



House and Senate Democrats Representative Gretchen Guess

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REP. GUESS PROTECTS SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS House passes bill preventing the implication of sexual assault victims as responsible for their own victimization.

JUNEAU – Representative Gretchen Guess’ bill, House Bill 321, which changes the victims’ compensation board guidelines when considering sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor, passed the house today with no opposition. HB 321 limits the factors considered in making a crime victims’ compensation award in cases of sexual assault or sexual abuse of a minor.

“It is a shameful insult to deny a sexual assault victim aid on the misguided implication they are somehow responsible for what happened to them,” said Rep. Guess.

The unintended consequence of the preexisting language was child abuse and sexual assault victims could be denied funding if the board found them to have contributed to the circumstances of the crime. This bill acts toward absolving the victim of any blame.

“These guidelines have the very unfortunate consequence of not only withholding aid, but also making a victim of sexual assault or sexual abuse of a minor feel as though they somehow deserved or played a role in being victimized. This is a horrible outcome that this simple bill seeks to remedy,” said Rep. Guess.

The bill adds language prohibiting the consideration of provocation, the use of drugs or alcohol, or past social history of the victim by the compensation board.

HB 321 now moves to the Senate.

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