

## **Sponsor Statement**

### **HB 389 – Defining Educational Neglect**

Alaska Law defines neglect in many different ways. Specifically AS 47.10.014 states provides that a court may find a child neglected if the “parent ... fails to provide food, clothing, shelter, *education*, medical attention or other care necessary...” Most of these factors are often observable and relatively undebateable. The exception is that of educational neglect. What is the definition of educational neglect? How can a DFYS social worker or a Judge assess whether a child has been neglected educationally?

HB 389 answers these questions by defining educational neglect. While it is unlikely educational neglect would be the sole grounds for finding a child neglected it is often one of several factors. Under HB 389 if the court finds that a parent or guardian has failed to comply with the compulsory education statutes, that is, s/he knowingly fails (without valid excuse) to keep the child in school, then the court may find the child was neglected educationally.