

SB

117

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Mary Pagenkopf

Senate Rules Committee May 5, 1997 3:00 p.m.



SENATOR DAVE DONLEY
ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SPONSOR STATEMENT SB 117
Infant care education in the schools

SB 117 adds "infant care" instruction to what is currently encouraged in AS 14.30.360(a) for each school district to include in its' health education curriculum.

Prenatal and infant care programs are successfully reducing dangers to infants under 3 months of age but Alaska still suffers from a consistently higher rate of mortality for infants age 3 months to 1 year than the rest of the United States. This strongly indicates a problem in Alaska with a lack of proper infant care.

The attached matrix dramatically indicates the problem. In a study of six western states, Alaska was listed as having the best record for prenatal care, the fewest low weight births, and the lowest births to mothers under the age of 18. However, Alaska still had the highest infant mortality rate of the states studied. The disparity of these figures once again points to a lack of appropriate infant care.

Encouraging infant care to be included in high school health care curriculum will give young Alaskans the basic infant care skills that statistics indicate may be lacking and causing Alaska's infant mortality problems.

One of the leading causes of death for infants in both Alaska and the rest of the United States is Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. 100% of infants who died of SIDS in Alaska from 1992 - 1995 were found in the prone sleep position, had been placed to sleep on inappropriate bedding, or had a mother who smoked cigarettes. These are factors that could be significantly reduced and hopefully eliminated with proper infant care education.

Abuse and neglect are also factors that figure in the health and welfare of infants. These are two problems that also could hopefully be prevented or reduced with proper infant care education.

DD/ljh

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MEMBER: Senate Finance Committee • Legislative Budget & Audit Committee
• Senate Community & Regional Affairs Committee

Produced in House

Backup for SB 117
The Statistical Case for Why Alaska Needs Better Infant Care

SAMPLE WESTERN STATES & THEIR PROGRAMS THAT IMPACT INFANT MORTALITY	¹ Infant Mortality per/1000	² Low Birth Weight	³ Early Prenatal Care	⁴ Births of Mothers < 18 y.o.
Alaska	8.2	4.9%	83.3%	3.9%
WIC, Medicaid, Healthy Babies (M of D) ⁵ Head Start, Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies, Prenatal Care II Program, Even Start, Home Health Svcs, Infant Learning Programs, & Indian Health Svc.	(worst)	(best)	(best)	(best)
Idaho	7.2	5.3%	78.0%	4.8%
WIC, Medicaid, Healthy Babies (M of D), Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies Indian Health Svc.				
Wyoming	7.9	7.3%	81.2%	4.7%
WIC, Medicaid, Healthy Babies (M of D), Headstart, Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies, Indian Health Svc., Extension Food Nutrition Education Program				
Washington	6.4	5.2%	80.7%	4.0%
WIC, Medicaid, Healthy Babies (M of D), Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies, First Steps, Indian Health Svc.				
Montana	7.4	6.0%	80.5%	4.5%
WIC, Medicaid, Healthy Babies (M of D) Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies, Family Planning, MIAMI (MT's Initiative for the Abatement of Mortality in Infants), Indian Health Svc.				

¹ Rate of mortality of infants 3 months - 1 yr. of age per 1000 live births.

² Infants weighing less than 2500 grams (5.5 lbs.) at birth

³ Prenatal care in the 1st or 2nd trimester of pregnancy

⁴ Births by mothers less than 18 years of age

⁵ March of Dimes Healthy Babies Program