



REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN MEYER

HOUSE DISTRICT 19

Sponsor Statement

HB 214

“An Act relating to a civil action against a person under 21 years of age who enters premises where alcohol is sold or consumed.”

HB 214 allows bar and liquor store owners, or any alcohol licensee, to bring a civil suit against a minor if they are caught on their licensed premises, or attempting to enter in violation of the law. This is in addition to the *criminal* penalty state law allows for minors on licensed premises. Currently, the criminal penalty is a Class A misdemeanor, which carries a maximum fine up to \$5,000 and up to one year in jail.

This legislation mirrors an ordinance passed in 1998 by the Municipality of Anchorage. The ordinance was well-supported by the alcohol industry. Local establishments have been successful in using the ordinance to deter underage drinking.

HB 214 provides an incentive for owners and employees who sell alcoholic beverages to check IDs carefully. If a minor is found to be on the premises or attempting to gain access, the licensed owner can bring a civil suit against the minor. If a judgement is entered in favor of the licensee, payment of civil fines can be taken from the minor's Permanent Fund Dividends (PFD).

In addition, HB 214 requires a licensee to post a new kind of warning sign at each entrance of the licensed premises. The sign must warn that a person under 21 years of age, who enters the licensed premises, is in violation of the law, and could be liable for damages in the amount of \$1,000.

With the increasing measures of civil liability, additional warnings, and possible garnishment of a minor's PFD, we are sending a powerful message to young people under age 21 that we are not going to tolerate using fake IDs and other creative ways to get around the law. It also gives licensees and their employees more incentive to stop minors from gaining access to alcoholic beverages.

