

Submitted by: Assembly Members Silvers,  
Goecker, Baldwin Day, Johnson,  
Martinez, McCormick, Myers, Perez-  
Verdia, Rivera, Volland, Assembly  
Chair Constant and Assembly Vice-  
Chair Brawley  
Prepared by: Legislative Services Office  
Reviewed by: Assembly Legal Services  
Office  
For reading: April 14, 2026

**ANCHORAGE, ALASKA**  
**AR No. 2026-98, As Amended**

1 **A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY IN SUPPORT**  
2 **OF ALASKA HOUSE BILL 101 THAT WOULD RAISE THE AGE OF SEXUAL**  
3 **CONSENT TO 18, AND URGING THE ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE TO PASS**  
4 **SUCH LEGISLATION THIS SESSION.**  
5

6 **WHEREAS**, under current Alaska law, the age of sexual consent is 16, meaning  
7 that adults may legally engage in sexual activity with 16- and 17-year-olds; and  
8

9 **WHEREAS**, Alaska House Bill 101 (HB 101), sponsored by Representative Andrew  
10 Gray, would raise the age of consent to 18 and provide clearer statutory protections  
11 for minors; and  
12

13 **WHEREAS**, HB 101 includes close-in-age exemptions for 16- and 17-year-old  
14 victims to ensure that consensual relationships among their peers are not  
15 criminalized, while targeting predatory conduct by older adults; and  
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17 **WHEREAS**, advocates, law enforcement, and victim service organizations have  
18 indicated that raising the age of consent would improve the ability to prosecute  
19 sexual abuse and trafficking involving minors; and  
20

21 **WHEREAS**, minors involved in relationships with significantly older individuals are  
22 more likely to experience coercion, manipulation, and unequal power dynamics that  
23 limit their ability to make informed decisions; and  
24

25 **WHEREAS**, these situations are associated with measurable negative outcomes,  
26 including increased risk of trauma, mental health challenges, substance abuse, and  
27 disruption to education and long-term stability; and  
28

29 **WHEREAS**, gaps in current law can be and have been used by adults to target  
30 minors specifically because of the existing age threshold, limiting timely intervention  
31 by families, educators, and law enforcement; and  
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33 **WHEREAS**, this legal framework places the burden on minors to demonstrate lack  
34 of consent in cases of sexual assault, complicating prosecution and potentially  
35 enabling exploitation; and  
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37 **WHEREAS**, Alaska continues to experience high rates of sexual violence, and  
38 policies that reduce preventable harm to minors are a basic public safety  
39 responsibility; and  
40

41 **WHEREAS**, the bill received overwhelming support in the House and was approved  
42 39-0 before being sent to the Senate for consideration in May of 2025 where it was

1 referred to the Judiciary and Finance committees and has [not] been heard by the  
2 Senate Judiciary Committee at three meetings, which received several letters  
3 of support including from the Anchorage Police Department and Victims for  
4 Justice, but has not been [or] moved out of that committee to date; and

5  
6 **WHEREAS**, HB 101 is a narrowly focused and well-understood policy change that  
7 is ready for action, and does not require inclusion in a broader or more complex  
8 public safety package in order to move forward; and

9  
10 **WHEREAS**, delaying action by holding HB 101 in the Senate prolongs known gaps  
11 in protection, and each year of delay results in additional minors being exposed to  
12 preventable harm; and

13  
14 **WHEREAS**, the Anchorage Assembly has an obligation to advocate for clear,  
15 enforceable standards that protect young people and support effective enforcement  
16 of the law.

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18 **NOW, THEREFORE, THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY RESOLVES:**

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20 **Section 1.** The Anchorage Assembly supports the passage of Alaska House Bill  
21 101 and urges the Alaska State Senate to move HB 101 from committee, the Alaska  
22 State Legislature to pass the bill before the 34<sup>th</sup> Legislature concludes, and the  
23 Governor to sign it into law.

24  
25 **Section 2.** The Assembly affirms its commitment to policies that protect minors  
26 from exploitation and strengthen accountability for offenders.

27  
28 **Section 3. The Assembly requests that the Chair Claman move the bill out of**  
29 **committee or the Senate leadership use its authority under the uniform rules**  
30 **to discharge HB101 out of the Senate Judiciary Committee and bring to the**  
31 **Senate floor for a vote.**

32  
33 **[Section 3.] Section 4.** The Legislative Services Office is directed to transmit a  
34 copy of this resolution to the Alaska State Legislature, the Governor of the State of  
35 Alaska, and relevant stakeholders.

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37 This resolution shall be effective immediately upon passage and approval by the  
38 Assembly.

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40 PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 14th day of April, 2026.

