



Please Join the Council in Supporting HB 77: The Disability Training and Identification Bill

GOALS

- *Provide the best protection of officers, individuals with disabilities, and whole communities:*
 - All law enforcement officials equipped with the tools to comply with federal laws requiring appropriate communication and interaction with individuals with disabilities.
 - Citizens educated about their responsibilities when interacting with law enforcement.
 - Individuals with disabilities given the voluntary ability to receive discreet identification on their driver's license or state issued identification card if they choose.
 - Ultimately, reduce unlawful and potentially tragic encounters between individuals with disabilities and law enforcement.

WHAT IS IT?

- *This bill improves interactions between individuals with disabilities and law enforcement officials through three key components:*
 1. The institution of a training program to provide law enforcement officials with the tools to positively interact with individuals with disabilities.
 2. Educating the public about their duties and expectations when interacting with law enforcement officials.
 3. Providing individuals with disabilities the voluntary option to obtain a discreet mark on their driver's license or ID card to ensure law enforcement is aware of their disability when interacting with them.
- *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.*

- *Training for police officers, as well as corrections, village safety, & parole/probation officers:*
 - The Alaska police and corrections academies will add a disability awareness training component to their curriculum which will include:
 - Information on disabilities and how they may influence the interaction of an individual with the legal system.
 - Information on recognizing varying types of disabilities (including non-apparent disabilities) and awareness of the resources available.
- *Information for the public:*
 - 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.
- *Identification for individuals with disabilities – voluntary option:*
 - Individuals with disabilities will have a voluntary option of a discreet marker if they feel that they would benefit from an additional law enforcement verification of a disability.
 - This will be similar to an organ donor mark and will be entirely optional.

WHY SHOULD ALASKA DO THIS?

- *The high stress and discretionary nature of police work can result in miscommunications involving individuals with disabilities without proper law enforcement training.*
 - Some disabilities can be mistaken as evidence of delinquent behavior.
 - 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.
 - This can lead to thinking the individual is non-compliant or resisting arrest.
 - Some disabilities can be mistaken as signs of aggression or imminent threat.
 - This can lead to actions that inappropriately escalate the situation.
- *Given the large number of Alaskans who experience disabilities, it is crucial that officers have the correct tools to interact with these individuals in the legal system.*
 - It is estimated that 18.7%¹ of the 736,399 individuals living in Alaska experience a disability – approx. 137,706 individuals with disabilities in Alaska.²

Please support HB 77.

¹ US Census, 2010

² Alaska Census, 2013