

SCR

17

<TARGET><BILL>SCR 17</BILL><SUBJECT>SCR
17</SUBJECT><COMM>SSTA30</COMM></TARGET>

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT
First Committee of Referral

DATE: 2/16/18

FURTHER: Rules

DATE TURNED
 IN TO OFFICE: 2/27/18

State Affairs Committee considered SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 17
 SCR 17-APRIL 2018:SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

Proclaiming April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

and recommends:

- be replaced with CS _____ (_____) Same Title New Title
- adopt previous CS _____ (_____) Same Title New Title
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt _____ Letter of Intent
- further referral to _____ Committee

Dept Abbr.	
ADM	LWF
CED	LAW
COR	LEG
EED	MVA
DEC	DNR
DFG	DPS
GOV	REV
DHS	DOT
AJS	UA

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #
LEG			✓	1

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	PRINTED LAST NAME	Do PASS	Do NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
	Wilson	✓			
	Giesse	✓			
	Coghill	✓			
	Egan	✓			
CHAIR:	Meyer	✓			

Alaska
Council on
Domestic Violence
Sexual Assault

House State Affairs Hearing - TALKING POINTS FOR SCR 17

Proclaiming April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month

• Good afternoon Chairman Krieiss-Tompkins and members of the House State Affairs Committee.

My name is.

• Unfortunately, Senator Kevin Meyer cannot be here today. (And he shouldn't have to be since you have heard this same exact language twice in your committee last year and now twice this year.)

As he chairs another committee at this time

• SCR 17, ~~the resolution before you would~~ proclaim April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

• This is part of a national campaign to raise public awareness about sexual assault and educate communities and individuals on how to prevent sexual violence.

• Senator Meyer first brought this resolution forward when he was a Representative -- in 2001. ~~People always ask why don't we put this permanently in statute?~~ Well, the Alaska State Legislature considers this resolution each year in order to bring attention to sexual violence in Alaska. (He carried this resolution 5 times. Last year it was SCR 2. It is a no-brainer. Yet, last year was the first year this resolution did not pass and look what happened? You had to replace TWO members.)

*the reason
on an annual basis*

• Mr. Chairman, sexual assault statistics nationwide are staggering.

• In the United States, 1 in 5 women—20%--have been victims of violent sexual assault in their lifetime.

• Unfortunately, in Alaska those rates are much higher – in fact the 2015 Alaska Victimization Survey reports that a third of adult women in Alaska have experienced sexual violence.

*SPAAAM
Nat'l Sex. Violence Res. Ctr.*

- Mr. Chairman, sexual violence is preventable. It is a social, public health, criminal justice, and human rights issue. We need to continue to educate the public.

- This year, the 2018 Sexual Assault Awareness Month campaign focuses on "Embrace Your Voice." We hope that this resolution will help to strengthen that effort across our state.

I believe you heard the companion ^{HCR} *22*

- That concludes my presentation Mr. Chairman. Thank you again for your consideration. (You have already heard testimony in previous committee hearings on this bill, I get it, you just want us to keep presenting it even though you won't pass it. Fine. I don't know why this resolution is even in your committee, it should be in House Rules where they will probably kill this again. Whatever. We will move the operating budget in 7 days. It took you 77.) *last month.*

- Note that the companion bill, HCR 22 by Rep. Millett's office is the exact same language. The House State Affairs committee heard HCR 22 a month ago (March 5) and moved it from committee. HCR 22 is currently in House Health and Social Services. If this committee moves SCR 17 it goes straight to House Rules. (Because as much as you might not like the other body, ya'll seem hell bent on persecuting your own minority first.)

SENATE FLOOR TALKING POINTS FOR SCR 17

Proclaiming April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month

- Mr. President, Senate Concurrent Resolution 17, would proclaim April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This is part of a national campaign to raise public awareness about sexual assault and educate communities and individuals on how to prevent sexual violence.*

- We bring this resolution forward each year in order to bring attention to the problem of sexual violence in Alaska.

we have heard from

- ~~During the Senate State Affairs hearing on this resolution, members heard directly from the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and received a letter of support from the Alaska Women's Lobby-~~

*Don't put in statute
need to bring up every year*

- Mr. President, sexual assault statistics nationwide are staggering.

- The Center for Disease Control's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey reports that in the United States, 1 in 5 ²⁰¹⁰ women and ~~1 in 71~~ men have been victims of violent sexual assault in their lifetime.

- In Alaska those rates are much higher – in fact the 2015 Alaska Victimization Survey reports that a third of adult women in Alaska have experienced sexual violence. *33%*

- Mr. President, all Alaskans deserve a life free from violence. Sexual assault of any kind should never be tolerated.
- We also bring this resolution forward each year to recognize the hard work of organizations such as
 - Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and
 - The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
 - Standing Together Against Rape
- Many of these organizations rely on volunteers. In 2016, over 3,100 volunteers devoted 48,483 hours of service in Alaska to end sexual assault.

in 2007

when I was first elected to the House

Past Director of STAR

- Mr. President, I have carried a resolution on Sexual Assault Awareness Month ~~five~~ *seven* times since 2001. The member from Eagle River and the member from Sand Lake have each carried this same resolution. ~~That is seven times that this resolution has been before this body and passed the Legislature. Last year was the first year it failed to pass the other body.**~~

Happy to say

Every time

if it's passed

and I'm a Republican

This resolution

is important

- Mr. President I urge all members to vote YES and reaffirm ~~our~~ *Senate's* resolve to again recognize the seriousness and importance of this issue, ~~the people working to address it, and our commitment to not letting this get swept aside in 2018.~~

that we

are

going to

support

* National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) opened in July of 2000 and is funded through the Centers for Disease Control. They partner with like organizations throughout the United States, they began the Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) campaign in 2001. In 2001, Representative Kevin Meyer sponsored HCR 7 recognizing April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

** MEYER PAST LEGISLATION ON SAME/SIMILAR SUBJECT

Bill #	Title	Date passed Legislature
HCR 7	Sexual Assault Awareness April 2001	4/10/2001
HCR 3	Sexual Assault Awareness April 2007	4/5/2007
SB 15	Sex Offender/Underage Alcohol Offense	6/23/2011
SB 124	Extend CDVSA	10/18/2014
SCR 6	Sexual Assault Awareness April 2015	4/6/2015
SCR 20	Sexual Assault Awareness April 2016	4/11/2016
SCR 2	Sexual Assault Awareness April 2017	Senate only 3/6/2017
SCR 17	Sexual Assault Awareness April 2018	

HB 210	Statute of Limitations Sexual Assault/Abuse	Enrolled 7/3/2001
HB 2	Civil Statute of Limitations Sex Offenses	Enrolled 6/5/2003
HB 334	Unlawful Exploitation of Minor/Child Porn	Enrolled 6/29/2004
HB 326	Use of Lewd Material as Harassment	Enrolled 8/10/2006

Note:

HCR 20	Rep. Fairclough (Now Senator MacKinnon)	Sexual Assault Awareness 2010	3/29/2010
HCR 6	Rep. Costello (Now Senator Costello)	Sexual Assault Awareness 2011	4/4/2011

*** There have been different themes over the years:

- Engaging bystanders, College Campuses, Prevention is possible, Healthy Kids, Healthy Teens, Healthy Sexuality
 - This year's 17th anniversary theme is, "Embrace your Voice" to inform individuals on how they can use their words to promote safety, respect, and equality to stop sexual violence before it happens.

STA

TALKING POINTS FOR SCR 17

Proclaiming April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month

- SCR 17, would proclaim April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This is part of a national campaign to raise public awareness about sexual assault and educate communities and individuals on how to prevent sexual violence.
- We bring this resolution forward each year in order to bring attention to sexual violence and the measures being taken by organizations such as:
 - Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and
 - The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
 - Standing Together Against Rape
- As I'm sure you know, sexual assault statistics nationwide are staggering.
- The Center for Disease Control's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey reports that in the United States, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men have been victims of violent sexual assault in their lifetime.
- In Alaska those rates are much higher – in fact the 2015 Alaska Victimization Survey reports that a third of adult women in Alaska have experienced sexual violence.
- Sexual violence is preventable. It is a social, public health, criminal justice, and human rights issue.
- This year, the 2018 Sexual Assault Awareness Month campaign focuses on, "Embracing Your Voice" to encourage and inform individuals on how they can use their words to promote safety, respect, and equality to stop sexual violence before it happens.

- Individuals can embrace their voices to show their support for survivors, stand up to victim blaming, promote everyday consent and practice healthy communications. We hope that SCR 17 will help to strengthen that effort across our state.

2001 - First Time

2017 -

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



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**SENATOR KEVIN MEYER
SENATE DISTRICT M**

SPONSOR STATEMENT FOR SCR 17

"Proclaiming April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month"

All Alaskans deserve a life free from violence. In our homes, in relationships, or in our communities, every individual should live a life without fear and with security and safety. This resolution encourages Alaskans to acknowledge and speak out against sexual assault as we join in unity to dispel the fear, self-blame, depression and anxiety that can be exhibited both emotionally and physically by those who have endured this terrible experience. This resolution emboldens Alaskans to declare that sexual assault of any kind will not be tolerated.

