



Alaska State Legislature House and Senate Democrats

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Davis Wins Support for Midwives and Birth Centers

Senate Bill 349 passes Alaska Senate with unanimous vote

JUNEAU – The Alaska Senate today endorsed a bill by Senator Bettye Davis (D-Anchorage) to update rules regarding midwifery and birth centers. Senate Bill 349 passed the Senate with unanimous support.

“The state of Alaska is among the leaders in the nation in children born in birth centers utilizing midwives, last year over 250 babies were born in the state using this safe, tension free method,” said Senator Davis. “This legislation merely corrects an oversight in the licensing of these centers by insuring that we have one uniform standard that applies to all birth centers.”

Currently there are six birth centers in Alaska, five registered and one licensed. The owners of these birth centers, both certified direct entry and certified nurse midwives, concluded the need to have one licensed standard for all birthing centers. These licensed birth centers will have one set of regulations to follow, comply with annual inspections, and put safeguards in place to guarantee the birth center is a safe environment for families.

In March of this year, the birth center owners collaborated together to rewrite regulations for licensed birth centers, which have not been changed since 1983, and have submitted their recommendations to the rewriting regulation process. With this bill, the registered birth centers will be considered licensed until six months after the effective date of new adopted regulations. After this six-month period, the birth centers will be governed by the new regulations. The Midwives Association of Alaska have agreed there should be one uniform standard birth center and encourage the members of the Legislature to support the passage of this important legislation.

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Sen. Bettye Davis, Sen. Johnny Ellis, Sen. Kim Elton, Sen. Lyman Hoffman, Sen. Hollis French, Sen. Gretchen Guess, Sen. Georgianna Lincoln, Sen. Donny Olson, Rep. Ethan Berkowitz, Rep. Sharon Cissna, Rep. Harry Crawford, Rep. Eric Croft, Rep. Les Gara, Rep. Max Gruenberg, Rep. David Guttenberg, Rep. Reggie Joule, Rep. Mary Kapsner, Rep. Beth Kerttula, Rep. Albert Kookesh, Rep. Carl Moses