



GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL
ON DISABILITIES &
SPECIAL EDUCATION



Please Join the SILC & the Council in Supporting HB16: The Disability Training and Identification Bill

WHAT IS IT?

This bill promotes positive interactions between individuals with disabilities and law enforcement officials through three key components:

1. The institution of a training program at the Academy level to provide law enforcement officials with the tools to positively interact with individuals with disabilities.
2. Educating the public about their responsibilities and expectations when interacting with law enforcement officials.
3. Providing individuals with disabilities the voluntary option to place a discreet mark on their driver's license or ID card that will inform law enforcement officers that the person with whom they are interacting with has a disability.

WHY IS IT NEEDED?

Given the large number of Alaskans who experience disabilities, it is crucial that officers have communication tools to help them interact more effectively with people who have a disability, especially non-apparent disabilities. The high stress of police work can result in miscommunications and unintended consequences between law enforcement personnel and people with disabilities.

For example,

- Individuals who experience disabilities that alter balance or speech can incorrectly be assumed to be intoxicated.
- Some disabilities may prevent an individual from understanding or complying with the requests of a police officer, which can lead to an officer thinking the individual is non-compliant or resisting arrest.
- Some disabilities can be mistaken as signs of aggression or imminent threat, which can lead to actions that inappropriately escalate the situation.

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION & STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

HOW WILL IT WORK?

- The Alaska police and corrections academies will add a minimum 8 hour disability awareness training component to their curriculum which will include:
 - ✓ Information on different disabilities and how an individual with a disability may behave in such a way as to cause a police officer to draw an incorrect conclusion.
 - ✓ Information on recognizing varying types of disabilities (including non-apparent disabilities) de-escalation techniques and information about disability resources.
- A section will be added to the Alaska Driver's License Manual to educate drivers about their responsibilities and expectations when stopped by a police officer. This information will be incorporated into the Alaska driver's license test to ensure all licensed drivers understand their responsibilities.
- Individuals with disabilities will have a voluntary option to add a discreet marker to their ID if they feel the marker could help improve communications by informing the officer that the person with whom they are interacting with has a disability. This will be similar to an organ donor mark and will be entirely optional.
- This bill does not violate HIPPA, breach confidentiality nor reveal any personal information unless an individual chooses to do so.
- This bill does not change or interfere with any of the established safety procedures in place to protect public officials or the responsibility of an individual for their own actions. The safety of the Law Enforcement Officers and the individual with whom they are interacting are of utmost importance.

RESOURCES:

<http://thefreethoughtproject.com/body-cam-footage-shows-officers-assault-pepper-spray-innocent-mentally-disabled-man/>

<http://www.npr.org/2013/09/03/218555867/are-cops-properly-trained-to-deal-with-people-with-disabilities>

Please support HB16