SCR 17 also recognizes the dedicated work in Alaska of the volunteers, staff and agencies, who dedicate their lives to ensure victims have someone to talk to, a place to go, as well as many other services to help. These individuals and groups deserve our respect and support and we join them in removing the veil of secrecy and silence, and declare intolerance towards the crime of sexual assault in Alaska.

SCR 17 proclaims the month of April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Alaska.

Alaska Women's Lobby

Defending and advancing the rights and needs of women, children and families in Alaska since 1981

SCR 17 and HCR 22- Sexual Assault Awareness Month February 2018

The Alaska Women's Lobby, with steering committees in Fairbanks and Juneau as well as members across the state supports SCR 17 and thanks Senator Meyer for his sponsorship.

SCR 17 declares April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). This year, nationally, SAAM is celebrating its 17th anniversary with the theme "Embrace Your Voice" to inform individuals on how they can use their words to promote safety, respect, and equality to stop sexual violence before it happens.

We know that one month isn't enough to solve the serious and widespread issue of sexual violence. However, the attention April generates is an opportunity to energize and expand prevention efforts throughout the year.

What is Sexual Violence? Sexual violence is a broad term and includes: sexual assault, incest, child sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, unwanted sexual contact, sexual harassment, exposure, and voyeurism.

Sexual violence occurs when someone is forced or manipulated into unwanted sexual activity without their consent. Consent means permission for something to happen or agreement to do something.

Anyone can experience sexual violence, including children, teens, adults, and seniors. Those who sexually abuse can be acquaintances, family, trusted individuals, or strangers; of these, the first three are most common.

The good news is that prevention is possible, and it's happening. Across Alaska youth are participating in Coaching Boys into Men, Girls on the Run, and learning about healthy relationships through the 4th R.

The resolutions give focused attention to sexual assault crimes and the ways in which Alaskan can prevent them.

Please support the passage of SCR 17 and HCR 22.

PO Box 20891, Juneau, AK 99802 * akwomenslobby@gmail.com



SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH OVERVIEW

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH AT A GLANCE

- In the United States, April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM).
- The goal of SAAM is to raise public awareness about sexual violence and educate communities on how to prevent it.
- This year, SAAM is celebrating its 17th anniversary with the theme “Embrace Your Voice” to inform individuals on how they can use their words to promote safety, respect, and equality to stop sexual violence before it happens.
- Individuals can embrace their voices to show their support for survivors, stand up to victim blaming, shut down rape jokes, correct harmful misconceptions, promote everyday consent, and practice healthy communications with children.
- We know that one month isn’t enough to solve the serious and widespread issue of sexual violence. However, the attention April generates is an opportunity to energize and expand prevention efforts throughout the year.

WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

- Sexual violence is a broad term and includes: rape, incest, child sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, unwanted sexual contact, sexual harassment, exposure, and voyeurism.
- Sexual assault is a serious and widespread problem.
 - Nearly 1 in 5 women in the United States have experienced rape or attempted rape some time in their lives, and 1 in 67 American men have experienced rape or attempted rape.¹
- Sexual violence occurs when someone is forced or manipulated into unwanted sexual activity without their consent.
 - Consent means permission for something to happen or agreement to do something.
 - Reasons someone might not consent to sexual activity include fear, age, illness, disability, and/or influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Anyone can experience sexual violence, including children, teens, adults, and seniors.
- Those who sexually abuse can be acquaintances, family, trusted individuals, or strangers; of these, the first three are most common.

ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE + PREVENTION

- The good news is that prevention is possible, and it’s happening.
 - Individuals, communities, and the private sector are already successfully combating the risk of sexual violence through conversations, programs, policies, and research-based tools that promote safety, respect, and equality.
 - By promoting safe behaviors, thoughtful policies, and healthy relationships, we can create safe and equitable communities where every person is treated with respect.
- We are in a watershed moment.
 - With the country focused on this very important issue, we have an unprecedented opportunity to improve understanding and change behaviors. The time to rally communities and the broader public is now.



SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH OVERVIEW

SAAM FAQ

What is the hashtag?

#SAAM

What is the official color of SAAM?

Teal is the official color of SAAM. The teal ribbon is the symbol of sexual violence prevention.

How do I order SAAM products?

You can purchase SAAM products such as stickers, palm cards, teal ribbon temporary tattoos, and more at the NSVRC Store: bit.ly/NSVRCstore

Are there free SAAM resources available?

Yes! The SAAM website (www.nsvrc.org/saam) provides free share graphics, printable posters, event planning guides, and more!

How can I get involved?

Use the Campaign Guide, Beginner's Guide to SAAM Event Planning blog series (bit.ly/SAAMBlogSeries), and planning guides to determine the best way to start a SAAM campaign in your community.

What is the NSVRC?

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) is the leading nonprofit in providing information and tools to prevent and respond to sexual violence. NSVRC translates research and trends into best practices that help individuals, communities, and service providers achieve real and lasting change. The center also works with the media to promote informed reporting. Every April, NSVRC leads SAAM, a campaign to educate and engage the public in addressing this widespread issue.

LEARN MORE

- NSVRC's media packet (<http://bit.ly/2BldBZT>) provides in-depth information and statistics on the complexities of this issue.
- Contact us! We can connect you with the appropriate expert at NSVRC or a local field expert. The NSVRC team is available for interviews and is a resource for reporting on sexual violence.
 - 877-739-3895
 - resources@nsvrc.org
- Follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/nsvrc) and Twitter (twitter.com/nsvrc) and use #SAAM

*Black, M. C., Basile, K. C., Breiding, M. J., Smith, S. G., Walters, M. L., Merrick, M. T., ... Stevens, M. R. (2011). *National Intimate Partner And Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 summary report*. Retrieved from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf

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TO: Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux, Chair
House Rules Committee

FROM: Senator Kevin Meyer

DATE: April 6, 2018

RE: Request for Hearing SCR 17
Proclaiming April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month

This is a request to the House Rules Committee to calendar Senate Concurrent Resolution 17, which would proclaim April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, for the House Floor.

The designated member of the House who will carry the bill is Representative Gabrielle LeDoux. My staff assigned to the bill is Christine R. Marasigan, christine.marasigan@akleg.gov, 465-6876.

The following documents are attached and will be sent electronically:

- Latest version of the bill: 30-LS1267\A (there were no changes)
- Sponsor Statement
- Supporting Documents
 - CDVSA Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence in the State of Alaska: Key Results from the 2015 Alaska Victimization Survey
 - Center for Disease Control, National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: Highlights of 2010 Findings
 - Alaska Dispatch News, "New report offers a more in-depth look at Alaska's many sexual assault cases" November 20, 2016
 - Letter of Support: Alaska Women's Lobby
 - Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) Overview
- Additional materials NOT attached, links only:
 - Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA) 2016 Annual Report <http://www.andvsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Final-Annual-Report-Compressed.pdf>
 - Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) 2016 Annual Report <https://dps.alaska.gov/getmedia/279c0b14-7fe5-4631-a264-80d2eb63a801/CDVSAAnnualReport2016;.aspx>
 - Crime Reported in Alaska 2016 - Supplemental Sex Offenses <https://dps.alaska.gov/getmedia/0637d6db-11f0-4d61-88a9-2d94a8e48547/2016-Felony-Level-Sex-Offenses-FINAL-locked;.aspx>
- Fiscal Note: Zero from LAA

Crime & Courts

New report offers a more in-depth look at Alaska's many sexual assault cases

Author: Devin Kelly

Updated: November 20, 2016

Published November 20, 2016

A new report from the state of Alaska paints perhaps the most detailed picture to date of sexual violence reported to law enforcement, showing that a huge disproportion of victims are between 11 and 17 years old, from Western Alaska and attacked by someone they knew whose age averaged only 22.

The report, a first-of-its-kind supplement to data sent by the state to the FBI, uses information not usually contained in FBI reports but was ordered to be studied by the Legislature in 2010.

That information includes the sex, age and relationship of victims and suspects, the location where crimes occurred and the weapons that were used, as first reported to authorities.

Hands, fists and feet were the most common weapons reported in rapes. Police were told the attacks most often occurred in homes. Caucasians were most likely to be the suspect in attacks on Caucasian and Asian women, while Alaska Natives were suspected in most attacks on other Alaska Natives. African-Americans were mostly likely to be suspected in attacks on African-Americans, but Caucasian victims were close behind.

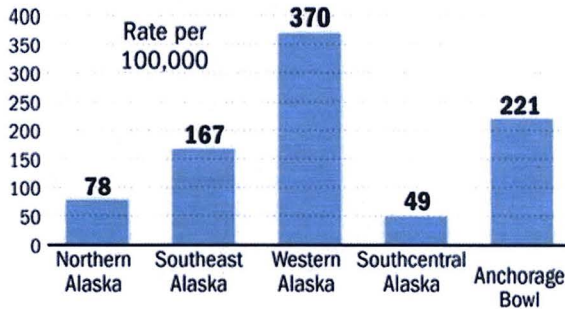
Anchorage — after Western Alaska, the second-highest region for the rate of reported rapes — is excluded from the demographic, weapon type and location data, leaving a gaping hole. Under state law, the information is voluntary, and Anchorage police declined to provide it for the report.

