

4/17/26

A resolution of the Alaska Democratic Party in support of raising the age of consent legislation that would raise the age of sexual consent to 18, with close-in-age exceptions, and urging the State legislature to pass such legislation this session.

**Whereas**, under current Alaska law, the age of sexual consent is 16, meaning that adults of any age who are not in positions of authority over the minor may legally engage in sexual activity with 16- and 17-year-olds; and

**Whereas**, raising the age of consent legislation, would raise the age of consent to 18 and provide clearer statutory protections for minors; and

**Whereas**, raising the age of consent legislation includes close-in-age exemptions for adolescent minors to ensure that consensual sexual relationships among their peers are not criminalized, while targeting predatory conduct by older adults; and

**Whereas**, advocates, law enforcement organizations, and victim service organizations across Alaska have indicated that raising the age of consent would improve the ability to prosecute sexual abuse and trafficking involving minors; and

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

**Whereas**, these situations are associated with measurable negative outcomes, including increased risk of trauma, mental health challenges, substance misuse, and disruption to education and long-term stability; and

**Whereas**, gaps in current law can and have been used by adults to target minors specifically because of the existing age threshold, limiting timely intervention; and

**Whereas**, this legal framework places the burden on minors to demonstrate lack of consent in cases of sexual assault – the same burden of proof expected of adult victims --, and this complicates prosecution and enables commercial sexual exploitation of children; and

**Whereas**, Alaska continues to experience high rates of sexual violence and particularly high rates of sexual violence against youth, and policies that reduce preventable harm to minors are a basic public safety responsibility; and

**Whereas**, a bill raising the age of consent received overwhelming support in the House and was approved 39-0 before being sent to the Senate for consideration in May 2025 where it was referred to the Judiciary and Finance Committees and has been heard by

the Judiciary Committee at three meetings, where it has received invited and public testimony in support and letters of support from victim service and law enforcement agencies; and

**Whereas**, delaying the passage of this law during the 2026 legislative session prolongs known gaps in protection, and each year of delay results in additional minors being exposed to preventable harm; and

**Whereas**, the Alaska Democratic Party has an obligation to advocate for policy positions that protect and support the most vulnerable Alaskans and that advocate for gender justice and work to reduce sexual violence and other forms of interpersonal violence.

**Now, therefore, the Alaska Democratic Party Platform Committee resolves:**

Section 1. We support the passage of raising the age of consent legislation and urge the Alaska legislature to move raising the age of consent legislation from committee, to pass a bill before the 34<sup>th</sup> legislature concludes, and the Governor to sign a bill into law.

Section 2. We affirm our commitment to policies that protect minors from exploitation and strengthen accountability for offenders.