

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

HCR3

“Proclaiming April 2017 as Child Abuse Prevention Month; and proclaiming April 7th, 2017, as Go Blue Friday”

Sponsor Statement

Every year, Alaskans come together to honor April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. The same is held true across the nation. In 1983, the U.S. Legislature proclaimed April as the first National Child Abuse Prevention Month to show a commitment to identifying and implementing solutions to end child abuse. As a result, activities to raise awareness about child abuse are promoted across the country during April of each year. Many governors also issue proclamations to encourage initiatives and events in their respective states.

In 2016, the Office of Children's Services received 17,418 Protective Service Reports regarding child maltreatment. This number includes the mental injury, neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse towards Alaskan children. With numbers like these, Alaska continues to lead the nation in child neglect.

We must reverse this trend and champion prevention. We must champion initiatives like providing safe, nurturing environments for our children; teaching our children and communities to recognize the signs of abuse; creating a healthy support system comprised of family, friends and community members, while also letting children who have been exposed to abuse know they are not alone, and that Alaska prioritizes the elimination of child abuse while ensuring their safety and wellbeing.

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Alaskans put this belief into practice not just in April, but every single day when it comes to our children. Recognizing April as Child Abuse Prevention Month through the passage of HCR3 is an important testimonial the state of Alaska can make every year to demonstrate our commitment to ending the abuse.

Every child deserves a loving family, a safe home, and the opportunity to grow into an upstanding and responsible member of society. We have to work together to support our children who grow up to be the future of Alaska. We must protect our future. I also invite all citizens in Alaska to join me on April 7th, 2017 to wear blue as a symbolic gesture that Alaska champions prevention, that child abuse will not be tolerated, and that we band together to reverse the trend and protect our children.