fairbanks, AK
 Address / Phone Number 99701
452-5538

1-21-98

HO 234 (cont.) R. Ewig 2

unborn baby. We are interested in both ^{precious} ~~pluses~~ and we want and will adopt those babies as a better solution. My husband and I personally will adopt at least three.

→ On the pro-choice/pro-death side, those who are so concerned about "poor women" and whether or not their abortions are state-funded need to invest their own personal money, not government money to pay for abortions, just as we are doing with CPC's. This will be a clear indicator of just how much abortion interest there is. Private investment/individual investment - ~~leads~~ ^{gives} to us the incentive to work at keeping the Crisis Pregnancy Centers funded and manned.

— Eliminate the state funding of abortions and allow the pro-choice/pro-death side to show how they care about "poor women" by personally-financially supporting those poor women.

— One other point in rebuttal to the pro-choice/pro-death argument of "what the courts have established." The ~~Courts~~ have varied in opinions over the years, but, ^{our}

U.S. CONSTITUTION guarantees "life"

Alaska State Legislature

REPRESENTATIVE
PETER KELLY

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House District 31

House Of Representatives

MEMORANDUM

January 20, 1998

To: House Finance
Committee Members

From: Rep. Pete Kelly, Chair
HB 234 subcommittee *Pete*

Subject: Revisions made in draft CS for HB 234

We have addressed the multitude of concerns raised during the Finance Committee hearing on HB 234 last May, as well as amendments proposed during previous committee hearings on the bill. There are principally three changes made to HB 234, as follows:

- The financial responsibility provisions have been deleted; therefore, sections 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 have been removed.
- The definition of "abortion" contained in section 7 has been deleted, because a definition was included in the final version of SB 24, which became law last year.
- An exception for the life of the mother has been added, in new section 2.

Abortion: Male coercion and irresponsibility

Consider this: By vesting all reproductive responsibility in the woman, a pro-choice male creates a situation in which men can easily rationalize their irresponsibility toward women who choose not to abort. Plausible? Read on.

As Daniel Callahan puts it, "If legal abortion has given women more choice, it has also given men more choice as well. They now have a potent new weapon in the old business of manipulating and abandoning women." Given that 80 percent of all abortions are sought by single women (according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute) the advent of reproductive rights has created a situation in which a man can coerce a woman to have an abortion by denying his responsibility towards her, or even abandoning her when she gets pregnant and "chooses" to carry the pregnancy to term.

According to feminist legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon, "Sexual liberation in this sense does not free women, it frees male sexual aggression. The availability of abortion thus removes the one remaining legitimized reason that women had for refusing sex besides the headache."

The anecdotal evidence for this interpretation is compelling.

Empirical studies have also demonstrated that male coercion and pressure play a sizable role in many women's abortion decisions. A survey from the Medical College of Ohio, for example, examined 150 women who "identified themselves as having poorly assimilated the abortion experience." Of the 81 women who responded, more than one-third felt they had been coerced into having an abortion. Fewer than one-third initially considered the abortion themselves.

In cases where women initially chose to bear the child, their male partners were opposed to the decision by a margin of eight to one. In all of these cases, the man withdrew his support for his partner "thereby eliminating that alternative."

Even in Carol Gilligan's famous study In a Different Voice, not all of the women's abortion decisions she recounts were independent. Male

coercion played an important role in about one-third of the cases cited. The men in the women's lives were unwilling to provide their partners with the moral and material support for pregnancy, childbirth, and child rearing. As one of Gilligan's respondents noted, "He made me feel I had one choice to make and that it was to have an abortion and I could always have children another time, and he made me feel if I didn't it would drive us apart."

In all these cases, the logic goes something like this: since the man was willing to pay for an abortion, and since the woman had a constitutional right to get one even if he wished to prevent it, by her failure to obtain an abortion she took sole responsibility for the child. Therefore, the reasoning concludes, the man should not be liable for any child support.

Permissive abortion policy has created a climate where men can enjoy sexual relations with little or no concern for their consequences. Abortion is often misrepresented as solely a women's issue; clearly, however, it is a men's issue as well as long as men are interested in protecting their sexual liberty.

Women and Children First - a different kind of pro-life newsletter

<http://www.prolife.org/ultimate/wcfpromo.html>

REPRESENTATIVE
TERRY MARTIN
VICE-CHAIRMAN
BUDGET & AUDIT COMMITTEE
MEMBER
HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Alaska State Legislature

MAY 15 - JAN 15 258-8169
716 W. 4TH, SUITE 650
ANCHORAGE, AK 99504

JAN 15 - MAY 15 465-3783
STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, AK 99801-1182



MEMORANDUM

April 18, 1997

To: Representative Joe Green, Chairman
House Judiciary Committee

From: Representative Terry Martin *T.M.*

Subject: HB 234 - To be heard in committee Wednesday, April 23

HB 234 was introduced on April 4 and referred to the Judiciary committee. This bill proposes to make elective abortions the lowest priority on the list of general relief medical services paid for by the state, and would allow the state to recover the cost of an abortion from both responsible parties -- the pregnant woman and the man who got her that way.

