



Alaska State Legislature House and Senate Democrats

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Senate Supports Longer Sentences for Repeat Sex Offenders

JUNEAU – Democrats and Republicans in the Alaska Senate joined forces yesterday to pass legislation sponsored by Senator Hollis French (D-Anchorage) that would give repeat sex offenders longer sentences and require them to serve out their full terms. Senate Bill 85 passed the Senate on a vote of 20-0.

“SB 85 addresses a pressing public safety issue in Alaska,” said French, a former state prosecutor. “Our state has a shameful record as having one of the highest rates of reported rapes per capita in the nation. SB85 focuses on the worst of the worst – repeat sexual offenders – and will provide additional protection for Alaska’s women and children, the most frequent victims of sexual crimes.”

The bill has two purposes: first, to increase the penalties for repeat sex offenders; and second, to eliminate “good time” or reduction in time served for these offenders. SB85 establishes a separate and more stringent set of sentencing guidelines for those who commit a second or subsequent sexual offense or commit a sexual felony after a prior felony conviction. Current statutory guidelines in Alaska treat all two-time felons the same, and prior felony convictions are given equal weight when an individual is sentenced on a new offense. Research on sexual offenders has, however, clearly found that they should be dealt with differently than other types of offenders.

In addition to increasing the maximum and presumptive sentences for repeat sex offenders, SB85 would require repeat sexual offenders to serve the full length of their sentences in prison; they would not be eligible to earn “good time” or a reduction in their prison terms for good behavior. Under current law, most prisoners, including sexual offenders, can earn a one-third reduction of their sentences for good behavior.

Noting that the bill has received good bipartisan support in the Senate, French said, “There’s no political angle to this subject. I appreciate the support of my Republican colleagues in the Senate, including Senators Ben Stevens, Fred Dyson, and Con Bunde, who are co-sponsoring the measure.”

SB 85 now goes to the House of Representatives, where a hearing in the House Judiciary Committee is scheduled for Friday, May 16.

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For more information, contact Senator Hollis French at 907-465-3892.

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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