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Senator Loren Leman District G

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Statement of Sen. Loren Leman Regarding Parental Consent Ruling

(ANCHORAGE) – Senate Majority Leader Loren Leman (R-Anchorage) made the following statements today concerning the Alaska Supreme Court's decision on parental consent for a minor seeking an abortion:

"I am pleased with the decision the Alaska Supreme Court issued this morning directing Superior Court Judge Sen Tan to hear and consider the State's substantial evidence demonstrating the importance of parental involvement in the decision making of their minor children related to medical services, including abortion," Leman said.

In 1997 the Legislature passed Senate Bill 24, sponsored by Leman, and later overrode Gov. Tony Knowles' veto. The bill amended a 27-year-old state law that requires a minor girl to obtain consent from one of her parents before getting an abortion. The 1997 law provided that a girl could alternatively seek approval from a judge instead of her parents in certain circumstances.

"It is very encouraging that two members of the Alaska Supreme Court, Chief Justice Matthews and Justice Carpeneti, were prepared to uphold our parental consent law right now, based upon the fact, already recognized by the Legislature and more than 80 percent of Alaskans, that loving parental involvement is beneficial and important," noted Leman. "I am confident that when the evidence is presented to the Court, the State will be able to demonstrate that Alaska's parental consent law serves compelling interests."

The U. S. Supreme Court has upheld parental consent laws similar to Alaska's on 9-0 decisions as recently as 1997.

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