I believe this bill simply makes good sense and was, in fact, inspired by the comments of Governor Knowles, who has pointed out how unfair it is that we in the legislature don't appropriate enough funding under the general relief medical program for eyeglasses for the poor and emergency dental care for the elderly. I would hope he would agree it is even more unfair that those services are bumped because the state is paying for an elective procedure, instead.

Attached to this memo are background materials you as a committee member will find useful in considering this bill. If you have questions about the bill or any of the materials, please contact either myself or John Manly of my staff at 465-3783. Thank you for your consideration of HB 234.



Sectional Analysis

HB 234

"Relating to assistance for abortions under the general relief program; and relating to financial responsibility for the costs of abortions."

Sec. 1 establishes the financial responsibility of both parents for the costs of an abortion.

Sec. 2 would require a pregnant woman who is seeking an abortion under the general relief program to assign to DHSS the right to recover the costs of the abortion from the other parent and to cooperate in establishing who and where the other parent is.

Sec. 3 revises the priority list to give abortion services the lowest priority when funding is insufficient for the general relief program.

Sec. 4 clarifies that the state has a claim against the pregnant woman for abortion costs and that the permanent fund dividend of the woman is a resource the state can pursue.

Sec. 5 amends the current statute that already allows the state to pursue third parties to recover the cost of general relief cash assistance so that the statute also includes recovery of abortion costs from third parties, including the other parent.

Sec. 6 adds an authorization for the state to take a permanent fund dividend to recover the costs of an abortion from a third party.

Sec. 7 contains a revised definition of "abortion."

HB 234 has no effective date clause and would, therefore, become effective 90 days after it is signed or allowed to become law.

REPRESENTATIVE
TERRY MARTIN
VICE-CHAIRMAN
BUDGET & AUDIT COMMITTEE
MEMBER
HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Alaska State Legislature

MAY 15 - JAN 15 258-8169
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JUNEAU, AK 99801-1182



Sponsor Statement

HB 234

"Relating to assistance for abortions under the general relief program; and relating to financial responsibility for the costs of abortions."

House Bill 234 provides a new measure of logic and consistency to the state's abortion law in two areas -- first, in establishing the procedure's priority on the official list of medical procedures the state will pay for under the general relief medical program; and second, by creating a mechanism by which the state can identify and hold financially responsible the would-be father.

The Governor has complained that the Legislature has not appropriated adequate funding in the general relief medical program to provide for the lowest priority items on the list. These include such necessities as eyeglasses and emergency dental care for the poor and elderly. Obviously, the Legislature agrees that these items should continue to be on the priority list. However, it is not logical that an elective procedure, such as abortion, should continue to hold a higher priority. HB 234 would eliminate the priority status that abortions have enjoyed at the expense of other, more essential demands.

HB 234 also allows the state to require payment from the pregnant woman, either partially or in full, for an elective abortion it has paid for under the general relief medical program.

And consistent with other provisions of state law, HB 234 would require that the male responsible for the pregnancy be identified and held financially responsible for an abortion sought under the general relief medical program. Currently, under Title 47, the state requires a woman seeking financial assistance from the state to identify the father of her dependent children. The state then recovers any costs it can from the father through the Child Support Enforcement Division. It is logical that if a father of a born child should be made to reimburse the state for state-funded services, so should the father of an unborn one that is aborted.

House Bill 234 represents a new benchmark in requiring accountable parties to accept the full responsibility for their actions. For too long, women have been able to obtain free abortions, courtesy of the state and at the expense of others who have medical needs that go unmet. At the same time, their male partners have had little more burden than to drive the woman to the abortion clinic, if that; often they simply abandon the woman.

If we are to continue to have a policy in Alaska of publicly-funded abortion, the state should do all it can to collect from the responsible persons.



Amendment #1
Conceptual amendments
to HB 234 to provide an
exception for the life of the
mother.

If you agree conceptually that this change should be made, it seems there are two ways to address the issue:

1) First, exception language could be added at the end of each of the following sections or subsections: Sec. 25.20.035, Sec. 47.25.150(b), Sec. 47.25.205, Sec. 47.25.220, Sec. 47.25.240, & Sec. 47.25.240(b).

"This section may not be construed to [alternately: deny funding / assign recovery rights to the state / establish cost liability for parents / etc.] for an abortion necessary to save the life of a mother whose life is endangered by a physical disorder, illness, or injury and no other medical procedure would suffice for that purpose."

2) A less wordy but more controversial way to establish a "life of the mother" exception would be as follows:

Everywhere the word "abortion" appears in HB 234, insert before it the term "elective" (there are three applicable references to abortion on p. 1, eight on p. 2, thirteen on p. 3, & two on p. 4).

Then, add a new definition of the term "elective abortion":

"elective abortion" means an abortion performed for reasons other than to save the life of a mother whose life is endangered by a physical disorder, illness, or injury and no other medical procedure would suffice for that purpose."