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House Finance Committee Passes McGuire Bill to Create Civil Legal Services Fund

(JUNEAU) – HB 175, legislation to establish a civil legal services fund as a special account in the general fund, passed the House Finance Committee earlier today. The legislation is sponsored by Representative Lesil McGuire (R-Anchorage).

The fund would allow the Legislature to make appropriations to organizations that provide civil legal services to low-income Alaskans. It is anticipated that the funds will come from the State punitive damage award accounts. Alaska law requires that 50% of the punitive damage awards be turned over to the state. The inherent logic of the bill lies in the fact that the funds will flow out of the legal system itself.

“All Alaskans deserve fair protection and representation under the law regardless of their economic status,” said Representative McGuire. “HB 175 will help to ensure that *all* Alaskans have access to legal representation and receive equal protection.”

HB 175 will now move to the House floor.

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