

HB

213



Alaska State Legislature

Representative Andrea Doll

House District 4

MEMO

Date: March 22, 2007

To: Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair
House HESS Committee

Re: Hearing request for **HB 213**

Please schedule **HB 213** regarding Crimes at Domestic Shelters at your earliest convenience.

This legislation will give juries, prosecutors, and judges the ability to seek the maximum sentence for those found guilty of felonies committed on the property of a shelter. It would also give a judge sentencing a person who commits a crime at a shelter such as trespassing or breaking and entering, guidance that the Legislature believes such crimes are more serious.

Representative Andrea Doll

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea Doll".

Contact: Terry Harvey 465 4712



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To: Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair
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Re: Hearing request for **HB 213**

Recommended witnesses/interested parties

Anne Carpeneti, Department of Law
(907)465-3428 Anne_Carpeneti@law.state.ak.us

Peggy Brown, Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
Executive Director
130 Seward Street, Suite 209
Juneau AK 99801
(907) 586-3650 Ext. 22
(907) 463-4493 fax
www.andvsa.org

Chris Ashenbrenner, Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
Interim Program Administrator
(907) 465-5504 Chris_Ashenbrenner@dps.state.ak.us

Saralyn Tabachnick, AWARE (Aiding Women in Abuse and Rape Emergencies) Shelter
Juneau, AK 586-6623

Contact: Terry Harvey 465 4712



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Representative Andrea Doll
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Sponsor Statement

**HB 213 Relating To Crimes at
Domestic Violence Shelters**

Alaska's rates of domestic violence and sexual assault are among the highest in the nation. While the state has made strides in providing safe shelters to protect victims of these crimes, more needs to be done to ensure that shelters provide the secure environment these vulnerable members of our society need for their safety and recovery. This legislation will give juries, prosecutors, and judges the ability to impose stiffer sentences -- up to the maximum punishment for each offense --- for felonies committed on the premises of a shelter for victims of domestic violence or sexual assault. It provides direction to judges and prosecutors that crimes committed on the premises of domestic violence shelters are deserving of maximum allowable punishment.

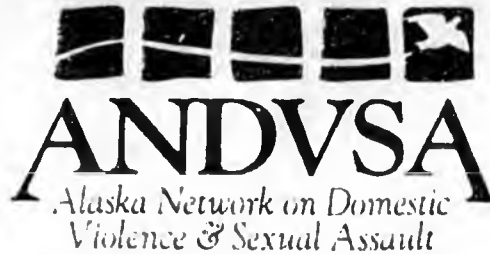
Women and children are typically the victims of domestic violence and abuse and many must seek refuge in a local shelter. These shelters are literally lifesavers for those who are at high risk of further violence. Unfortunately, in spite of strict security provided by these facilities, there are perpetrators of domestic violence who attempt to inflict further distress and harm to residents of these shelters. There have been recent incidents in Alaska where individuals have broken into shelters, or attempted to do so, with this intent. Due to presumptive sentencing laws, in many cases the perpetrator has not received a sentence commensurate with the seriousness of victimizing the vulnerable persons staying or working in these shelters.

No legislation can stop the most determined individuals from attempting to break into a shelter. However, this bill will provide for the imposition of greater sentences, up to the maximum for the offense, for such offenders.

Alaska must address our epidemic of abuse towards women and children in every way possible. Passage of this legislation will send an important message that Alaska will not go lightly on those who jeopardize the peace and safety of those who have sought refuge in a shelter or safe house.

Contact: Terry Harvey 465 4712
03/22/07

Juneau Office
130 Seward St #209
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Phone: (907) 586-3650
Fax: (907) 463-4493
www.andvsa.org



Sitka Office
PO Box 6631
Sitka, Alaska 99835
Phone: (907) 747-7545
Fax: (907) 747-7547

March 20, 2007

The Honorable Representative Andrea Doll
State House
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Doll:

The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault is a coalition of member shelter and community based programs across the state who provide direct services and advocacy for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. We would like to offer you our full support for the Safe Shelter Legislation – An act which will make it an aggravating factor at sentencing if a person breaks into a shelter/safe home for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

We appreciate your guidance and leadership in addressing this matter. It speaks to the fact that Alaska is willing to get tough on those who perpetrate violence and terroristically threaten victims. We cannot merely be informed by the statistic that we are number one in the entire nation for forcible sexual assaults and men murdering women; we must act. We must provide our courts with tools to deter violent offenses and hold offenders accountable.

If I can be of further service to your endeavors, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Peggy Brown, Executive Director
ANDVSA

Cc: Saralyn Tabachnick, AWARE

Alaska's Original

Juneau: AWAIC, AWRC, STAR, AWC, TWIC, CFRC, SAFE
Fairbanks: LAC, Home, SPIH, AWARE, LeeShore Center, WISH, KWRCU
Sitka: MFCU, NAMI, BSWG, SCS, SAFV, USAFV, AVV

Several years ago, a man attempted to break into the shelter. I held the door shut until the police arrived.
Barrow, Arctic Women in Crisis (AWIC)

We had an incident where a father came and took two of his three children. He made a dash to Fairbanks with the two children. We went to court and got a restraining order that ordered him to return the children. We now have security doors on our offices and locking security doors for after hours.

Seward, Seaview Community Services (SCS)

We had our building and offices broken into twice last year. The perpetrators were looking specifically for money but the women and children in house were re-traumatized.

Janet Ahmasuk

Nome, Bering Sea Women's Group (BSWG)

We have had people attempt to break in - I can remember at least 5 times in the last 7 years someone has been forcefully trying to get in - Law Enforcement considered it "trespassing" since they didn't get in the door.

Fairbanks, Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living (IAC)

TWC's only incidences have occurred when someone waits outside in the parking lot or street OR on two occasions have waited for someone exiting and then grabbed the door and come in. We're fortunate that under threat of police being called, the perpetrators have left without further incident.

Bethel, Tundra Women's Coalition (TWC)