



Alaska State Legislature House and Senate Democrats

WEB: <http://www.akdemocrats.org>
CONTACT: Jordan Marshall, Press Secretary
PHONE: (907) 465-3842 or 321-3682
FAX: (907) 465-5125
EMAIL: press@akdemocrats.org

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Alaska History a Priority for State's Senior Senator

Representative Mary Kapsner Applauds Sen. Ted Stevens' Call for Alaska History

JUNEAU – Representative Mary Kapsner (D-Bethel) today applauded U.S. Senator Ted Stevens' call to require that Alaska History be taught in public schools. Sen. Stevens made his comments in Juneau this morning at an annual address to a joint session of the Alaska State Legislature.

"Alaskans can bridge differences of opinion by establishing a common understanding of our past," said Sen. Stevens. "The Alaska Humanities Forum is making efforts to develop a statewide mandatory curriculum in Alaskan history. It is my hope that this curriculum will enable future generations to grasp and preserve what it means to be 'Alaskan.'"

Kapsner is hopeful Sen. Stevens' affirmative comments might provide the momentum needed to pass House Bill 84, an act to create an Alaska History curriculum. Efforts to create a statewide course with a focus on Alaska History are currently stalled in committee.

"Alaska has a rich history," said Representative Kapsner. "The State is far better off when young adults understand our unique Constitution; the national battles that led up to Alaska's federal, state and Native land claims; as well as the events that culminated in statehood and the complex issues that currently face the Legislature."

HB84 directs the Department of Education & Early Development to develop a standards-based Alaska history education curriculum within grades nine through 12. Each school board shall implement the curriculum as a part of regular classroom studies and shall require that each student complete the curriculum with a passing grade as a requirement for graduation.

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