



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

News From The House Majority

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 7, 2006
5446

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Major Consumer Protection Amendment **Passes House with SB 169**

(JUNEAU) – The House of Representatives has passed an amendment, sponsored by Representatives Lesil McGuire (R-Anchorage), John Coghill (R-North Pole) and Les Gara (D-Anchorage) to Senate Bill 169, which addresses consumer protection and identity theft in Alaska. The original bill, sponsored by Senator Gene Therriault (R-North Pole), deals with the handling of records kept by the Division of Worker's Compensation.

Representatives McGuire, Coghill and Gara amended SB 169 on the floor to include a number of critical consumer protection provisions. In addition to protecting social security numbers, the amendment would require that individuals be notified if their personal information is accessed, and it allows victims of identity theft to file a police report.

The amendment was based on Senate Bill 222, co-sponsored by Senator Therriault and Senator Gretchen Guess (D-Anchorage). Senators Therriault and Guess worked extensively over the last six months to address legitimate stakeholder concerns.

“We are here to represent Alaskan consumers,” said Representative McGuire. “Alaska leads the nation in identity theft and that is unacceptable. Alaskans who find themselves the victim of identity theft spend countless hours trying to remedy the situation and we have to do our best, as Representatives of our citizens to combat this issue.”

The amendment also prohibits the printing of more than the last five digits of a credit card number on receipts, provides affordable access to credit reports, and enables individuals to freeze their credit report to ensure they are the only ones with access to it.

The amendment passed without objection and received strong support from Representative John Coghill (R-North Pole), Majority Leader.

“I’ve had a staff member who has been the victim of identity theft three times in the last two years, so this hits very close to me,” said Representative Coghill. “I’ve always been sensitive about the use of social security numbers and have passed legislation in the past that removed social security numbers from driver’s and hunting licenses. I see this bill as an essential step in helping Alaskans combat identity theft.”

“This is a great example of how good legislation results when legislators reach across the aisle,” Representative Gara said. “This legislation will protect the private information of Alaskan consumers, and I’m proud and pleased that it passed with such strong support in the House.”

SB 169 passed the House unanimously. The addition of the amendment means that SB 169 will now move to the Senate for concurrence.

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