The Alaska Department of Public Safety official who supervises the division that commissioned the report said she hopes the information can contribute to a growing body of knowledge about sexual violence in the state.

Reported sexual assault incidents in Alaska for 2015

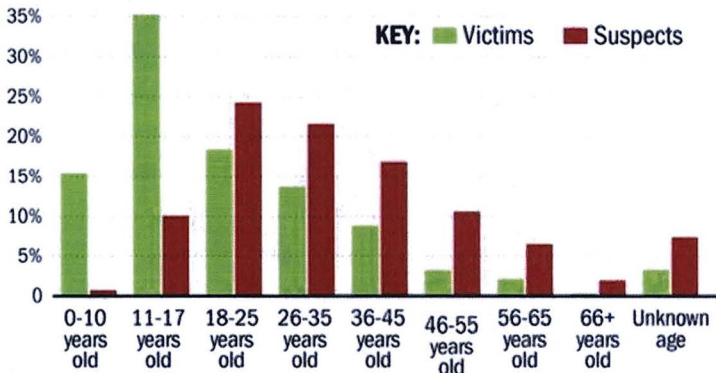
Rate by geographic area

Excludes incidents reported from specialized statewide agencies, such as the Alaska Bureau of Investigation or Alaska Wildlife Troopers due to the difficulty in determining the population those agencies represent.



By age of victims and suspects

Not all agencies provide victim and/or suspect information; the graphs are reflective of information provided by reporting agencies.



By relationship of victim to offender

Only includes incidents in which agencies provided victim/suspect relationship information. Counts reflect the number of relationships between victims and offenders, not the total number of victims and offenders. For example, 2 victims and 4 offenders would equal 8 relationships.

Family	Counts	%	Otherwise known	Counts	%
Child	60	8.7	Acquaintance	194	28.1
Other family member	58	8.4	Friend	76	11.0
Stepchild	19	2.7	Boyfriend/girlfriend	60	8.7
Sibling (brother or sister)	18	2.6	Otherwise unown	45	6.5
Child of boyfriend or girlfriend	10	1.4	Babysittee (the baby)	10	1.4
Grandchild	8	1.2	Neighbor	6	0.9
Spouse	7	1.0	Offender‡	4	0.6
In-law	3	0.4	Employee	2	0.3
Parent	3	0.4	Employer	1	0.1
Stepsibling (stepbrother or stepsister)	3	0.4	Unknown	Count	%
Grandparent	2	0.3	Relationship unknown	77	11.1
Common-law spouse	1	0.1	Victim was stranger	23	3.3
Stepparent	1	0.1			

‡ "Victim was offender" is defined by the FBI NIBRS program as when the victim is also an offender in the incident. For example, a woman attacks a man with a knife (aggravated assault). She is subdued and raped by the man she attacked. In this case, the relationship may be listed as victim was offender.

Alaska's law enforcement agencies report crime statistics to the FBI each year. Those statistics make up the annual Uniform Crime Report, which showed rising violent crime rates across the board in Alaska in 2015, including murder and rape.

But for the first time, the report included a state-issued supplement, "Felony Sexual Offenses 2015." The sexual offenses data in the report is separate from the national UCR report, which showed that rape was one of several violent offenses, including homicide, that increased in 2015.

The national rape data can't be compared directly to the state data in the new supplemental report, because the methodologies are different.

A person repeatedly raped by a single suspect would likely lead to several offenses being reported in the national program, but a single victim with several statute violations in the state program.

The state's reporting program stems from legislation in 2010 that added felony-level sex offenses to the data that agencies are required to report to the state.

Officials from the Alaska Department of Public Safety met to decide what data falls into that category. Lisa Purinton, program coordinator for the Department of Public Safety, said officials decided to make many of the supplemental information requests optional for local law-enforcement departments.

"Given the nature of the offense, there's a lot of times you won't have that information available, especially when suspects and relationships are unknowns," Purinton said.

The Anchorage Police Department did not provide such information. That could skew the data, Purinton acknowledged.

Anchorage police spokeswoman Jennifer Castro said in an email that the department has only reported what it was required to in the past, "as some metrics could not be obtained easily."

She said the department has recently expanded its data collection efforts, however, and is now collecting data on victims and suspects, including age, sex and race — the information contained in the new report.

Purinton said the report aims to capture the offense as it's first reported to law enforcement. It doesn't track the outcomes, such as whether a suspect was convicted.

That's because of the nature of the crime, Purinton said. Most sexual assault cases never go to trial, often because of a lack of evidence to support the allegations or because the victim decides not to testify.

Sexual assault in Alaska has been studied before, but efforts to collect data continue to intensify. A February 2009 University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center report on sexual assaults in smaller communities was described as the first of its kind.

Another report, the Alaska Victimization Survey, conducted every five years by the UAA Justice Center, found in a survey of 2,027 women in 2015 that intimate partner violence and sexual violence had declined since 2010, but concluded that the rates "remain unacceptably high."

About this Author

Devin Kelly

Devin Kelly covers Anchorage city government and general assignments.



Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence in the Municipality of Anchorage: Key Results from the 2015 Alaska Victimization Survey



Out of every 100 adult women who reside in the Municipality of Anchorage:

39 experienced intimate partner violence (IPV):



32 experienced sexual violence:



48 experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or both:



These lifetime estimates come from a 2015 survey of adult women in the Municipality of Anchorage.
Source: UAA Justice Center, Alaska Victimization Survey, <http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/avs>.

Purpose of the Survey

Every human being has the right to be safe and free from violence in their own homes, in their relationships, and in their community. Intimate partner violence and sexual violence are endemic problems. The Alaska Victimization Survey provides comprehensive statewide and regional data to guide planning and policy development and to evaluate the impact of prevention and intervention services. The 2015 survey was designed to provide estimates that could be compared to previous estimates from 2010-11. Results can be used to support prevention and intervention efforts that reduce violence against women.

Methodology

A total of 1,137 adult women in the Municipality of Anchorage participated in the 2015 survey. Respondents were randomly selected by phone (using both land lines and cell phones) from May to August 2015. They were asked behaviorally specific questions about intimate partner violence (both threats and physical violence). Intimate partners included romantic and sexual partners. Respondents were also asked about sexual violence (both alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault and forcible sexual assault). These questions were not limited to intimate partners. Procedures were designed to maximize the safety and confidentiality of all respondents. The survey was approved by multiple institutional review boards and was supported by the Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

Acknowledgments

We sincerely thank the 1,137 adult women in the Municipality of Anchorage who invested time and effort to participate in this victimization survey. They re-lived horrendous experiences, experiences that no one should be subjected to, to help the rest of us understand the extent of intimate partner and sexual violence in the Municipality of Anchorage. Funding for this project was provided by the Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. The survey was administered by RTI International. Data were analyzed by the UAA Justice Center.

Important Limitations

The survey excluded non-English speaking women, women without phone access, and women not living in a residence. Estimates may be higher among women excluded from the survey. Estimates may also be conservative because of the continuing stigma of reporting victimization. This survey measured the number of *victims*, not the number of *victimizations*. In addition, not all forms of intimate partner violence or sexual violence were measured.

Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence in the Municipality of Anchorage: Key Results from the 2015 Alaska Victimization Survey

Key Estimates

The following table shows the percentage of adult women in the Municipality of Anchorage who experienced each form of violence. Results from the 2015 survey are compared to results from 2010-11. All estimates were weighted to control for selection, non-response, and coverage. The 2015 estimates show that 48.3% of adult women in Municipality of Anchorage experienced sexual violence, intimate partner violence, or both, in their lifetime (versus 54.8% in 2010-11); and 7.5% experienced these forms of violence in the past year (versus 9.8% in 2010-11).

Measures of Violence	Lifetime		Past Year	
	2010-11	2015	2010-11	2015
Intimate partner violence (composite)	46.3%	38.6%	8.6%	5.4%
Threats of physical violence	27.2%	24.2%	3.9%	3.2%
Physical violence	44.9%	37.9%	8.3%	5.3%
Sexual violence (composite)	34.1%	31.6%	2.6%	3.6%
Alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault	22.1%	20.7%	2.1%	2.3%
Forcible sexual assault	25.0%	22.5%	1.1%	2.3%
Any Violence (composite)	54.8%	48.3%	9.8%	7.5%

Intimate Partner Violence Estimates:

The intimate partner violence composite includes both threats of physical violence and physical violence.

