

Alaska State Legislature



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Fake IDs Could Buy Big Trouble for Minors **HB 214 Passes House; Would Let Bars Sue Violators for \$1,000**

(JUNEAU) – Minors who enter Alaska bars illegally hoping to get served alcohol could instead find themselves facing lawsuits seeking up to \$1,000 in penalties, under legislation the House passed unanimously on Thursday.

House Bill 214, sponsored by Rep. Kevin Meyer (R-Anchorage), would allow tavern owners to bring civil suits against minors who enter or even try to enter licensed premises in violation of state law. Minors caught on licensed premises already face a Class A misdemeanor charge, carrying penalties of up to \$5,000 in fines and a year in jail.

“While trying to get served in a bar may seem like a harmless stunt to a young person, it can expose the owner of the bar to tens of thousands of dollars in fines, or even the loss of his liquor license and his livelihood,” said Meyer. “It is serious business, and owners need some way to fight back.”

HB 214 mirrors a 1998 Anchorage ordinance, supported by the alcohol industry, which bar owners are using with great success to discourage underage drinking, Meyer said. Large liquor retailers and bars in Anchorage have used it to prosecute hundreds of minors, and in some cases the law has allowed owners to recover the money from the violators’ Permanent Fund dividends.

The bill would require licenses to post signs in their bars warning minors that trying to get served is a crime, and listing the potential penalties. It would not only discourage minor drinking, but would offer increased financial incentives for bar employees to tighten their vigilance against minors, he said.

“With the increasing measures of civil liability, additional warnings, and possible garnishment of a minor’s dividend, we are sending a powerful message to young people that we are not going to tolerate using fake IDs to get around the law,” Meyer said.

HB 214 moves next to the Senate for consideration.

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