Alaska State Legislature

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Governor Signs Bipartisan Stalking Protection

House Bill 1 closes a dangerous loophole in Alaska' anti-stalking laws

(JUNEAU)—On Friday, Governor Frank Murkowski signed critical public safety legislation to help protect victims of stalking. House Bill 1, sponsored by Rep. Harry Crawford (D-Anchorage) and Rep. Cheryll Heinze (R-Anchorage), closes a dangerous loophole in Alaska's anti-stalking laws. Before HB 1, only an individual threatened by an acquaintance or someone in his or her household could get a domestic violence protective/restraining order. When threats came from a stranger, however, the legal system offered no similar protection. House Bill 1 changes this rule to include individuals whom the stalking victim does not know.

HB 1 allows victims of stalking by strangers to seek and obtain protective orders, which incorporates the procedures that are already in place for domestic violence situations. HB 1 also requires that perpetrators covered under the bill be included in the central registry for the Department of Public Safety; this provision helps protect public safety officers in potentially dangerous situations.

The anti-stalking law enjoyed wide, bipartisan support with both Representative Harry Crawford (D-Anchorage) and Representative Cheryll Heinze (R-Anchorage) as prime sponsors. Rep. Crawford, who introduced the bill, began work on this legislation at the request of a constituent in 2002. Rep. Heinze was once a victim of an unknown stalker.

"I'm very please with Governor Murkowski's support for this change," said Crawford. "We closed a major loophole in Alaskan law, and now, Alaskan families are safer from the crime of stalking."

"It's a major step in the direction of safety for women," said Heinze. "Now, women can get a protective order against a stalker before any physical harm occurs."

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