

Alaska State Legislature



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Bipartisan Effort to Protect Victims of Stalking **House Bill 1 closes a dangerous loophole in Alaska' anti-stalking laws**

(JUNEAU)—The Alaska State House of Representatives today passed critical public safety legislation to help protect victims of stalking. Currently, an individual threatened by an acquaintance or someone in his or her household can get a domestic violence protective/restraining order. When threats come from a stranger, however, the legal system affords no similar protection. House Bill 1 closes this dangerous loophole in Alaska's anti-stalking laws.

HB1 allows victims of strangers to seek and obtain protective orders, incorporating the procedures already in place for domestic violence situations. It also requires that perpetrators covered under the bill be included in the central registry for the Department of Public Safety; this provision helps protect public safety officers in potentially dangerous situations.

The anti-stalking law enjoyed wide, bipartisan support with both Representative Harry Crawford (D-Anchorage) and Representative Cheryll Heinze (R-Anchorage) as prime sponsors. Rep. Crawford, who introduced the bill, began work on this legislation at the request of a constituent in 2002. Rep. Heinze was once a victim of an unknown stalker.

"This is an important day for (stalking victim) Mary Wells and other vulnerable Alaskans and families who have been victimized by stalkers," said Crawford. "The House just made it easier for these victims to take a stand against violence and help protect themselves."

"In the past, many women have been stalked but did not have a domestic violence case to justify a restraining order," said Heinze. "Now women can take action when they know they are being stalked, before the situation escalates."

The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

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