

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



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SENATE DISTRICT O

SSSB 12 Sponsor Statement v. U 2/13/2019

An Act relating to assault in the first degree; relating to sex offenses; and relating to credit toward a sentence of imprisonment for time spent in a treatment program or under electronic monitoring.

Sponsor Substitute for Senate Bill 12 (SSSB 12) eliminates loopholes in Alaska law that have contributed to the inability to hold perpetrators of sexual assault adequately accountable for their actions. The bill will prove to victims that Alaskans have had enough and will stand with them to prosecute and incarcerate sexual predators while creating adequate deterrence for future violent crimes.

SSSB12 removes the "Schneider Loopholes" in Alaska's criminal code that allowed a violent sexual predator to walk free without jail time last September. The result of Justin Schneider walking free garnered national attention as Alaskans stood by in disbelief that such a free pass could occur after Justin Schneider brutally strangled a woman to the point of unconsciousness and then ejaculated on her. The plea deal decision also resulted in the unprecedented removal of a judge (Corey) for decisions made in the case.

SSSB12 will improve our sexual assault laws in several important ways: 1) it will classify unwanted contact with semen as a sexual crime, which means perpetrators can be required to register as sex offenders for this crime, 2) it will require that strangulation to the point of unconsciousness is defined as assault in the first degree, which carries a sentence of 5 to 20 years, and 3) it would eliminate credit toward time served for electronic monitoring.

In recent years, one outrageous story after another about criminals getting a slap on the wrist has dominated our headlines. The case of Justin Schneider, however, forces us to confront just how badly our criminal justice system has been failing victims and survivors of sexual assault. SSSB12 will define how we prosecute specific areas with loopholes in domestic violence and sexual assault. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the legislature and with Governor Dunleavy's administration to ensure the safety of all Alaskans.

It is time to stand up and say enough is enough; there will be no more free passes for violent sexual perpetrators in Alaska. I encourage support from legislators and the Alaska public to expedite passage of SSSB12, eliminating the "Schneider Loopholes" in our state's criminal code, and I respectfully request support for this important legislation.