

SENATOR BERT K. STEDMAN

Senate District A



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Youth Courts Benefit from Bill

Senate State Affairs moves SB 292

(Juneau)—Alaska’s youth courts would receive a steady source of funding under a bill passed with unanimous support Thursday by the Senate State Affairs Committee.

“Youth court volunteers statewide are making great contributions to their communities. I’m doing my part in the legislature to recognize their hard work and their value to the state,” said Sen. Bert Stedman (R-Sitka), sponsor of Senate Bill 292. “I am a strong believer in youth courts and their positive effects on communities.”

SB 292 designates up to 25 percent of revenues from court system fines to fund Alaska youth courts. Youth courts try first-time juvenile misdemeanor cases by a jury of peers. They reduce the repeat offense rate and help young people understand the consequences of their actions. Youth courts also educate minors on legal processes and decrease the burden on the rest of the juvenile justice system so it can focus on more serious cases.

“I appreciate the support of my constituents who called to testify during the hearing,” Stedman said. “This bill will elevate the funding debate in the Senate and I will be tracking the budget closely to make sure youth courts are properly funded.”

Senate Bill 292 is a companion bill to House Bill 303, introduced by Rep. Dan Ogg (R-Kodiak).

Alaska has 16 youth courts, including three in the Senate District A communities of Ketchikan, Wrangell and Sitka.

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