- 38.6% of adult women experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime (versus 46.3% in 2010-11).
 - 24.2% experienced threats of physical violence (versus 27.2% in 2010-11).
 - 37.9% experienced physical violence (versus 44.9% in 2010-11).
- 5.4% of adult women experienced intimate partner violence in the past year (versus 8.6% in 2010-11).
 - 3.2% experienced threats of physical violence (versus 3.9% in 2010-11).
 - 5.3% experienced physical violence (versus 8.3% in 2010-11).

Sexual Violence Estimates:

The sexual violence composite includes both alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault and forcible sexual assault.

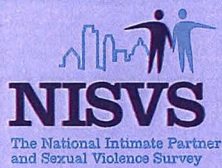
- 31.6% of adult women experienced sexual violence in their lifetime (versus 34.1% in 2010-11).
 - 20.7% experienced at least one alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault (versus 22.1% in 2010-11).
 - 22.5% experienced at least one forcible sexual assault (versus 25.0% in 2010-11).
- 3.6% of adult women experienced sexual violence in the past year (versus 2.6% in 2010-11).
 - 2.3% experienced at least one alcohol- or drug-involved sexual assault (versus 2.1% in 2010-11).
 - 2.3% experienced at least one forcible sexual assault (versus 1.1% in 2010-11).

Conclusion

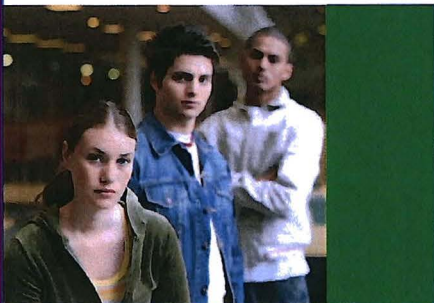
Almost half of adult women in Municipality of Anchorage (48.3%) have experienced violence in their lifetime, and 1 in 13 have experienced violence in the past year. More than 1 in 3 have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime, and 1 in 19 have experienced intimate partner violence in the past year. Three in 10 have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime, and 1 in 28 have experienced sexual violence in the past year. Some women experienced violence more than once.

Rates of violence against women in the Municipality of Anchorage remain unacceptably high.

For additional information on the Alaska Victimization Survey, please visit <http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu/avs>, or contact André Rosay with the UAA Justice Center (907-786-1821) or Lauree Morton with the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (907-465-5503). National, statewide, and local resources for domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and teen dating abuse can be found online at: <http://dps.alaska.gov/cdvs/Services.html>. Standing Together Against Rape (STAR) provides options, support, and information to Alaskans affected by sexual violence. Their crisis line is 1-800-748-8999. Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC) offers safe shelter and intervention to those affected by domestic violence. Their crisis line is 907-272-0100.



National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey



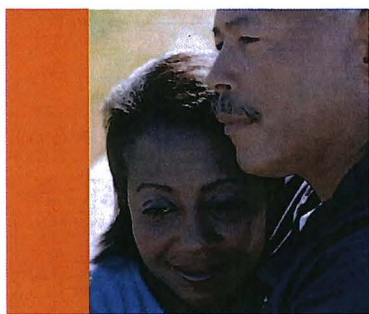
CDC's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) is an ongoing, nationally-representative telephone survey that collects detailed information on sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence victimization of adult women and men in the United States. The survey collects data on past-year experiences of violence as well as lifetime experiences of violence. The 2010 survey is the first year of the survey and provides baseline data that will be used to track trends in sexual violence, stalking and intimate partner violence. CDC developed NISVS to better describe and monitor the magnitude of these forms of violence in the United States.

Highlights of 2010 Findings

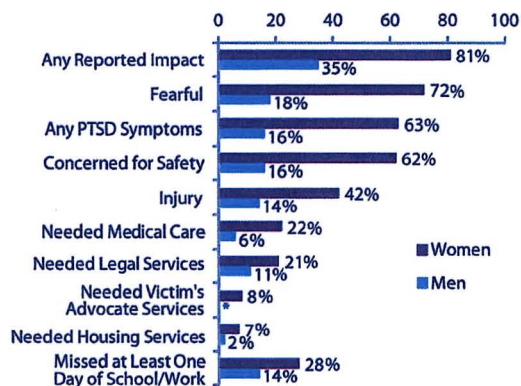
Sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence are widespread in the United States. The findings in this report underscore the heavy toll of this violence, the immediate impacts of victimization, and the lifelong health consequences.

Women are disproportionately affected by sexual violence, intimate partner violence and stalking.

- 1.3 million women were raped during the year preceding the survey.
- Nearly 1 in 5 women have been raped in their lifetime while 1 in 71 men have been raped in their lifetime.
- 1 in 6 women have been stalked during their lifetime. 1 in 19 men have experienced stalking in their lifetime.
- 1 in 4 women have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner while 1 in 7 men experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner.
- 81% of women who experienced rape, stalking or physical violence by an intimate partner reported significant short or long term impacts related to the violence experienced in this relationship such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms and injury while 35% of men report such impacts of their experiences.
- Women who had experienced rape or stalking by any



IPV-Related Impacts Among Victims of Rape, Physical Violence, and/ or Stalking by an Intimate Partner



National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey

perpetrator or physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime were more likely than women who did not experience these forms of violence to report having asthma, diabetes, and irritable bowel syndrome.

- Men and women who experienced these forms of violence were more likely to report frequent headaches, chronic pain, difficulty with sleeping, activity limitations, poor physical health and poor mental health than men and women who did not experience these forms of violence.

Female victims of intimate partner violence experienced different patterns of violence than male victims.

- Female victims experienced multiple forms of these types of violence; male victims most often experienced physical violence.

The majority of this victimization starts early in life.

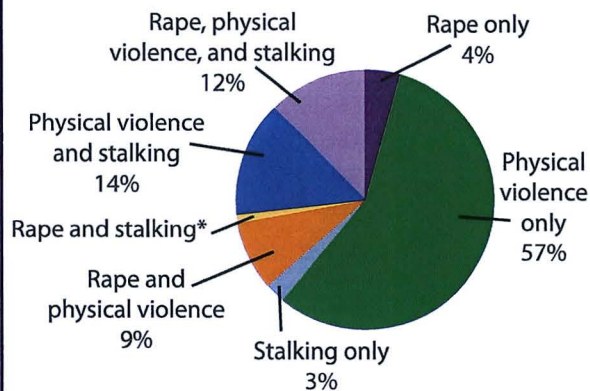
- Approximately 80% of female victims experienced their first rape before the age of 25 and almost half experienced the first rape before age 18 (30% between 11-17 years old and 12% at or before the age of 10).
- About 35% of women who were raped as minors were also raped as adults compared to 14% of women without an early rape history.
- 28% of male victims of rape were first raped when they were 10 years old or younger.

Summary

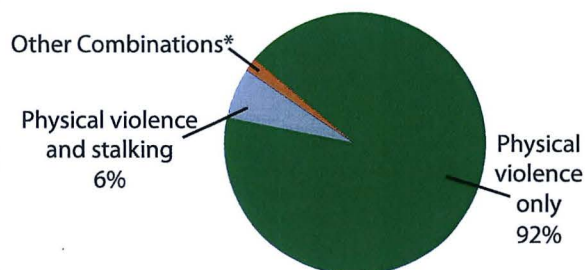
Overall, lifetime and one year estimates for sexual violence, stalking and intimate partner violence were alarmingly high for adult Americans; with IPV alone affecting more than 12 million people each year. Women are disproportionately impacted. They experienced high rates of severe intimate partner violence, rape and stalking, and long-term chronic disease and other health impacts such as PTSD symptoms. NISVS also shows that most rape and IPV is first experienced before age 24, highlighting the importance of preventing this violence before it occurs to ensure that all people can live life to their fullest potential.

Overlap of Lifetime Intimate Partner Rape, Stalking, and Physical Victimization

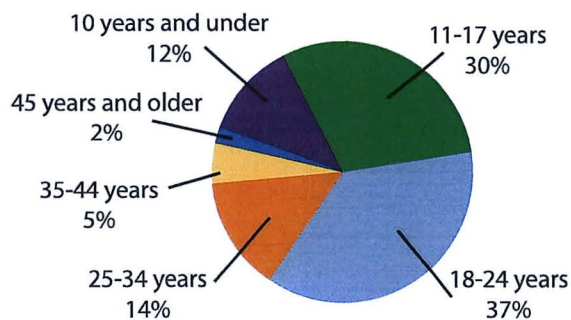
Female Victims



Male Victims



Age at Time of First Completed Rape Victimization in Lifetime Among Female Victims



Alaska Dispatch News

Opinions

Alaska should declare a sexual assault state of disaster

✍ Author: Alexander Keller Hirsch | Opinion ⓘ Updated: August 7, 2017 📅 Published August 7, 2017

By now, most Alaskans are woefully aware of the alarming reality. Alaska's sexual crime rates are three times higher than the national average, and child sexual assault rates are six times the national average. A 2016 state report confirms that, disproportionately, victims of sexual violence are between 11 and 17 years old, from Western Alaska or the Anchorage Bowl, and were attacked by someone they knew. According to the FBI Uniform Crime Report, 59 percent of Alaska women report having experienced sexual violence. Native Alaskans make up 61 percent of rape victims in the state, making Alaska Native women 9.7 times more likely than other Alaskans to be victims. Remarkable though they are, these numbers are by all accounts conservative, as the reported assault rate comprises only a portion of the overall rate of incidents.

