



## Representative Eric Croft Sponsor Statement

House Bill 278  
*"Privacy Omnibus"*

**"The right of the people to privacy is recognized and shall not be infringed. The legislature shall implement this section." Alaska State Constitution, Article I, Section 22**

Significant advances in technology have occurred since the right to privacy was added to the Alaska Constitution in 1972. Developments such as DNA testing, inexpensive video equipment, and the grocery store scanner are able to infringe on people's privacy in ways not possible twenty-six years ago. HB 278 protects and updates our constitutionally guaranteed right of individual privacy, a right that will slowly erode if we do not shore up its protections with periodic review. The bill implements and updates our privacy rights in three distinct areas -- genetic privacy, restrictions on the electronic monitoring of employees, and restrictions on releasing specific forms of consumer information.

**Genetic Privacy** In the last ten years genetic science has rocketed forward - a human chromosome is mapped, sheep are cloned and genetic sampling is used as a means of identification. This bill establishes and defends an individual's ownership of their own genetic material.

**Electronic Monitoring of Employees** HB 278 protects workers from being electronically monitored at home, in an employee bathroom, locker room, shower or bath facility, and establishes that workers must be notified of electronic monitoring in the workplace, and protects a worker from being fired for asserting their right to these simple privacy considerations.

**Release of Certain Consumer Information** Retail outlets often issue cards which serve the same purpose as coupons. These cards provide a mechanism for retailers to collect and store information on an individual's purchases. HB 278 would prohibit retailers from selling information gathered on an individual's purchasing habits without first notifying the consumer and receiving permission to release the information.

HB 278 updates Alaska statute to keep in touch with technology as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century.