

SB

8

<TARGET><BILL>SB 8</BILL><SUBJECT>SB
8</SUBJECT><COMM>SEDC27</COMM></TARGET>

Alaska State Legislature

Senate Education Committee

Senator Meyer, Co-Chair

State Capitol, Room 103
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-4945 Phone
(907) 465-3476 Fax
Senator_Kevin_Meyer@legis.state.ak.us



Senator Thomas, Co-Chair

State Capitol, Room 514
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Phone (907) 465-2327
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Senator_Joe_Thomas@legis.state.ak.us

AGENDA

Monday, February 28, 2011

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Beltz Committee Room

1. SB 8 – Student Questionnaires & Surveys
2. SB 6 – Pre-Kindergarten School Programs/Plans
3. UA Chancellors' Presentation

Bills previously heard or scheduled



February 24, 2011

Senator Bettye Davis
Alaska Senate Education Committee
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol Room 30
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Davis and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

The Leadership Team of Anchorage United for Youth requests your support for Senate Bill 8, "*An Act relating to questionnaires and surveys administered in the public schools.*"

Anchorage United for Youth has been making real headway at addressing the issues that impact Anchorage youth through a coordinated community effort with over 40 non-profit, public and private partners committed to increasing graduation rates, decreasing youth substance use and reducing juvenile crime rates. Current success with the Anchorage United for Youth plan and its implementation has led to interest from around the state in replicating this effort. Reliable and valid data like that obtained through the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is integral to the success and sustainability of this effort.

Reliable and statistically valid community data is critical to our mission of supporting Anchorage youth. Routine standardized surveys such as the YRBS allow us to track trends over time and help guide and evaluate the important youth programs we implement to keep our youth on track to graduate from high school, avoid delinquency and reject substance use. The YRBS must have a response rate of 60% to make it statistically valid, yet current legislation requires active parental consent which presents significant obstacles and costs to achieving this response rate. Approximately \$90,000 is spent for just one survey cycle in order to provide the incentives necessary to simply get permission slips returned. However, failure to return permission slips is primarily linked to apathy, oversight, and student error, not parental refusal of permission, which averages around 10%.

Senate Bill 8 protects previously legislated parental rights to consent, parental rights to notification, and children's rights to refuse participation. We support Senate Bill 8 because it continues to provide these protections and respects the privacy of families, while removing the obstacles to obtaining this vital data that allows us to track and improve conditions for our youth.

We thank you for your commitment to youth in the state of Alaska and ask for your support of Senate Bill 8.

Sincerely,

Greg Razo, Cook Inlet Region, Inc.
Chair, Anchorage United for Youth Leadership Team

Anchorage United for Youth Leadership Team

From: Becky Judd [mailto:bjudd-h@ak.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2011 11:03 PM
To: Sen. Kevin Meyer
Subject: Support for SB 8

Dear Senator Meyer,

I am writing **in support of SB 8**, an act related to surveys and questionnaires in public schools. I believe there will be public testimony on Friday 2/24 at 8am. Please accept this email as public testimony.

I have worked in the prevention of teen pregnancy, substance use, tobacco and suicide with school communities statewide for over 20 years. Local schools and agencies need the YRBS data to: 1) evaluate services in their community; 2) determine the effectiveness of their efforts in preventing the behaviors measured. Many state and national grants require this data to get funding.

The active consent law puts an undue burden on the schools to obtain positive parent permissions, becoming increasingly cumbersome and expensive. In the past, I volunteered assistance to a district conducting follow-up calls and letters to parents who forgot to send back the permission slips. My talking to hundreds of parents, only a few objected to their children's participation in the anonymous survey.

Parents opposed to participation, are already actively involved in their children's lives. They are present when the surveys are taking place and are very proactive in voicing their objections in person. Therefore, the active consent is not needed for them. The growing burden on the schools to obtain these permissions is taking time away from instruction. Yet, we need this data, to determine the success of our efforts.

Please support SB8.

Sincerely,

Becky Judd

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