

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



Interim:
P.O. Box 109
Wrangell, AK 99929
Phone: (907) 874-3088
Fax: (907) 874-3055

Session:
State Capitol, Room 108
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-3824
1-800-686-3824
Fax: (907) 465-3175

**REPRESENTATIVE PEGGY WILSON
HOUSE DISTRICT 2**

SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 357 “Updating the terminology in statutes for persons with disabilities”

After the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, most states modified their statutes to reflect a positive reference- changing the word "handicapped" to "person with a disability". This bill changes all Alaska State Statutes to rid them of this archaic reference that has negative and demoralizing connotations in reference to a person's ability and potential. Using "a person with a disability" reflects language that is in Federal legislation- the Federal Workforce Investment Act, the American's with Disabilities Act, the Civil Rights Act of 1991; The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in 1992 and 1998.

These changes are being proposed in consultation with the Department of Labor, other state agencies, and along with the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education. There is support for this bill from numerous other organizations such as the South-East Alaska Independent Living Center, which represent people with disabilities. This bill is not designed to modify any existing requirements or exemptions, nor will it be changing any existing requirements or exemptions with the new terminology. This bill is designed to serve the constituents of everyone across the state that are affected by this existing negative and demeaning terminology.

I ask for your support of HB 357 to update and modernize the language that is in our Alaska Statutes.