41  
42 *Christopher Constant*

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44 \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

45 ATTEST:

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47 *Jasmine Acres*

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49 \_\_\_\_\_  
Municipal Clerk



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE  
ASSEMBLY INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM**

No. AIM 48-2026

Meeting Date: April 14, 2026

1 **From: Assembly Member Yarrow Silvers**

2  
3 **Subject: Opinion Essays relating to House Bill 101**

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5 For the Assembly's consideration, please see the attached opinions recently  
6 published in the *Alaska Landmine* and the *Anchorage Daily News*:

- 7  
8 1. Opinion: Alaskans deserve a vote in the Senate on raising the age of consent  
9 to 18 from 16, written by Keeley Olson, Executive Director of Standing  
10 Together Against Rape (STAR), published by the *Alaska Landmine* on April 3,  
11 2026, and found online here: [https://alaskalandmine.com/landmines/alaskans-  
12 deserve-a-vote-in-the-senate-on-raising-the-age-of-consent-to-18-from-16/](https://alaskalandmine.com/landmines/alaskans-deserve-a-vote-in-the-senate-on-raising-the-age-of-consent-to-18-from-16/)  
13  
14 2. Opinion: Alaska's age-of-consent loophole puts teens at risk – and a fix is  
15 stuck in the state Senate, written by Laura Norton-Cruz, Bianca Cross and  
16 Scott Kendall, published by *Anchorage Daily News* on April 5, 2026, and found  
17 online here: [https://www.adn.com/opinions/2026/04/05/opinion-alaskas-age-of-  
18 consent-loophole-puts-teens-at-risk-and-a-fix-is-stuck-in-the-state-senate/](https://www.adn.com/opinions/2026/04/05/opinion-alaskas-age-of-consent-loophole-puts-teens-at-risk-and-a-fix-is-stuck-in-the-state-senate/)  
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21

22 Prepared by: Legislative Services Office

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24 Respectfully submitted: Yarrow Silvers, Assembly Member  
25 District 5, East Anchorage

# Alaskans deserve a vote in the Senate on raising the age of consent to 18 from 16

Alaska has the highest rate of rape in the United States – more than three times the national average. Over half (51.1%) of all reported victims of sexual assault in Alaska in 2024 were juveniles ([State of Alaska Felony Level Sex Offenses Report](#)). Along with the highest rates of sexual assault and child sexual abuse in the nation, Alaska has the highest rates of suicide.

In 2019, the rate in Alaska was 27% higher than in 2010. ([Alaska Death by Suicide Rates and Figures 2010-2019](#)). Sexual assault has long been reliably linked to an increased risk for suicide (Byran et al., 2013; Tomasula et al., 2012). Recent research found that people who were sexually assaulted reported an 18% higher prevalence in suicidality than people who were not (Dworkin et al., 2022).

Standing Together Against Rape (STAR) sees firsthand the damage sustained by youth who are groomed and sexually abused by predatory adults. We are in a unique position to share the grave harm that sexual abuse of minors causes in the lives of Alaskans. We strongly support raising the age of consent in Alaska to 18.

Youth who are sexually assaulted are much more vulnerable to ongoing harm. Years of research has shown that nearly half (49%) of all female survivors experienced some form of revictimization over the course of two years. Unwanted sexual contact was the most common form of revictimization. (Relyea, M., & Ullman, S. E. (2017). Without appropriate response and crisis intervention, youth are at higher risk to experience repeat victimizations. This can be avoided by making sexual assaults against minors a priority and making sure they are able to access the healing resources they need. This is impossible if they feel they are not protected, aren't taken seriously, or that they are somehow to blame for their own victimization.

Alaska's age of consent for sexual contact is 16. This means an adult of any age can have sex with a sixteen year old. It also means 16- and 17-year-olds are treated as adults, not minors, when reporting a sexual assault. Many adults are unaware of the age of consent and the significant problems it presents in our state. Unfortunately, those who are keenly aware of it are predatory adults.

Older teens are minors. They cannot enter into a contract, rent a motel room or car, get a credit card or open a bank account on their own. If they are in school, a parent or guardian must sign a permission slip for them to go on a field trip or travel with their team for sporting events. They cannot get a tattoo. So why do we fail to offer any guardrails when it comes to engaging in sexual relationships with adults?

Raising the age of consent to 18 is not a unique concept. It would bring Alaska in line with states including, but not limited to Florida, Kentucky, Idaho, Utah, Oregon, California, Wisconsin, Tennessee and Arizona.

[House Bill 101](#) is a bill from Representative Andrew Gray (D – Anchorage) to change the age of consent from 16 to 18, while allowing a close in age exemption between teens. HB 101 already passed the State House unanimously in May 2025. The bill is currently being reviewed by the Senate Judiciary Committee – chaired by Senator Matt Claman (D – Anchorage) – where it is being held-up without a vote.

Today, with all the outrage regarding the Epstein files and calls to hold predatory adults responsible for their abuse of minors, Alaska cannot afford to look the other way. HB 101 passed the House

unanimously and deserves a vote in the Senate.