[New report offers an in-depth look at Alaska's many sexual assault cases]

Alaska's recent governors, starkly cognizant of this disaster, have responded, albeit to limited effect. Gov. Sean Parnell was right to term sexual abuse in Alaska "an epidemic." He launched Alaska Men Choose Respect, a statewide prevention program that combined widespread public service announcements and annual rallies with increased sentencing for sex offenders and mini-grants for community-based prevention programs. Parnell also made efforts to expand law enforcement in remote areas through the Village Public Safety Officers program.

As part of his "Safer Alaska" initiative, Gov. Bill Walker has followed suit, though, laudably, he has ramped up efforts to treat the issue with accelerated urgency. On June 19, the governor signed Senate Bill 55 into law, bringing the state into compliance with the federal Violence Against Women Act, enforcing out-of-state protective orders registered in Alaska courts, and ordering local law enforcement agencies throughout the state to report their untested rape kits to the Alaska Department of Public Safety. The state received a \$1.1 million, three-year grant to process 1,000 untested sexual assault kits held in storage by Alaska State Troopers. Walker also declared April the perennial Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

"For too many years," Walker wrote, "Alaska has been plagued with high rates of domestic violence and sexual assault. Solving these problems will require a multi-pronged approach across many departments addressing victims, perpetrators, families, and bystanders."

Walker is right. The causes of sexual violence in Alaska are complex and ingrained, and redressing the multidimensional social problems that underlie such violence will require maximum coordination among networks of government agencies, nonprofit organizations, community groups and individuals. This is why the governor should immediately declare a sexual assault state of disaster in the state of Alaska.

Some apparent progress has been made in recent years. The 2015 Alaska Victimization Survey reflected a significantly decreased rate (roughly one-third) of reported sexual violence since 2010. It is unclear how much of this change is accurately reflected by vital advancements made in preventing violence, or if it is the reporting of sexual assault that has flagged. Either way, as long as Alaska continues to rank the highest in the nation for sexual crime, more must be done to ensure the safety of our residents.

Declaring a state of disaster could catalyze public assistance measures at the state, local and tribal government levels, and direct the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to establish funding for emergency protective measures. The declaration would also allow the governor and his emergency management team to swiftly establish a sexual violence commission that could work closely with the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to expand the exceptional services it currently offers in the form of emergency shelters, safety planning, community advocacy and batterers' intervention programs. A state of disaster could also provide greater financial assistance for victims seeking legal redress.

Were the governor to take this needed step, the declaration would allow the state to petition federal government agencies for funding and logistical help. Though the federal grant the state received will no doubt help, in fact thousands more untested rape kits will remain in need of subsidy.

Declaring a state of disaster will elevate the issue's notoriety and call further attention to sexual violence as a matter of significant state priority. Serious change, proportionate to what is required to fully eliminate the conditions of possibility for sexual assault, may remain a cultural concern so

long as widespread misogyny persists. But cultural change is invigorated by shifts in policy, which signal new directions and quicken variations in cultural consciousness.

Like torture, rape is a paradigm of what the philosopher Jay Bernstein terms "moral injury"; both are "paradigms of acts that no one should ever do." The devastation reaped by rape is revealed in the experience of suffering and pain related to the "destruction of individuals' standing as persons – as having dignity," writes Bernstein. The profound result of thinking this way about sexual violence as a form of torture is, "When people do terrible things it is not moral rules that are broken but other persons that are broken, their bodies and dignity."

On Feb. 15, the governor issued an order officially declaring the state's opioid abuse crisis a public health disaster. This created a legal foundation for the state to issue a medical "standing order" that allows community groups, law enforcement and members of the public to dispense and administer naloxone, an anti-overdose medication. It was the 11th disaster declared by the governor, but the first addressing a dire need in Alaska that was not strictly related to the damage caused by storms or wildfire.

A similar declaration for sexual violence would dignify Alaskans who have suffered in the past, but also demonstrate respect for equally considerable future generations of victims. The declaration could open pathways to renewal in a state where, as Gov. Walker rightly admits, "more must be done."

Alexander Keller Hirsch is associate professor of political science at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and director of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies at UAF.

The views expressed here are the writer's and are not necessarily endorsed by Alaska Dispatch News, which welcomes a broad range of viewpoints. To submit a piece for consideration, email commentary@alaskadispatch.com. Send submissions shorter than 200 words to letters@alaskadispatch.com.

Comments

Rape Culture in the Alaskan Wilderness

In the tight-knit communities of the far north, there are no roads, no police officers—and higher rates of sexual assault than anywhere else in the United States.



SARA BERNARD | SEP 11, 2014 | HEALTH

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One night a few years ago, when Jane was 13, a man she'd grown up with stumbled into the room she shared with her two sisters in Tanana, Alaska, a tiny village northwest of Fairbanks, and climbed on top of her. He was drunk and aggressive.

"He tried getting into my clothes," recalls Jane (whose name has been changed for this story). "He tried putting his hands under my shorts and inside my shirt." She struggled and pushed, but he was years her senior and made of muscle; he pulled her on top of him. She kept pushing and yanking until she suddenly shot backwards and tumbled off the bed. "He was so blacked out, he was like still asleep; his eyes were closed," she says. "I was watching his face, but his face didn't move at all. His breathing was normal, but his hands..." She pauses, and the word hangs thickly in the air. "His hands felt like he was *awake*."

Afterward, she ran into the living room and burst into tears, stuffing her face into a pillow so her parents wouldn't hear. She didn't tell them, then; she was scared and ashamed. "I guess I just felt like I was dirty. I guess that's what victims feel like. They feel dirty and just want to clean everything off."

The following summer, Jane was fast asleep at her family's fish camp downriver, while a group of adults drank and caroused in the next room. She awoke to someone tugging down her pants, reaching between her legs; she struggled and kicked, and he lumbered out of the room.

In fact, Jane says, she's been grabbed, chased, followed, and molested so much in her short life that she's now made it a habit to lock the bedroom door at night and shove a chair under the knob so no one can come in; she'll wait up, trembling, until everyone at a party is passed out cold before she can comfortably fall asleep. She's learned to avoid being alone with friends' dads, or with grandpas at village potlatches, or with boys at basketball games, who've repeatedly groped her breasts and buttocks. "It's just random, like, you'll think everything's all normal and then you'll feel something on your backside," she says. "You just freeze."

Jane is a tall basketball player with bright eyes, rectangular black-framed glasses, and a wide, eager smile. She has no trouble listing accomplishments and affinities: She's ambidextrous by choice, grew up doing all the rugged outdoor chores men do, raves gleefully over beloved local foods like fried moose heart and walrus in seal oil.

But for years, she felt scared, hypersensitive, and depressed. She never told her parents about the incident; she was too afraid of what would happen, and anyway, when she told one of her sisters, the only response she received was a dry laugh. "It happened to all of us," her sister had said. "Just leave it alone."

Growing up in Tanana, a town of 254, the prevalence of this kind of thing was common knowledge, but rarely discussed. Everyone knew the local elder who'd molested and raped his daughters and granddaughters for decades until he was arrested for touching another family's girls; after four years in jail and another half dozen or so at a cabin downriver, he was back on the village tribal council. One of Jane's great aunts was molested and raped by an uncle for years; dozens of years later, the aunt's grown daughter told her that the same uncle had molested her, too. Sometimes people pressed charges; most of the time, though, nothing happened. "These perverts travel from village to village, from potlatches to dances," Jane says. "And then they get drunk and you don't know what they're going to do."

“I was watching his face, but his face didn't move at all. His breathing was normal, but his hands...”

Then, last year, Jane joined the Tanana 4-H club, a newly minted outlet for local youth of all ages to gather and play games and craft things like blueberry jam and beaver hats. It's run by Cynthia Erickson, owner of Tanana's general store and native of Ruby, a village 100 miles downriver. Erickson says she started the program because of suicide: Three years ago, there were six in Tanana. At first, she just wanted to give Tanana's kids a place to do things with their hands, to go on field trips, to feel supported. But what began as a diversion quickly became a safe place for kids to share all kinds of traumas they were witnessing and experiencing: sexual and domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, death after brutal death. The discussions they'd have were rarely prearranged, Erickson says. Instead, the kids would launch the conversation by saying, "Did you hear what happened?"

Last fall, the group was asked to give a presentation at a statewide conference held by the First Alaskans Institute in Fairbanks. Instead of explaining how they'd come up with their anti-suicide pledge, the kids decided to share the reasons they'd needed one in the first place.

Jane spoke about her own abuse and described in detail what has been horrifyingly typical for the people around her: A local woman who was gang raped until she could "barely walk." A young boy who was sexually assaulted by an older man and later killed himself. Tribal elders who commanded respect, but whose behavior didn't. "I'm still young and I'm already sick of it," she said. "It's happening in his house, in her house, even in your own bed."

