



Representative Harriet Drummond
Sponsor Statement

House Bill 214: Bree's Law, Dating Violence Programs

HB 214 will help protect Alaska's children and young adults from dating violence by formally naming the Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Education requirements in the Alaska Safe Children's Act as "Bree's Law" in remembrance of 20 year-old Alaskan Bree Moore who was murdered in 2014 by her boyfriend in a senseless act of violence.

Bree's story provides a lasting and powerful lesson about the need to educate our young people to recognize and safely respond to dating violence.

The story of Bree's life, the inspiring person she was, and the unspeakable tragedy that befell her helped shine a light on the problem of teen dating violence in our state and prompted the inclusion of Bree's Law into The Alaska Safe Children's Act, which was signed into law by Governor Walker in 2015.

This education will be taught in grades 7-12 in all Alaska public schools starting this year. Teens will learn how to develop healthy relationships, practice supportive communication skills, recognize the warning signs of an abusive relationship, and to seek help.

"Amber Alert" is an excellent example of a similarly named program that saves lives and protects children. When we hear the words "Amber Alert," we immediately know it is for quickly alerting the community to assist in the search and rescue of a missing and exploited child.

It provides a lasting reminder of the compelling and heartbreaking story of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman who was abducted while riding her bicycle in Arlington, Texas and was later found murdered.

It is fitting that our state be at the forefront of Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Education. Nationwide, Alaska is ranked number one in domestic violence and in men killing women, and it is the most dangerous state in the United States for women.

U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski recently announced legislation to help name these vital education efforts nationwide as "Bree's Law." She additionally has reported that federal funds under the Every Student Succeeds Act can be used for Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Education.

Although HB 214 has no fiscal note and there is no state funding needed in formally naming "Bree's Law," it will nonetheless provide a powerful and lasting example of the need for this lifesaving education throughout Alaska and the U.S.