

**HB**

**392**

<TARGET><BILL>HB 392</BILL><SUBJECT>HB  
392</SUBJECT><COMM>HSTA30</COMM></TARGET>



3/21/18

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins  
State Capitol Room 411  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Kreiss-Tomkins and the House State Affairs Committee,

The Anchorage Women's Commission exists to advise the Mayor and Assembly on matters pertaining to the status of women. The Commission is particularly concerned with improving opportunities for women in the community. One of our objectives, along with items such as disseminating results of research on women's issues, recommending legislative action on women's issues, and encouraging women to assume leadership roles, is to act as a liaison between the state women's commission and local women.

Currently, Alaska does not have a statewide women's commission. Given that half of our state's population are women and girls, and given the dramatic inequality of representation of women in government at every level, passing HB392 makes sense and shows the dedication of the Legislature in respecting women and striving for equality. Only 19 of the 60 seats in the Alaska Legislature are held by women. This disparity shows the need to encourage and facilitate more women participating in the legislative process in Alaska, and bring more female voices to the table. Until our elected bodies better represent our population, creating a commission for Women and Girls is one effective way of amplifying women's voices and a step toward parity.

Alaska has some of the worst rates in the country when it comes to sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, and rape, the vast majority of which are crimes against women and girls. Add to this the growing women's movement, which showcases the rampant sexual harassment and assault of women happening on a regular basis (including recent allegations in Juneau), and the evidence for a need to prioritize social and legal equality for women and girls is widespread and plentiful.

Additionally, according to a 2017 report from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, women in Alaska earn only 68 cents for every dollar a man makes, for doing the same work.<sup>1</sup> This is true across every age and educational level, and across industries, even though women participate in the workforce at nearly equal rates as men. Clearly, economic equality is nonexistent in our state.

The Governor's website on state commissions recognizes serving on a commission as "among the most effective ways for Alaskans to participate in, and take ownership of, their

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<sup>1</sup> <http://labor.state.ak.us/trends/mar17.pdf>



own governance.”<sup>2</sup> Creating the Alaska Commission for Women and Girls would show our youth that women belong in public service just like men do, would give women a voice in state policy that is currently vastly underrepresented, and would provide new opportunities for leadership among women.

Please pass HB392, and establish the Alaska Commission for Women and Girls, thereby promoting economic, social, legal, and political equality for women and girls in the state. Thank you for your service to our state, and for your thoughtful consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

**Aimee Chauvot**, chair  
Anchorage Women’s Commission

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<sup>2</sup> <https://gov.alaska.gov/services/boards-and-commissions/>

