

Sponsor Statement

HB 166

“An Act relating to the year in which public school student competency testing begins.”

HB 166 would delay enactment of the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam from 2002, to 2004.

The Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam is one of the most critical issues the legislature is facing in 2001. Results from the 2000 administration of the exam show only 33% of Alaska's sophomores passed the math test, about 50% passed the writing test, and 75% passed reading. Clearly, our students have the right to a quality education, but as test results are showing, many students are not adequately prepared for the exam, particularly the math test. There has been much testimony from educators indicating they need more time to align curriculum to the exam. The issues of testing special needs students and transfer students have not been adequately addressed.

With the passage of this bill, school districts throughout Alaska will be given additional time to prepare students for the high stakes exam while also allowing education officials more time to perfect the exam's content. A two year delay in the enactment of the Alaska High School Qualifying Exam is also supported by the Alaska Association of School Boards.