If lawmakers disagree with the bill, they should say so publicly and cast their vote. Alaskans deserve transparency, accountability, and action on legislation that protects our youth from serious harms, including sex trafficking. If you believe adults should not be allowed to have sex with minors, contact Senator Claman today (907-465-4919 or [Senate.Judiciary@akleg.gov](mailto:Senate.Judiciary@akleg.gov)) and tell him to pass HB 101 out of committee so it can go to the floor for a vote. Silence and delay only serve those who exploit the gaps in our laws.

*Keeley Olson has been the Executive Director of STAR for ten years. She has over thirty years' experience in the field of crime victim advocacy. STAR offers a confidential crisis line for survivors of sexual trauma and their loved ones, who can access support and information 24 hours a day. STAR is well known for its crime victim advocacy and violence prevention programming.*

# Opinion: Alaska’s age-of-consent loophole puts teens at risk — and a fix is stuck in the state Senate



*The Alaska State Capitol in Juneau. (Sean Maguire / ADN)*

We are three Alaskans who have dedicated time advocating for victims of sexual violence — as an attorney, a social worker and victim advocate, and a law enforcement officer. We are writing here across our differences in political beliefs and professional backgrounds to express our profound disappointment in Sen. Matt Claman for obstructing a bill that would protect minors from sexual assault. We write this together because we share a belief that 16- and 17-year-old Alaskans deserve stronger protection from adult predators, and because we share an anger at Sen. Claman for his repeated delays to pass [House Bill 101](#) out of committee, which would address this need by raising the age of consent to 18.

HB 101 was sponsored by Rep. Andrew Gray and co-sponsored by a tripartisan group of representatives. It passed the Alaska House unanimously last May — a rare occurrence in the Alaska Legislature or anywhere in politics. This demonstrates both the commonsense appeal of the bill and its urgency. Alaska has [consistently ranked No. 1](#) in the country for rates of rape and child sexual abuse. The [average age of all victims](#) of reported sexual assaults in Alaska is just 16, and the average age of perpetrators is considerably higher, around 30 years old.

We remember being teens and how many children we knew were preyed upon by adult men. We remember wishing that the law and social norms at the time better protected them. And right now, we have the chance to do something.

Rapists and traffickers target the most vulnerable, and youth is a vulnerability. In Alaska, they also take advantage of the legal vulnerability of 16- and 17-year-olds. Because our current age of sexual consent is 16, when a 16- or 17-year-old — who, mind you, cannot vote or sign legal paperwork in their own name — is sexually assaulted by a much older perpetrator, this teen victim, who is a legal minor in other areas of life, has to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that they did not consent to the sexual activity. This is the same burden of proof facing an adult victim.

Worse still, many of these adults are known to prey on youth who are homeless or otherwise vulnerable, promising them food, money or gifts. And under current law, this conduct is essentially legal. As parents of teens and preteens, and as people who care about the well-being of young people, we believe firmly that middle-aged adults should not be preying on minors. Importantly, raising the sexual age of consent requires close-in-age exceptions so that consensual sexual activity between fellow young people is not criminalized. HB 101 contains those exceptions. We respect the autonomy of young people and their relationships. The sole purpose of the bill is to better protect 16- and 17-year-old victims of assault and sex trafficking and to send a clear message to those who would prey on them.

Despite its unanimous passage in the House, this bill has languished for many months in the Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Claman. He has been slow to schedule hearings, at which he has asked testifiers critical or even hostile questions. He has not put HB 101 before his committee for a vote so it can move forward, nor has he scheduled a deadline for amendments or a final vote. At this point, it appears that Sen. Claman is using his position as chair to run out the clock on this session to kill the bill. If he succeeds, teen victims will have to wait another year or more for protection.

It appears Sen. Claman opposes the bill. Regardless, he cannot be allowed to prevent his fellow senators from voting on it. Given his position of public trust, and given his campaign for governor, we cannot be silent in the face of this misuse of his chairmanship.

Sexual violence is a scar across our state, affecting every community and every family. It is something we hear about, see or deal with on a daily basis. We cannot wait. We call on Sen. Claman to do the right thing — regardless of whether he supports the bill — to move it out of his committee so it can get a vote by the full Senate. We ask that the public join our call. Finally, if Sen. Claman cannot answer the call of decency, we ask that the other senators move to pull HB 101 out of his committee and vote on it. Our state and our children deserve action on this critical issue, and they deserve it immediately.

***Laura Norton-Cruz** is a social worker and documentary film producer focusing on maternal child health and violence prevention and formerly worked as a rape victim advocate for STAR.*

***Bianca Cross** served for 27 years in law enforcement and served many years as a detective investigating crimes of sexual assault and abuse.*

***Scott Kendall** is an Anchorage attorney in private practice. He previously served as chief of staff to Gov. Bill Walker and currently volunteers on the board of an organization that advocates for survivors of sexual violence.*

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*The Anchorage Daily News welcomes a broad range of viewpoints. To submit a piece for consideration, email [commentary\(at\)adn.com](mailto:commentary(at)adn.com). Send submissions shorter than 200 words to [letters@adn.com](mailto:letters@adn.com) or [click here to submit via any web browser](#). Read our full guidelines for letters and commentaries [here](#).*