The presentation was met with a standing ovation, and it took the kids nearly two hours to make it from the stage to the back of the conference center, thanks to all the members of the audience who stopped to hug them, weep, pile up cash donations on a scarf on the stage, and tell them how proud they were. In some cases, audience members felt inspired to come out about their own abuse. One grandmother told Erickson she'd been raped and abused for so many years, and she'd held it in for so long, that that was the reason that she'd been so harsh to her children. After the presentation, she called her children and apologized to them.

The impact that Jane and her peers made at the conference seemed to launch a new era of transparency in Alaska about domestic and sexual violence; the media splash that followed drew a groundswell of support both for the 4-H youth and for recent state efforts to both document and prevent these crimes. But a few months later, when Erickson asked the kids if they thought their presentation had made a difference in Tanana, they all shrugged and made "zero" signs with their hands. Their stories had rocked the small community, too, but the fresh feeling "didn't really stick," Jane admits. "It went back like the old way."

In its short history as a state, Alaska has earned an unnerving epithet: It is the rape capital of the U.S. At nearly 80 rapes per 100,000, according to the FBI Uniform Crime Report, Alaska's rape rate is almost three times the national average; for child sexual assault, it's nearly six times. And, according to the 2010 Alaska Victimization Survey, the most comprehensive data to date, 59 percent of Alaskan women have been victims of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or both.

But those numbers, say researchers, just skim the surface, since sex crimes are generally underreported, and may be particularly underreported in Alaska for cultural reasons. “Those numbers are conservative,” says Ann Rausch, a program coordinator at Alaska’s Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. “They’re still staggering.”

The causes of the violence are complex and entrenched. Government officials, law enforcement personnel, and victim advocates note the state’s surfeit of risk factors, from an abundance of male-dominated industries, like oil drilling and the military, to the state’s vast geography, with many communities that have no roads and little law enforcement. “There are so many factors that tip the scale for Alaska,” says Linda Chamberlain, executive director of the Alaska Family Violence Prevention Project. Not the least among them: the lack of strong law enforcement presence, or support services of any kind, in remote towns like Tanana. “It’s easier for perpetrators to isolate their victims and not get caught. And for people not to get help.”

Some believe that this fact both attracts and encourages criminals. The suspect for a recent rape in southwest hub community of Dillingham, for instance, was a white man who’d just arrived from somewhere in the Lower 48 to take a job at the Wells Fargo in town. “Because it happens in rural Alaska,” one victim advocate cautions, “doesn’t mean it’s only rural Alaskans who are a part of it.”

It happens at alarming rates in urban Alaska, too. In 2010, Anchorage and Fairbanks had the highest rape rates of all cities in the U.S. Some bars in Anchorage and Fairbanks are known for a prevalence of date rape drugs; others, in Fairbanks, are known for shunning members of the military after too many brutally violent nights. (The U.S. armed forces have their own issues with sexual assault: Investigations across the United States reveal victimhood percentages almost as high as Alaska’s; in late 2013, the Alaska National Guard also launched an investigation of widespread sexual assault allegations within its ranks). John Vandervalk, a sex crime detective in the Anchorage Police Department, claims that the city’s numbers are high partly because of attrition from villages where there are few or no services to address these kinds of crimes. But while rates of victimization are much higher among Alaska Natives—a survey from 2006 that analyzed law enforcement data in Anchorage found Alaska Native women 9.7 times more likely than other Alaskan women to be victims of sexual assault—anyone who works in Alaska’s cities consistently confirms, like Vandervalk, that “this is not an Alaska Native problem. It’s a problem that affects all demographics.”

Lawmakers aren’t blind to the issue. In 2009, Alaska governor Sean Parnell launched Alaska Men Choose Respect, a statewide prevention initiative that combines pervasive public service announcements and annual rallies with a slew of other incentives, including increased sentencing for sex offenses and mini-grants for violence prevention projects.

But some argue that focusing on a centralized criminal justice system and government-led initiatives can only go so far. In a state where hundreds of roadless communities are scattered across hundreds of thousands of miles, and where the storied rates of violence against women can hit 100 percent in some villages, silence is the norm, and violence is almost expected. (Says detective Vandervalk, “You’ll get a Native girl who says, ‘My mom always tells me to wear two pairs of jeans at night to slow him down.’”)

It’s only in recent years that some Alaskans have begun to speak publicly about this problem. In many places, silence still endures. But Cynthia Erickson hopes that the “old way” will eventually fade, and that speech, above

all else, will empower victims, shame perpetrators, and interrupt the cycle of trauma where it starts: in childhood. “This story of Tanana is absolutely no different than every single one of these villages,” she says. “This is our world. And this is the fight we’re fighting—for the children. I don’t have time for adults.”

Tanana is nestled at the intersection of the Tanana and Yukon Rivers, about 130 miles northwest of Fairbanks, and is one of 165 Alaskan villages off the road system. In good weather, three nine-seater plane flights a day land at Tanana’s airport, a slim snowfield with a few blinking lights. In January, temperatures can plunge to 60 or 70 degrees below zero, and the life-giving river is frozen solid. The sky gradually pales around 11 a.m. and darkens again by 3 p.m. in a splash of peach and hot pink. Beat-up trucks hibernate under feet of snow in people’s yards. To get around, most residents drive open-air snow machines, staving off the wind chill with the wide earflaps of homemade marten-fur hats (or, in one instance I observed, strips of cardboard and duct tape).

The regular flights are packed with freight, so things like toilet paper and Doritos don’t usually have a problem making it in to the Ericksons’ general store, though sometimes weather can keep staple items off the shelves for weeks. The day I arrived, it had “warmed up,” as locals like to say, to five degrees below zero. Five o’clock in the evening marks the start of rush hour, and half the town had stopped in the store to pick up tomato sauce, frozen dinners, Gatorade, candy. They asked each other about the day’s work, commented on the weather, and gruffly dropped their items one by one on the counter, cheeks red from the cold. A petite teenaged girl with long dark hair and spindly legs waltzed through the pinging entryway wearing only basketball shorts and zebra slippers. (This far north, cold is relative: The previous few days, at 40 below, with powdered-sugar snow so dry and cold it squeaked underfoot, Alaskans had called it “chilly.”)

Why hadn’t his daughter told him? Why had she waited so long to talk about it, and why then to the entire state?

I first met Erickson and her husband, Dale, at a high school basketball game in Fairbanks, followed by steak salads at Denny's—or, as it's known: "the northernmost Denny's in the world." In the middle of the game, packed onto narrow bleachers, Erickson launched directly into the litany of abuses she'd witnessed and heard of in Tanana, and precisely what she thinks of those who see violence and do nothing. An older woman a few rungs above us tapped her on the shoulder, and as she turned, her face lit up, recognizing an old friend; they spoke eagerly for most of the rest of the game. On our way out, Erickson ran into a young woman. She put her hand on her shoulder and exclaimed at the teenager's beauty and adulthood, demanding updates. Dale Erickson hung back patiently, until he saw his window: "Quick! Let's get her out of here before she runs into someone else she knows."

Erickson has a cap of frosted curls, high cheekbones, and gem-like blue eyes. She exudes a fiercely protective maternal energy and has no qualms about the public way she's been going about shifting things in Tanana. "I'm sleeping pretty damn good at night," she says. If no one will report abuse to the authorities—or if the authorities don't act fast enough—she often leaves anonymous, vaguely threatening notes for people she believes are beating their wives or molesting their relatives. "I just started voicing my opinion in the last couple of years. I don't give a shit anymore," she said. "I really don't."

After the 4-H presentation, she told kids to be on guard for backlash. Most of the kids hadn't told their families about the content of their speeches beforehand, and then, thanks to the media blitz that followed, the state of Alaska got an earful. For many families, the sudden publicity felt threatening. Jane's parents, in particular, resented that she hadn't come to them first; her father called his daughter a few hours afterward and left a dismissive voicemail message, speaking about her in the third person. "She's overreacting," he said. "She just got touched by a couple of drunk people." When he did reach her, he told her he felt betrayed: Why hadn't she told him? Why had she waited so long to talk about it, and why to the entire state?

The Alaska Federation of Natives asked the Tanana 4-H group to repeat their presentation a few days later, at a second, larger conference. Jane's father demanded that she change her speech for the second round, offering less detail, and less of her personal experience, because people would be jumping to conclusions, wondering

who she meant when she said “it’s happening in his house, in her house, even in your own bed.” He feared her words could implicate him.

A Tanana teacher told me he’d known the presentation was going to “stir the pot” before it happened, and that it probably was still “ruffling feathers”; some residents avoided the general store for weeks, sending family members to do the shopping instead, and some still avoid speaking to Erickson. While most adults were outwardly supportive of the kids’ courage, a lack of outright retaliation didn’t necessarily indicate a truce. For Erickson, evasion can cut as deep. “You can be a bully without saying a word.”

