



Alaska State Legislature

Representative Beth Kerttula

<http://kerttula.akdemocrats.org>

Representative Beth Kerttula

(907) 465-4766

Rep.Beth.Kerttula@legis.state.ak

[us](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE · June 28, 2010

Citizen Jurors Now Protected in Alaska Law

Counseling available when civic duty becomes traumatic

(JUNEAU) – Today, Governor Parnell signed House Bill 52 into law, allowing Alaska judges to offer post-trial counseling to jurors traumatized by serving on trials with extraordinarily graphic, gruesome, or emotional evidence. Representative [Beth Kerttula](#) (D-Juneau) sponsored the bill after a constituent shared her experiences serving as a juror on a particularly disturbing trial.

“Jurors are sometimes asked to view extremely graphic photographs or to hear horrible testimony that sticks with them long after the trial is over. Counseling can be a tool to help jurors cope with their very human reaction to this type of trauma,” said Rep. Kerttula. “On a broader level, recognizing the challenges of serving on a jury can enhance peoples’ attitudes toward participating in a fundamental part of America’s legal system.”

While carrying out a civic duty, jurors can become traumatized through a crime victim’s harrowing experience in what is categorized as secondary trauma. The excessive levels of stress sometimes lead to a milder version of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Until now, the State of Alaska offered no support to help jurors cope with these predictable reactions. HB 52 allows judges to offer up to 10 hours of post-trial counseling to jurors who serve in difficult criminal trials.

“To protect the integrity of our legal system, courts must address juror stress,” Rep. Kerttula said. “Our Constitution guarantees citizens a right to a jury trial, but it doesn’t say we should traumatize our citizens who serve on juries. I am proud of our state for recognizing that.”

With HB 52 now signed into law, Alaska becomes only the second state to pass a law that provides juror counseling.

For more information, contact Rep. Kerttula or aide Hannah McCarty at (907) 465-4766 or [Representative Beth Kerttula@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Beth_Kerttula@legis.state.ak.us).

###

- [Print](#) [Forward this page](#)
- http://www.akdemocrats.org/kerttula/062810_citizen_jurors_protected_in_ak_law.pdf
- Links: [HB052](#) [Representative Beth Kerttula](#)