

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 22, 2006

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Bunde & Neuman Push Stricter Sentencing for Sex Offenders

(JUNEAU) – Representative Mark Neuman (R-Mat-Su) and Senator Con Bunde (R-Anchorage) are combining legislation to ensure stricter sentencing for sex offenders in Alaska.

The legislation, comprised of HB 353, sponsored by Representative Neuman, and SB 218, sponsored by Senator Bunde, increases the sentences for first-time offenders of children under 13 to 25-30 years and for victims over 13 to 20-30 years minimum. The minimum sentence for Class A sexual felonies also increases to 20-25 years for offenses against children under 13, and 15-20 years for those over 13. It also restructures and increases the sentencing for Class B and Class C sexual offences, as well as repeat offenders. Mandatory probation is also included, and the legislation changes the requirements of probation and parole to include polygraph testing.

“We need sentencing laws in this state that make it perfectly clear to sex offenders in Alaska that their behavior will not be taken lightly and will not be tolerated. This legislation goes a long way to protect our citizens and ensure that criminals in Alaska receive a sentence commensurate to their crime,” said Representative Neuman.

SB 218, sponsored by Senator Bunde passed the Senate 19-0 last week. SB 218 is similar legislation to HB 353 and has moved to the House for consideration, receiving a referral to the House Finance Committee.

Senator Bunde said, “Anyone convicted of a sex crime poses a very serious threat to society. This legislation sentences sex offenders to longer prison terms and takes additional steps to ensure they are not committing the same types of crimes while out on parole. Alaska has a long and terrible record for sexual assaults. Our state has had the highest per capita rates of sexual assault and abuse in the nation for 22 years. This bill takes a big step in fighting the problem.”

Senator Bunde and Representative Neuman have combined their bills, deciding that SB 218 will be the vehicle for the legislation. Representative Neuman is now a cross sponsor of the bill and will work with the other cross sponsor, Representative Bill Stoltze (Chugiak/Mat-Su), to help move the legislation through the House.

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