



Alaska State Legislature Senate Majority News

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Senate Passes Major Suicide Prevention Legislation **SB 60 Extends Statewide Suicide Prevention Council**

(Juneau) – Today the Alaska Senate passed bi-partisan legislation that continues the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council. The council was created by the legislature in 2001 with the mission of reducing the tragically high number of suicides in our state.

Senate President Ben Stevens says, “The Senate has shown its continued commitment to addressing the devastating affects suicide has on Alaskans and their families. Suicide is a problem that impacts Alaskans of each sex, all ages, and regions of the state.”

The Council, through a comprehensive prevention plan, provides a centralized statewide effort to educate individuals and communities on ways to prevent suicide.

A recent legislative audit recommended extending the Council. The Council has embraced all the recommendations of the legislative audit and is committed to adopting measurable performance indicators – which will determine the effectiveness of the Council and the Alaska Suicide Prevention Plan.

Legislative Budget and Audit Chairman Gene Therriault says, “We will also work with the Department of Health and Social Services to assure that besides continuing the Council, that all the audit recommendations are implemented concerning public notice and conforming to the Alaska Suicide Prevention Plan.”

On average, suicide takes 130 Alaskan lives each year. Alaska’s suicide rate is nearly twice the national average.

SB 60, sponsored by Senate President Ben Stevens, extends the termination date of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council from June 2005 to June 2009.

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