

U.S. SENATE PASSES COURTROOM INTERPRETERS BILL; SENDS IT TO HOUSE

WASHINGTON — The U. S. Senate has passed and sent to the House legislation to guarantee courtroom interpreters for all persons not fully fluent in English.

The bill, says Alaska Sen. Mike Gravel, would apply in

district courts, including those of Alaska, and would encompass all phases of the legal proceedings, from arraignment through trial.

Gravel, who had strongly supported the bill, said the Senate's action was "an important step

forward in securing equal justice under law for all our people."

Alaska is one state where a definite need for this kind of measure, Gravel said.

Gravel also noted that Frank Flavin, executive director of the Alaska Legal Services Corpora-

tion, had supported the measure. Flavin cited civil actions involving Alaska Natives and other minority populations in which courtroom interpreters were needed.

Gravel urged speedy action in the House, which must pass

the legislation before it is sent to the White House for final approval.

The Alaska legislature considered similar action during the last session, but failed to take any affirmative action.