

# Sponsor Statement for SB 158

**“An Act transferring the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault from the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Health and Social Services; and providing for an effective date.”**

[Senate Bill 158](#) would transfer the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault ([CDVSA](#)) to the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). [Alaska Statute 18.66](#) established the council under the Department of Public Safety in 1981. This statute gives the council the authority “... *to provide for planning and coordination of services to victims of domestic violence or sexual assault or to their families and to perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual assault and to provide for crisis intervention and prevention programs.*” This coordination includes providing emergency safe housing, counseling, education/outreach services, and technical assistance to programs such as Advocates for Victims of Violence, Abused Women’s Aid In Crisis, Arctic Women in Crisis, Alaska Women’s Resource Center, South Peninsula Women’s Services, Standing Together Against Rape and Sitkans Against Family Violence to name a few.

The mission of DHSS is to “*promote and protect the health and well-being of Alaskans.*” DHSS has in place established programs and services that will be beneficial to the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault that include:

- Division of Administrative Services that deals with federal granting agencies
- Division of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse to assist in developing prevention and education programs
- Division of Family and Youth Services that have 29 field offices for child protective services in place

SB 158 would create a closer working relationship between CDVSA and the DHSS as required in [AS 18.66.050](#) (12) & (14) for developing standards, procedures and continuing education on domestic violence. A 2002 sunset audit review performed by Legislative Budget and Audit showed that this had not yet been accomplished. Adoption of this bill will provide adequate resources to enhance their capabilities and become a more efficient CDVSA program under DHSS.