



Stevens introduces bill to create AIDS panel

Alaska Sen. Ted Stevens has introduced legislation which would create a national commission on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome — AIDS — to evaluate existing efforts to prevent and treat the disease and make recommendations to the president.

Under the Stevens legislation, the commission would be charged with:

- Studying AIDS research and current health care efforts.
- Encouraging government and private groups to become involved in domestic and international AIDS programs.
- Examining the employment, housing and insurance problems encountered by AIDS victims.

The commission also would study the legal and ethical issues raised by the disease.

The bill calls for the commission to report to Congress and the president within 18 months of the legislation's

enactment.

The report would recommend legislation and administrative actions designed to help prevent and treat AIDS, educate the public, assist individual victims and coordinate the federal government's AIDS funding efforts.

"If left unchecked, the present AIDS epidemic will become a catastrophe," Stevens said. "More than one in every 10 Americans may become infected in the foreseeable future unless we take immediate action."

Stevens said that while several federal agencies and the Army are involved in AIDS research, their efforts could be enhanced by greater involvement of the academic community and the private sector.

The commission also would study the effect AIDS has had on the armed forces, including the impact on recruitment and retention.