



Alaska State Legislature

Senate Majority Web: www.akrepublicans.org

Sponsor: Senator Ben Stevens
Current Version: SB 60
Contact: Shannon Straube, 465-4993

Fact Sheet for: Senate Bill 60

Short Title: EXTEND SUICIDE PREVENTION COUNCIL

Summary:

- Extends the termination date of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council from June 2005 to June 2009.

Benefits:

- Implements a recommendation by the Legislative Budget & Audit Committee to continue the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council.
- Provides a centralized statewide effort to educate individuals and communities on suicide prevention.
- Gives the council the opportunity to enact its new statewide suicide prevention plan.
- Allows the council to create a network with public and private groups across Alaska that are working towards similar goals.
- Reduces the stigma that comes with suicides through outreach work with families and friends of suicide victims.
- Assures groups and individuals working towards similar goals that Alaska's elected officials are also committed to preventing suicides.

Background:

- Alaska has nearly twice the average national number of suicides. In 2001, the Alaska Legislature created the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council to establish strategies and goals to reduce the number of suicides. The council is currently working with the Alaska Injury Prevention Center on a study that examines suicides over a 12 month period. Voluntary interviews with friends and families of victims will be combined with medical records and law enforcement reports. The council will also conduct a media campaign to educate Alaskans about suicide and its devastating effects. The council also serves in an advisory capacity to the governor and the legislature on suicide issues.