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Representative John Coghill

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Abortion Information Bill Passes House **HB 160 Seeks Public Health Data on Procedure in Alaska**

(JUNEAU) – Alaska would join 48 other states in collecting statistical and demographic information on the number of abortions performed each year, under a bill the House passed unanimously today.

Rep. John Coghill Jr. (R-North Pole) sponsored House Bill 160 as a way to improve reporting of public health information from Alaska, the absence of which hampers national efforts to get a full picture of the role abortion plays in maternal health, fertility, teen pregnancy and other matters.

“Data from abortion surveillance is used along with birth data and fetal death computations to estimate pregnancy rates and other maternal health rates,” Coghill said. “It is also used in defining characteristics of women who are at high risk for unintended pregnancy.” Ongoing annual surveillance of abortion rates also helps monitor trends in how abortion is provided, helping clinics adjust their practices, he added.

HB 160 would require physicians, hospitals or clinics providing abortions to send a report to the Bureau of Vital Statistics within 30 days of terminating a pregnancy. Following guidelines established by the National Center for Health Statistics, the reports would include such information as the age of the patient, the number of previous births, and other data. The Bureau would be required to publish an annual report based on the data.

To protect the privacy of all involved, the reports would not include the name of the patient or doctor, or the facility or municipality at which the procedure took place. The data would be reported only in aggregate form, and the original reports would be destroyed each year following production of the Bureau’s annual report, he said.

HB 160 generated support from the Alaska Department of Health and Human Services, which is eager for the new information it would bring to Alaska health issues, and from the American Civil Liberties Union, which applauded its strong privacy provisions, Coghill said.

[HB 160](#) moves next to the Senate for consideration

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