One woman, who briefly described her own experience with sexual abuse—and her daughters’, and her sisters’, and her friends’—as a matter of course, shook her head and looked away, hands folded, at the mention of Cynthia Erickson. To her, all the publicity following the 4-H group’s speeches was an embarrassment; you kept private things private. “You say Cynthia Erickson and my guard goes up,” she said.

While few victims deny that sexual assault and domestic violence should be punishable crimes, the public shaming of an elder or father or brother is a big deal in a village where everyone is related—either by blood, or by a lifelong relationship just as binding. “Everybody knows who’s doing what,” Erickson told me. “It’s common river knowledge. Who’s the molester. Who’s the abuser.” But families struggle to protect one another and their lives going forward, knowing that anyone they offend will be at the post office the next day, and the day after, and the day after that. Winters are long, brutal, and dark, and in a tight-knit, tiny community, connected to most of its income, medical care, and law enforcement only by airplane, conflicts often simmer in silence. Flights aren’t cheap; when tensions build, there’s no place to go.

For that reason, family members often blame the victims, or the friends of victims, who attempt to report a crime, out of fear of losing material support, or a vital link in a precarious web of familial structure. When a young man from Tanana was accused of sexually abusing several village children a few years ago, some of his relatives verbally attacked the woman who turned him in, saying, “Shame on you. He had his whole life in front of him and you’re going to ruin it.” Even the raffle the 4-H group organized to help fund the trip to Fairbanks for the conference sold very few tickets, one Tanana resident claims, “because it was dealing with hard issues.”

Often, when state troopers—the only police force available for a quarter of Alaska’s villages—are called in for a brutal assault case, they’ll get on the next available flight, but when they arrive on the scene, no one will talk. Lieutenant Andrew Merrill, a state trooper who lived and worked in Bush Alaska for a dozen years, notes that in many cases, a perpetrator is also “the one that chops wood, hauls the water, hunts the caribou so there’s food in the house. So, it’s like, ‘Yeah, he punched me, and yeah, I want this to stop, but I also need to survive.’”

It took one woman 30 years to begin speaking about the time she was gang raped in Tanana. She claims that the main perpetrator apologized to her the summer after it happened, and that she “was in no place to accept that. I had a gun and was going to kill him.” But she did nothing. She feared for her children, her family’s reputation, her affiliation with the local church. “It was so shameful to me that I didn’t dare tell anyone but the doctor,” she says. “I told the doctor and I got an abortion. I thought if I told the cops, then everybody would know. What would people think? So I just suffered with it.”

A friend of Cynthia Erickson’s who grew up with her in Ruby, a town of 172, endured brutal beatings by her husband for several decades before she uprooted her life and moved with her children to Fairbanks. She wasn’t able to go back to Ruby to visit for many years because “she ‘broke up the family,’” says Erickson. “I’m like, ‘broke up the family’? He beat the shit out of her! But she was looked down on for a long time.”

Jane, too, has no intention of sending someone who she grew up with to jail—someone she’d trusted, and who she says she now hates, but still, on some level, loves. After the Tanana 4-H group gave its second presentation, the Office of Children’s Services was ready, this time, to whisk her offstage. Jane told investigators what the man had done and they urged her to press charges. “But my first thought was, ‘I can’t do that,’” she says. Jane felt she’d already done enough damage by making a public presentation and mentioning the molestation, even in vague terms; her family began shunning the accused and she felt she’d already, to some degree, destroyed his life. She looked up at the state trooper and said, “You do realize that I grew up with him?” He handed her his card; as soon as they left the room, she tore it up and threw it in the trash.

The word for “trooper,” according to Lieutenant Andrew Merrill, translates in nearly every Native language in Western Alaska as “‘he who comes and takes away.’ That’s what we’re seen as,” he says,

citing both the structure of rural Alaskan law enforcement, and the perception of it: “You call us, we fly in, we do an investigation, we put somebody in handcuffs and we fly away.”

Merrill is now Deputy Director for C Detachment, a state division that’s four-fifths the size of Texas, spanning hundreds of thousands of miles between Anchorage and Alaska’s western coast. It employs roughly 30 troopers.

Because the area they patrol is so large, and staffing so slim, the amount of time it takes for state troopers to arrive on the scene is anywhere from several hours to several days. And since effectively prosecuting a sexual assault often requires a forensic examination to collect DNA evidence—an exam that typically can only be conducted in full in urban hubs—by the time a victim gets one, if she gets one at all, the 72-hour collection window may have passed.

“In a worst-case scenario,” Merrill says, “we have people collect their own undergarments, use their cell phones to take pictures of the room, talk to a local health aide about collecting urine in a cup.” Troopers will go forward with the investigation, regardless, if the victim wants to press charges, but it’s often tougher for district attorneys to build a case. That, and the high numbers of victims who recant their testimony—or refuse to give it in the first place—are a large part of the reason more than half of the reports that reach state troopers never make it to the DA’s office.

She looked up at the state trooper and said, “You do realize that I grew up with him?”

While the state has made a concerted effort to improve training in sexual assault and domestic violence investigations, Merrill points out that young, inexperienced troopers who’ve been “chasing broken tail lights” in Anchorage often struggle when sent into Bush Alaska and are tasked with pursuing far more serious crimes. To provide more boots on the ground, governor Parnell’s administration has more than doubled the number of Village Public Safety Officers, or first responders, since 2008, with the official goal, says Choose Respect coordinator Katie TePas, of providing some form of local law enforcement for every community that wants one. (VPSOs weren’t allowed to carry firearms until this summer, when a new bill passed the state legislature. The bill also set aside limited funds for firearms training.)

But the jobs are difficult to fill. Hiring officers from outside a village or its surrounding communities can present all kinds of challenges, from housing shortages to high rates of attrition, but hiring from within often forces a cop to choose between his job and his family. “We have VPSOs who quit because they don’t want to arrest their uncles, their brothers and sisters,” says Merrill, adding that recently, one VPSO was tasked with arresting her own son.

For now, at least 75 of Alaska’s communities have no local police or Village Public Safety Officers, according to an October 2013 report by the Indian Law & Order Commission. The group devoted 60 pages of its nationwide survey to Alaska, calling the state’s centralized law enforcement system “unconscionable,” and citing, in particular, the rates of domestic and sexual violence.

But to rely solely on criminal law, says Ginger Baim, former executive director of SAFE, a shelter in Dillingham, is “like going to the emergency room and saying, ‘What have you done to stop accidents?’” The manifestations of sexual and domestic violence in Alaska “are all symptoms of the problem,” she says. “They’re not the problem.”

When Americans and Russians began showing up in Alaska, they brought with them—as settlers did in the rest of the U.S.—an explosion of disease. In the late 1830s, small pox wiped out a third of the Native population in southern and western Alaska. In 1900, a flu and measles epidemic did the same—or worse, by some estimates. Some villages were decimated; in others, there weren’t enough left alive to bury the dead.

Then, shortly after the second pandemic, many Native Alaskan children were shipped off to boarding schools—some as young as 6 years old—and many were beaten, sexually abused, and urged to forget their languages and cultures. In a few villages, multimillion-dollar lawsuits were filed against Catholic priests and church workers for molesting almost an entire generation of Alaska Native children. (The suits were settled in 2007 and 2011.)

Public health nurse Paula Ciniero has worked in 10 villages in the Fort Yukon subregion of the Interior, a vast swathe of land north of Fairbanks, for the past decade. She focuses on various public health needs such as immunizations and tuberculosis testing at local clinics, but she says roughly three quarters of her time these days involves sexual or intimate partner violence. “People get mad at me when I say it’s become tradition, but it has,” she says. “We’re talking about third-generation violence. That’s tradition.”

This is further exacerbated by the fact that traumatic experiences can lead to alcohol and drug abuse, and alcohol and drug abuse can lead to further traumatization. “It’s like a circle, you can’t take just one; they’re all linked together,” says Cynthia Erickson. “You’re born, you’re molested—kick another domino down.”

Detective Vandervalk, in Anchorage, notes that the average blood alcohol level for a victim at the time of a rape exam is .21—two and a half times the legal limit. “And that’s average. We routinely deal with people in the high threes, fours, fives—both on the suspect’s side of the house, and on the victim’s.” No one’s blaming the victims,

he insists, but still: “If you make yourself vulnerable by drinking too much and passing out, something bad is going to happen to you sooner or later.”

Ginger Baim, the former SAFE director, claims that almost all sexual assaults that have taken place in Bristol Bay region for the past 25 years are not only facilitated by alcohol, but happen when a victim is passed out cold. Her own assault, when she was a teenager, happened that way—and the man who raped her may also have been affected by fetal alcohol syndrome. “His mother drank every single day she carried him,” she says. “He was born pickled.”

Experts and locals often link Alaska’s high rates of suicide with sexual assault, too. Many men were abused as young boys—something that’s also, slowly, surfacing. “It’s putting a Band-Aid on the hurt,” says Erickson. “That’s why there’s so much alcohol and drugs. That’s why there’s so much rape. They don’t feel good, they black out, and alcohol and drugs cover the pain. That’s why we’re so dysfunctional. Nobody’s dealing with it.”

Tanana’s counseling center is a low-slung ranch-style house painted sea green. It lies steps from the village medical clinic, which is right next to the school. Inside, the center is warm and comfortable, with two soft brown couches and several armchairs. Someone’s always offering tea or coffee, and one morning, at an AA meeting, there was a pot of moose soup: hunks of shredded meat and carrots suspended in a thick broth.

In the winter, when night falls early, the town’s health director, Theresa Marks, hosts a weekly sewing group here. A handful of women drink tea and chat over the dark-season projects they’re working on: beaver and marten fur mittens and slippers, crocheted scarves, and elaborate “sun-catchers” crafted with multicolored hollow beads so tiny they have to be picked up with a needle. If women and their families aren’t trapping animals, they can purchase them wholesale in town or nearby: polar bear, wolverine, moose. One woman boasts that she snagged an entire moose hide for \$100. They dish the latest gossip and share jokes of the day, cackling over the reliable antics of 2-year-olds or the “badass granny” bumper stickers on an older woman’s snow machine.

One woman told me that, historically, the kind of sexual abuse and assault so many people were experiencing was *huklani*, or bad luck, so no one spoke openly. “It was taboo,” she said, “Like, bad, you don’t talk like that, you don’t say that.” When she tried to say something to her grandmother, once, she was hushed. “You learn not to talk when you’re a kid.” But over the last few years, women’s groups and regional meetings have increasingly turned into spontaneous talking circles.

Sabrenia Jervsjo, Cynthia Erickson’s cousin, works as a rural advocate for the Interior Alaska Center for Nonviolent Living, and she says her job is to encourage just that: Each time she turns up in another village, more people come, and more people talk—more adults, including more men. Public health nurse Paula Ciniero is part of a grant-funded collaborative team that travels statewide, leading workshops on identifying and healing from domestic violence and sexual assault. “We get so much positive feedback,” she says, “Women say to me, ‘Now I know why my parents don’t talk. Now I know why my parents have said what they’ve said.’ It’s like the light bulb goes on.”

While Erickson claims with a weary laugh that her general store has served as an unofficial talking circle for 28 years, health aides from the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium did organize an official healing workshop in Tanana shortly after the 4-H presentations. And many Tanana residents appreciate the idea, at least, of speaking out. One woman, also a survivor, organized a welcome home pizza lunch immediately after the talks; the adults who attended that day stood and read the kids’ own words back to them, and said, “We hear you.”

“People get mad at me when I say it’s become tradition, but it has. We’re talking about third-generation violence. That’s tradition.”

Erickson gets emails and phone calls every day now, and is constantly fielding requests to bring the 4-H kids to other conferences and gatherings. When visiting Allakaket, population 109, about a hundred miles to the north, a woman dashed across the town hall, cornered her, and begged, almost in tears, “Please, could your kids please come talk to my kids?”

In March, Erickson took a few of the 4-H kids to the Cama-i Dance Festival in Bethel, a southwest hub community halfway across the state, scrounging together the funds through donations of airline miles. The girls who attended gave a short speech, showed the video from their first presentation, and met dozens of other kids who had identical stories to theirs.

The week before, Erickson had won the Doyon Corporation’s 2014 Daaga’ Community Service Award, and when she got it, she wept—from embarrassment. “My parents, my grandparents, they didn’t get awards. They were just called good people.” She looked at the certificate, and said it was a nice frame; she’d rather put a family picture in it. “I’m not gonna sugar coat shit, we’ve been doing that too long,” she told me. It’s taken decades to create all this violence, she said, and the kids’ “zero” signs reflect real feeling. Patterns continue, and

when it comes to talking circles and workshops and counseling sessions, “the people who really need to be at that aren’t at it.”

Jane says her parents stopped drinking after the presentations—a huge shift, although she claims it was for physical health reasons. She also believes there are fewer people stumbling around the streets of Tanana intoxicated, and fewer parties in the middle of town on weekdays. “I feel like the adults know that the kids are watching them now,” she says. “Kids are little, but they still have smart minds, and know what’s going on at all times.”

Jane used to be painfully shy, but since joining 4-H, she has become more outgoing; she recently became captain of the basketball team, and this spring, she won a medal, ranking her among the tournament’s top five players. She wants to be a state trooper, a teacher, or a chef, and plans to go to college in Fairbanks.

But becoming a celebrity, thanks to the presentations, required some adjustment. So many people began dashing up to her at basketball games, telling her how brave she is—it was gratifying, but also a little unsettling. At a recent tournament in Huslia, a village 130 miles to the northwest, a local woman brought her elderly mother up to Jane, saying, “Mommy, remember? She was one of the 4-H kids from Tanana.”

Every time Jane is pegged as a hero, she’s reminded of the story she told to the world, a story that on most days she’d rather forget. “They come up to me and say they’re so proud of me, and I should keep doing what I’m doing,” she says. “But I always have second thoughts.”

A few months ago, Jane received an email from a national 4-H director, in Washington, D.C., asking her to put in an application to be a Healthy Living Youth Ambassador, one of five teens who’d work alongside 4-H staffers to build and promote wellness programs. Though she says she’s not sure she’ll apply, she appreciates the offer; it means the world is listening, whether or not she’s the one who will keep talking. “I want kids to know that they don’t have to follow the path of our parents,” she says. When it comes to this, there are no second thoughts. “I don’t want us to be the victims anymore.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SARA BERNARD is a freelance writer and radio reporter based in Seattle.

'Choose Respect' always: Alaskans must continue combating high rate of sexual assault, domestic violence

Aug 20, 2017

News-Miner opinion: Former Alaska Gov. Sean Parnell started the Choose Respect campaign in 2009 to tackle what he described as the epidemic of domestic violence and sexual assault. Alaska at the time had the highest sexual assault rate in the nation at about 2.5 times higher than the national average. The state had a rate of child sexual assault six times the national average.

"The time to tackle this issue is long overdue," the governor said then in announcing the new program.

What Gov. Parnell envisioned was a 10-year effort, one that would include three components: keeping convicted abusers in jail, providing shelter and legal aid to victims, and beginning a public education campaign. Plea agreements, according to one news account, would no longer be allowed to include a term allowing a person to avoid being listed on the state's sex offender registry.

The governor's program built on an effort from the prior year by the Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, which together created the Real Alaska Men Choose Respect campaign.

The Choose Respect campaign started by Gov. Parnell led to supportive rallies across the state. Within five years, more than 170 Alaska communities had participated in marches, rallies, and community events, according to the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Rallies have been held in Fairbanks regularly and in other Interior Alaska communities.

It's been nearly eight years since the Choose Respect campaign began. There's been progress, but more needs to be done.

Progress can be seen in the 2015 Alaska Victimization Survey conducted by the Justice Center at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The survey, released in February 2016, contained these positive findings:

- In 2010, 12 in 100 women had experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or both in Alaska during the previous year. By 2015, that number dropped to 8 in 100.
- Intimate-partner violence decreased by 32 percent.
- Sexual violence decreased by 33 percent.
- 21,401 adult women in Alaska experienced intimate-partner violence, sexual violence or both in the past year.
- Half of adult women in Alaska have experienced violence in their lifetime.

That's the good news.

The bad news is apparent in the stories reported regularly in the Daily News-Miner about sexual assault and domestic violence. One story alone at the end of July carried the headline "Four Interior Alaska men indicted in sex abuse cases."

A resolution debated in the Alaska Legislature earlier this year noted that "despite tremendous progress, Alaska still has the highest rates of sexual violence in the nation" and that "the state currently has one of the five highest rates of child abuse in the United States." It stated that "2,126 children were evaluated by child advocacy centers in the state for possible sexual abuse" in 2016 and that "1,625 adult victims of sexual assault sought services at rape crisis centers in the state" that year.

The drive to end sexual assault and domestic violence is a continual battle. Despite the progress shown in the UAA Justice Center survey, Alaska still has far too many victims.

Yes, Alaska has a budget problem. We've also got a sexual assault and domestic violence problem that we and our state's elected officials should not forget.

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2018 Legislative Session

Bill Version: SCR 17
Fiscal Note Number: _____
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier: SCR17-LEG-SESS-02-16-18
Title: APRIL 2018:SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS
MONTH
Sponsor: MEYER
Requester: SENATE STATE AFFAIRS

Department:
Appropriation:
Allocation:
OMB Component Number: 0

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2019	Included in	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
	Appropriation Requested	Governor's FY2019 Request	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2019	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2018) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2019) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency?
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version/comments:

INITIAL VERSION. ONE PAGE. ZERO NOTE.

Prepared By:	SANTE LESH, BUDGET ANALYST	Phone:	(907)465-4824
Division:	LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY	Date:	02/16/2018 03:32 PM
Approved By:	JESSICA GEARY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Date:	02/16/2018
Agency:	LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY		